

This Here...

"...the very soul of reasonableness." (A Scott)

EGOTORIAL

LOST IN TRANSLATION

While internetting the other day I stumbled across a Gary Delaney joke that I hadn't heard before, though apparently it's a well-known and popular one, and it made me laugh. This was the day of our monthly Writers' Group get-together, and eager to share, I guessed that about the only person present who would "get it" would be **John Hardin**, but of course it didn't quite work out that way, taking him a minute, in part no doubt because my delivery is fucked up by having no teeth which makes my typical drunken mumble even harder to interpret.

Having Thought about it Some More (© Pam Wells) my revised version is - er - less concise, unsurprisingly, than Delaney's usual one-liner concision, and goes like this:

I recall **Mark Plummer**'s bio, or one of them anyway, mentioning the time he spent playing the tuba on a Led Zeppelin tour. That is, until Jimmy Page asked him to please stop, but I never shared with him my own gig playing the triangle for a reggae band...

And Ting...

That went audibly "thud" in the room and lay there whimpering, almost certainly due to yer basic Merkan lack of familiarity with even very basic Jamaican patois - there's a reason 'The Harder They Come' had to be released with subtitles.

I'm trying to explain it later to **Jen**, and the best I can come up with is that it's equivalent to me saying "& that", which she equates to "an'all", leading me to attempt to convey that *those* two phrases aren't really the same either before giving up, but not without the thought having lodged in for the



purposes of this here 'Egotorial', since I had considered it might be nice to get this'un written up early (which does sometimes happen, believe it or not).

Effectively, both "& that" and "and t'ing" equate to "et cetera", notwithstanding what's apparently become the more specific usage of "ting" to refer to an attractive woman, which has seen use by rappers.

Brits of a Certain Age (can we just abbreviate that to BoACAs henceforth?) will recall the #1 single "Uptown Top Ranking" from 1978, linked here in the shorter Top of the Pops version in deference to **Graham James** who avowedly hates it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CqGIS70H3o>

"An'all" is a quite different business of ferrets though, innit? On the face of it it's just another way of saying "also", but in context it conveys a bit more nuance than that as it typically

ups the stakes in describing whatever it's appended to. Sort of a "not only... but also" if you like. Example: describing the slobby qualities of Jackson Lamb of Slough House and concluding with "virulently flatulent an'all"...

(Note to self - include him as the fart reference in *Mustn't Grumble* #3 whenever the next WOOF occurs...)



Yes, I *know* this could or should have been a longer 'Proper Rabbit' etymology column, but then I'd have had to write a whole other 'Egotorial', wouldn't I?

It's all good. (And t'ing.)

October 2025

CORFLUX



EXCURSIONS & THAT

Experienced convention organizers have long been aware that (a) many people don't read the PRs and (b) leave things like notifying the team about stuff until the last fuckin' minute, so here's some reminders from PR2 that already signed-up or potential attendees ought to pay attention to.

Rich Coad (I assume), wrote:

As mentioned in PR 1, there are some possible excursions that can be organized if there is sufficient interest

Wine Tasting:

Spike and **Karen** are willing to organize a wine tasting excursion on the Thursday (February 26), if there is interest. Send your questions to **Spike**, who is collecting information at winerytour@corflu.org.

Schulz Museum:

Santa Rosa was the long time home of Charles Schulz, the creator of Peanuts. The committee is willing to organize an outing to the museum on the Friday morning, before anything really gets started at the convention. Let us know your interest at corflu43@corflu.org.

Rancho Obi Wan:

I just learned of this place recently. It's in Petaluma and requires pre-booking for a tour of the world's largest collection of Star Wars memorabilia. I recall when the very first Star Wars movie came out Terry Carr said it put SF back 30 years, thinking, undoubtedly, of the Ray Palmer *Amazing*. Now, of course, we know it was more like 40 years and the Clayton *Astounding*.

DEADLINES

Yes, you've still got ages to leave it until the last second, but with hotel bookings particularly it's immensely helpful if you get in early because that gives the hotel and the organizers a warm glow. Booking deadline is **January 27th**, which will also be the date by which banquet preferences will need to be made known. The reservations link is in PR2.

Links:

<https://corflu.org/Corflu43/CorfluPickledPR2.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/corflu>

<https://corflu.org/>

HEALTH DIARY

October 4

Have I calmed down enough to write this bit up? I suppose I must have, because erewego ect...

Previously on 'Health Diary': I did my ECG and cardio stress tests at Dr Morris' office, got the all clear and followed that up with an email to Dr Peters & Lee to look out for the clearance results and a MyChart message to Dr Park to let *her* know. Nice Dr Park replies that the results have been faxed to Dr Lee's office so I should hear something soon.

Which I don't.

I'm at the point where, driven by increasingly strident exhortations from friends & family, I shall have to follow up again to ask what's occurring (if anything). I've so far assumed that there's been a wait for insurance approval (as there so often is) or, in a more dire assumption, Medicare has been suspended and the powers-that-be haven't told anybody. Anyway, yesterday I steel myself to get on the blower (something I really hate doing and which stresses me the fuck out) and call what I know will be a switchboard / service seemingly in place to prevent actual direct messaging.

After listening to "all our representatives are busy" from Dr Lee's number for 10 minutes I get transferred to the "leave a message" robot. Happily, nice Monica from Dr Lee's calls me back with reasonable alacrity, but I then learn that they've got fuck all in the way of cardio results, so now I'll have to call Dr Morris' office - actually the SW Medical barrier in between patients and doctors. They do actually find the info pretty quick, and I learn that yes, the results were faxed off right away, but to a different specialist than Dr Lee. (At this point I'm enraged enough to start breaking shit, and **Jen**, not unreasonably really, responds to my high state of crank with some of her own.)

The nice SW medical operator takes down the needed fax number and will pass that along - I'm advised "a couple of business days" will be needed to get the info where it needs to be. So we wait again. I punt MyChart messages to Drs Park and Morris advising them of all this, and we're left wondering whether, as now seems likely, my bypass surgery and **Jen's** knee replacement might be happening quite close to each other, with all the implications that has for recovery time...

We conclude that the major arseeness here is that when the "wrong" heart specialist gets the info faxed to them, it doesn't occur to anyone there to say "Hold on, this bloke isn't our patient" and query what's going on. However, **Nate Silva** points out something that had vaguely occurred to me: that they might be *expecting* me to be signing up as a patient with them (and presumably wondering why I haven't yet?).

The upshot is that this cock-up has cost us a week in which I might have reasonably expected to be off and getting sliced up, or at least have a timeline for that to happen.

October 6

I hear back from both nice Dr Park and Dr Morris' office, both of whom say they will correctly forward my results to Dr Lee's people. "Today", as Dr Park says, so in theory we're covered.

October 7

In happy news, lo, a child is born to William and Meagan ALee, Connor James, so **Jen** is now officially a grandmother in her own right coo er gosh ect...



October 8

Jen toddles off to the lab to get her A1C check done, which gratifyingly comes back at 6.9, just under the 7.0 threshold for going ahead with her knee replacement, so now the race is on to sort out slicing up dates for us both.

October 9

Unless I hear from nice Monica from Dr Peters & Lee's office by noonish, I plan to follow up again this afternoon.

Which I do, and she gets back to me a minute after five pm with assurance that they've got the results and it's all now on the desk of the surgery scheduler, whom Monica promises to chivvy up in the morning and for me to expect a call from her...

October 10

Which call does not occur, but **Jen** gets hers and now has a knee replacement surgery date of November 17th. Hopefully when I get my call (on Monday?) my slice-up will be this month to give us enough separation for basic recovery...

October 15

Still no call, so I follow up again on the squeaky wheel principle and extract a promise that Deborah, who is the scheduler, will be calling me back.

October 17

Still nothing by week's end, but I have my regular oncology checkup, today with nice nurse Hannah, who says that my

WBC is now "close to normal" at 16.8 - the lowest it's been (I think) since my diagnosis. "Normal" is quoted as between 4 and 11 thingies per wosname, but I got told ages ago that with leukemia a count of 15 or below is considered remission level, so we may be getting there, albeit well fuckin' slowly. My hematocrit (percentage of red blood cells in total volume) was still high at 54% (50 is the mark) so I got another phlebotomy - they got their 500ml out of me in a record (for me) 8 minutes!

October 22

Jen did decide to weigh in herself with a call to Dr Lee's switchboard yesterday (or was it Monday, I dunno what fuckin' day it is) mentioning her own upcoming surgery and the consequent need to get mine sorted. Today I finally get a call from Deborah, not to schedule surgery but rather to make an appointment for this coming Monday (27th) to *discuss* the surgery. Progress of a sort, I suppose. She does mention that this appointment is supposed to occur within 30 days of my heart tests which - er - it won't, so as I'm so fond of wearily saying, "I guess we'll find out"...

MOVIE NIGHT

THE A-TEAM

This 2010 movie version of the 80s tv series has, I think, fairly recently appeared on Netflix, and on a Sunday afternoon where I demurred at watching the Washington Commanders get trounced by the enemy (D*ll*s) I thought I'd give it a go.

At the time dear old Roger Ebert called this'un "an incomprehensible mess" and by just about any measure he's not wrong.

However...

O Gawd, erewego again, you're probably thinking, here's yet another fuckin' apologia for yet another fuckin' bog middling action movie ect ect blah, and of course in some ways - oh all right, in most ways - you might be correct.

However...

Chapter 1 is an origin story of sorts. Hannibal Smith (Liam Neeson) and Templeton Peck (Bradley Cooper) are on a mission in Mexico where both have been separately captured by the forces of rogue general Javier Tuco. Smith serendipitously runs into (fairly literally) former Army Ranger B.A. Baracus (Quinton Jackson), they rescue Peck and, needing a pilot, scoop up H.M. Murdock (Sharlto Copley) from a conveniently nearby medical hospital and have it away in a medical helicopter, dogfight with Tuco's chopper, luring him into US airspace where he's promptly shot down. The end. Of chapter 1.

Incidentally, it's this episode that's used to explain Baracus' previously nonexistent fear of flying.

Chapter 2. Jump ahead 8 years to Iraq - Smith and his loyal team (Baracus has presumably been reinstated into uniform in the interim) get recruited by a shady CIA agent ("Lynch") for a black op to recover some actual U.S. Treasury plates and a billion in cash out of Baghdad, rather than using the private security Black Forest team of Brock Pike (Brian Bloom). With me so far? The recovery is a success, but the A-Team get fucked over by Pike who destroys the dosh and nicks the (presumed destroyed) plates. The team is court-martialed and gets ten years each in separate supermax prisons. Peck's ex-bird Charissa Sosa (Jessica Biel) who was supposed to be in charge of the plates gets a demotion.



Chapter 3. Six months later "Lynch" visits Hannibal in nick to inform him that Pike is trying to flog off the plates, which Smith already knows about, and makes a deal for clean records and reinstatement for the team if he can be got out to get the plates back. So this next bit is the prison break section, acquiring Peck, Baracus and Murdock from their respective facilities. Despite vigorous pursuit, they (DoBFO) manage to get away. Incidentally, have you ever seen anyone fly an M8 light tank? Me neither, until now...

Chapter 4 - the actual mission. Turns out that the theft and subsequent attempted sale of the plates was co-ordinated by Pike, "Lynch" and Smith's former C.O. General Morrison

(who had faked his own death). Loads of action involving blowing up many, *many* (© Eileen Gunn) shipping containers and having to improvise when the original plan appears to go tits up. Our heroes, of course, prevail, the conspirators are revealed and Pike gets spirited off (presumably to a black site) by a different "Lynch" (an uncredited John Hamm).

Conclusion: far from getting their records scrubbed and reinstatement, the team is all rearrested for the prison escapes. Sosa, though, gets promoted back to captain and says she'll do what she can for the lads, which apparently includes snogging Peck. As they sit in the prison van, he opens his gob to reveal a handcuff key she's presumably passed to him in mid-snog, and we pan back to get the familiar voice-over from the tv series...

Post-credits scenes (which were incorporated into the movie itself in the extended version) feature cameos from both Dirk Benedict and Dwight Schultz. An aside from earlier: the prison break of Murdock involves the playing of a DVD movie called "The A-Team" to the psych ward inmates, and in the background you can see one of the cast members' names given as "Reginald Barclay". Well, I giggled. There's probably a couple of other easter eggs I missed an'all.

On the basis of the above, you could infer that this is a sort-of four episode story arc of the original series squeezed into 118 minutes, and that's a fair assessment. There's a lot of the humor of the original, mind, and unlike some commentators I thought that the characterizations were pretty spot-on.

Richard Corliss of *Time* opined that there's a lack of "a coherent plot and complex characterization" (I don't entirely agree) but correctly adding that any of that posh tosh is "irrelevant to the genre".

Thing is, I clocked all the typical "faults" of action movies as I was watching this'un, yet found it *hugely* entertaining, to the point that I'd happily rewatch it (and look out for more Easter eggs, I expect)...

TV GUIDE

PEACEMAKER

Oh Lordy, what a big ole brouhaha about *that* season ender, ey?...

Well, let's be fair to James Gunn and describe the reviews as "mixed", since I don't want to imply that everyone was slagging it off.

Jarrold Jones for *The AV Club* wrote:

With "Full Nelson", James Gunn provides closure while ripping open new rifts in the status quo, saving the best for last, and once again leaving us in his grip. This development will certainly suck for Chris. For us, his latest calamity is a promise: Peacemaker's story is far from over.

And here's Kendall Myers from *Collider*:

Peacemaker's season 2 conclusion is simultaneously emotional, terrifying, and outright strange, making the most of everything the series has to offer.



So it wasn't all WTF, but Scott Meslow at *Vulture* summed up what a lot of people were thinking:

...it's hard not to feel like this episode is an extended teaser for whatever Gunn is cooking up next.

Now I've enjoyed just about all the DC movie (and animated) output which more or less led in to 'Peacemaker' (eg 'Suicide Squad'), and when you're down in what's basically D-list "superheroes" it's a fun exploration of the arse end of the community which doesn't *always* include Booster Gold.

I like to think I'm well-versed in the lore and canon of DC, especially the "Timmverse" DCAU, and quirky (essentially "Elseworlds") entries like 'Batman: The Brave and the Bold' (2009-11) which was the light-hearted version of the Caped Crusader and had characterizations somewhat at odds with other versions eg Aquaman as a "hail-fellow-well-met" type. Returning to the ostensible topic of this here bit, James Gunn seems to have bought into the Grant Morrison look-how-fuckin'-clever-I-am ethos by digging out bits of DC history, in this case both the "Checkmate" organization (a new version thereof) and the "Salvation" planet, both of which, I'll admit, sent me off to Google...

Those two things are used by Gunn as setups for what's next, and I tend to find it a bit annoying that you have to watch *this* before you can properly follow *that*, which was also the case with 'Peacemaker' s2 itself, which refers back to events in the 2025 'Superman' movie, taking place shortly after it.

Jen had the major arse with the season ending, and I for one could appreciate that point of view to an extent. I'm sure a lot of other people shared it.

Side note: When Robert Patrick (who plays Peacemaker's nazi father in s1 in which he dies) got the call from James Gunn asking "Would you like to come back?", thought "How's he going to pull *that* off?" before accepting right away. The answer is, DoBFO, alternate universes. Try to stifle your yawns, it's actually pretty well done...

THE DIPLOMAT

The third season of this political thriller dropped on Netflix in its 8 episode entirety on October 16th. I reckon this must be the absolute best show of this type that I've ever clocked (and before I get showered with excoriation, I never saw a single episode of 'The West Wing', likely because it was on during several years in which I didn't have a telly - it isn't a big surprise, though, the 'Diplomat' creator and showrunner Debora Cahn began her writing career on that earlier show).

The first two seasons both featured *massive* cliffhanger endings, and this'un is no exception. The shenanigans leading up to that are again as frenetic as fuck. Yer basic premise from season 1 is that Kate Wyler (Keri Russell) is a career diplomat - and a very savvy one - appointed as US ambassador to the UK at a crisis moment, and there the frenzy begins...

Russell is expectedly fuckin'-A magnificent here, just as she was in 'The Americans' opposite Matthew Rhys (whom she also married at the time), and isn't any kind of pushover, although s3 has her chafing against additional restrictions - I'm being cagey there about giving anything away, especially for anyone who might want to binge this from the beginning.

As you'd expect, the ensemble are all well good, superb really, and as unfair as it always is to single actors out, you know I'm going to do that anyway: Ali Ahn as the CIA London Station Chief, Ato Essandoh as the ambassador's Deputy Chief of Mission, and particularly Rory Kinnear as the UK Prime Minister, a piece of work indeed. Oh, and Alison Janney as the VP *and* Celia Imrie as a former Conservative Party campaign manager and behind the scenes operator.

Highly recommended...

CODE OF SILENCE

A quick mention of this'un which is also well good, just out here on Britbox (and ITVX back in the UK). Rose Ayling-Ellis plays a deaf canteen worker recruited by the rozzers as a lip-reader. (For them as may not know, the actress is herself deaf.) It all goes a bit awry when she falls for the hacker recruited by the criminal gang. Eminently watchable...



RADIO WINSTON

BITS & BOBS

Shorts again, but not due to the expected slicing up (see 'Health Diary') but more due to me having been excessively fuckin' mokey for a large part of the month. Sorry about that...

To my great joy, primarily for the continued annoyance of **Leigh Edmonds** who is probably preemptively asleep already, I found that there's a *long* version of "Crimson and Clover" by Tommy James and the Shondells: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eGektsLxPA>

Ulrika O'Brien shared a link on FBF to what's allegedly the top 100 synthpop slices, which I observe embraces a remarkably broad definition of "synthpop". It does include a slice by Propaganda, though, 1985's "p:Machinery", and I'm sure you can well believe how hard it was for me to resist the temptation to link the 9+ minute extended version instead of this'un: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSf8cxID_eE

There's quite a lot of good stuff in the list, especially if you're a fan of Depeche Mode, and just within their entries you could argue all fuckin' night about the relative ranking of them, as indeed I did with the several entries for Erasure, although in my opinion they were so consistently good that it's not easy to separate their best stuff. I submit a fair dead heat between three of theirs here. "Oh L'Amour", "Sometimes" and the unutterably magnificent "Star", the latter of which didn't make the list...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEkhsxIFK7g>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1a8QABKNo0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU4xdsMbQ28>

I'm just going to lazily fill this'un out with some old favorites. Much too long ago to recall when I first discovered Mark Everett (Eels) - late 1990s I reckon. I certainly consider the 'Souljacker' set to be one of my favorite all-time albums. Even **Leigh** may be able to remain awake during the less than three minutes of "Rotten World Blues", shurely?...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDA11QLpSzM>

Here's another gobsmacking slice which isn't new, but only recently stumbled across by me from the Montreal indie outfit the Barr Brothers. "Half Crazy", chock full o' coo er gosh...

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

Anyway, let's finish up with a legit banger, The Hooters and the satirical gem "Satellite" from, oh gawd, 1987, really? Also one of the greatest videos ever...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVXjBMK3EKI>

GIVE US A CLUE

Lastish:

"Protection from fannish McVeigh's note, right? (6)"

Definition: Protection

Wordplay: "fannish McVeigh" = KEV + "note" = LA + "right" = R, yielding KEVLAR

"Eastern strategic cock-up Nic Farey is told to avoid (10)"

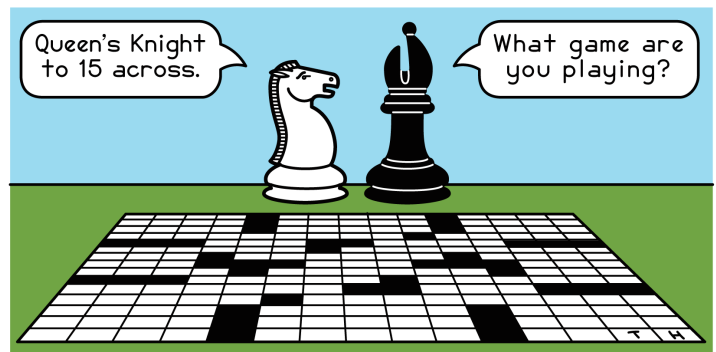
Definition: (something) Nic Farey is told to avoid

Wordplay: "cock-up" is the anagram indicator; E (Eastern) + "strategic" rearranges to CIGARETTES

"Nations rebel for a wanker (7)"

Definition: wanker

Wordplay: "rebel" is the anagram indicator; "Nations" rearranges to ONANIST



Alison Scott gets in first with 3/3. "Are they always this easy?", she asks, to which the answer is that they're certainly not often at expert level, but a means of having a little fun with fannish references - eg I was quite chuffed that the anagram of OCTOTHORPE included HOOPEER (issue #89), which impressed **Steve Jeffery**, for one...

Speaking of **Steve**, he's also mere hours later with his 3/3. Re: ONANIST, he says "I shall never think of the UN in the same light again".

"Clueless in Glen Ellen" (**Alan Rosenthal**) gets his 3/3 an'all. Also re: ONANIST, he recalls:

"Guess which passage I had to read for my Bar Mitzvah, in front of my entire family and a couple of hundred total strangers? Fortunately, no more than half of the family could understand Hebrew. It was from Genesis 38, Onan getting zapped for coitus interruptus with his brother's widow. What I remember is my granddad trying not to laugh out loud, and failing miserably..."

Only 1/3 for **Eli Cohen** which perhaps predictably is - er - ONANIST. Ahem. He writes:

"The first two seem to allude to obscure fannish references, about which I have no idea. Or maybe they have to do with some even more obscure British slang, like the last issue. "Matelot"? Really? (I confess I'd never heard the word; and Google says it comes from French! Reminds me that some of what I like about the early episodes of 'Death in Paradise' are the British vs. French arguments, like when Richard and Camille fight over "English Channel" vs. "La Manche".)"

I admit that the first solution requires knowledge of who "fannish McVeigh" is, but that didn't seem to hinder Clueless in Glen Ellen, did it? And to be an arse (who, me guv?) similar knowledge may be needed this month...

Thish's always easy (**Eli Cohen** falls off chair) slightly thematic efforts:

"About Weston, we heard he could fuck all night (8)"

"Also, Peyton in the dealers' room - why, with knowledge of indeterminate sex (11)"

"Censure Tori somehow for fucking a town in Pennsylvania (11)"

ANORAK

EVERYBODY DO THE...

September 27th marked the 200th anniversary of the first running of the Stephenson's Locomotion No. 1, and the first run on the Stockton-Darlington railway - although not strictly "first" since there'd been a trial run the day before



hauling railway directors in a coach dubbed "Experiment".

The "official" first run on the 27th hauled an unbelievably fuckin' monstrous set: eleven coal wagons, plus "Experiment" and another twenty passenger wagons. There'd been 300 tickets sold for the trip but contemporary

reports suggest that at least 450 people, possibly as many as 600 were on the ride, some of them perched on top of the loads of coal. Perhaps in part due to this mad overloading causing mechanical glitchery, it took about two hours to cover the first 8 miles of the journey (of about 26 total), but things picked up a bit and the eventual average speed was a sparkling 8mph with a top speed of 12.

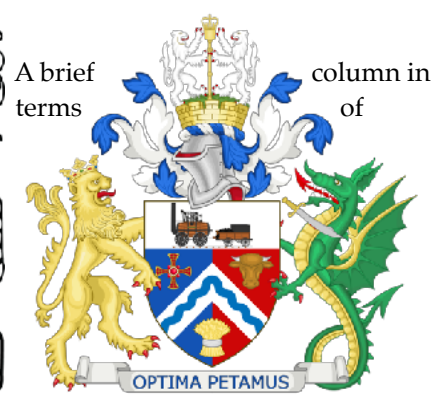
In honor of the 200th anniversary, the replica working Locomotion (built in 1975 for the 150th anniversary) was brought out for a run on the line. This was a three day event which ended up, appropriately, at Darlington and no doubt caused the more wide-eyed and maniacal anoraks to leave a trail of bodily fluids in its wake.



The original currently resides at the National Railway Museum's Sheldon outpost, having been moved there in 2021 after the expiration of the loan agreement whereby it was on display at Darlington's Head of Steam museum. Darlington residents got the arse over the move - the loco appears on their borough council coat of arms and the badge of the football club. In another almost-first, Locomotion No.1 was a very early preservation, in 1856 at a cost of £50.



wordage,
well good excuse for photos, innit?...



A brief
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THE OLD SOD

BY DAVID HODSON

Every so often, something drags me back to investigating the past.

Like most people, I suspect, I have a curiosity about where and who I came from and every now and again, on Facebook or some other social media website, some photos or a story will crop up that provide another set of clues to some conundrum or other that has previously stumped me.

A little over a week after I was born on April 8th, 1961 (It was a Saturday. I know this because of a “joke” my father shared at my expense one time: “David has been thrice worthless since the day he was born; he’s the eldest, and you didn’t get family allowance for the oldest back then, he was a week late being born and because of that I lost a whole year’s tax rebate, and he was born on the Saturday Spurs beat Chelsea 3-2, so I missed the match...” Some find it odd that we didn’t have a great relationship!), my parents (and I, surprisingly, considering my father’s attitude evidenced above) moved from Stamford Hill in North London to somewhere in Park Lane, Tottenham, which borders on one end of the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, and then, after my brother John was born in July 1962, to Church Road, Tottenham, just a mile or so North on the Tottenham High Road, part of the modern thoroughfare that now covers the old Roman road Ermine Street, from Stamford Hill. Probably much to my father’s annoyance, they moved into number 12 Church Road, just along from my maternal grandparents at number 28 Church Road, which, probably even more to my father’s annoyance at the time, is just opposite the Spurs ground on the West side of the High Road. Had they moved a week before I was born to either address, he could have probably fucked off to the match and left the midwives to deal with my mother’s labour and not even have been missed.

Shops on the south side of Church Road, late 1960s

The houses in Church Road were old Victorian houses, some



of which were large enough to have been turned into

tenements (these were the same design as a converted flat I lived in in Park Lane for a while), part of one of which my parents moved into, whilst most were still large for the time ex-farm worker’s cottages (Tottenham was mostly farm land even well into the industrial revolution). The part of the house my parents moved into was probably a short let from the local municipal borough of Tottenham because, in the mid-60s, probably just after the creation of the London Borough of Haringey from the amalgamation of the municipal boroughs of Tottenham, Wood Green, and Hornsey, my parents moved to a brand new flat (apartment for the lamb shanks in the audience) in The Weymarks in Weir Hall Road, Tottenham (just off of White Hart Lane, where Tottenham Hotspur don’t and never have resided, despite the stadium being traditionally called White Hart Lane), on the edge of what was once called “Little Russia”. It was probably a short let because most of Church Road, along with large parts of Stamford Hill, were due to be demolished as part of the post-war slum clearances. The piece of land behind my grandparent’s house at number 28 still had a crater where a WWII bomb supposedly dropped and, obviously I guess, didn’t explode and was used as a dumping ground by the local panel beaters for cars they couldn’t repair. There were reportedly a great many bomb sites around Tottenham, Stamford Hill, and the areas around the Hackney marshes because they were a lot of small manufacturing companies in the area making “things” for the war effort. Tottenham Hotspur football ground had a gas mask factory under one main stand and a bullet factory under the other, but only the gas mask factory has ever been officially acknowledged – official secrets and all that, old boy - although that didn’t stop my grandmother from explaining how she used to assemble bullets under that stand during the war and how she wished she’d had a rifle and one of those self-same bullets when she found out my grandfather had fathered a child with some “French tart” whilst working away from home as a fireman on the Southampton docks during the Nazi blitz.

My grandparents remained at number 28 for a couple of years longer until they, too, were moved to a new flat in Charles Bradlaugh House, Northumberland Park, which, on the one hand, pleased my grandfather because it was just a 5 minute walk from his allotments plot and his beloved rhubarb patch, but, on the other hand, disappointed him because he couldn’t take his pigeon loft in the backyard of Church Road with him, so he had to release all his pigeons into the wild. My grandmother hated Northumberland Park because she’d never lived in a block of flats before. By 1969, most of Church Road had been demolished and redeveloped with some pretty soulless and very quickly grotty blocks of flats.

Despite my short and probably very rose-tinted acquaintance with the old Church Road, I still hold its

memory with a lot of affection. I remember my grandparents had a photo album filled with tiny snapshots taken with an old 1950s Kodak Brownie 127 camera (it was the first camera I ever used) which showed my mother, my brother John, and I in the alleyway beside number 28, in the backyard with their Alsatian dog "Blackie" (he was black and tan with a white bib, but mostly black), and feeding the pigeons in the rickety wooden loft my grandfather had built in the backyard. The album vanished after my grandfather died and my aunt Joan cleared his house out; Joan was always a petty and spiteful bitch of a woman and felt her children weren't treated as favourably as my mother's and our other cousins were (it was a big family), but this was purely proximity; Joan had moved to Silvertown in East London when she got married and that seemed like a million miles away back then. There was probably also an element of mental health issues; we've realised since my niece's and her mother's (my sister) diagnoses of bipolar disorder that my rather volatile mother probably endured the same and that it probably also manifested in Joan. They could all have an argument with a mirror (Thank Gawd my grandmother didn't have that gun and that bullet mentioned above, I'm pretty sure she had bipolar as well; some of the arguments she had with people certainly indicated it). Needless to say, when a letter arrived one day in the 1970s at my grandparent's house from Joan telling them that her husband had been hitting her, the Ford Zephyr car (a sort of cut-down British version of those fancy 'Merican cars with fins and such) that sat outside their house and was only ever used for Sunday best, was fired up by my uncle Roy and the family transported to Silvertown for the Eastend version of a showdown (cue: The Electric Light Orchestra). Because I frequently stayed with my grandparents back then, I was taken along for the ride and witnessed my just into his seventies, tough as old fuckin' boots, still working as a roofer, grandfather clean his 40s-ish, soon not to be son-in-law's clock, so she certainly wasn't as ignored or sidelined as she thought and one of the photos she probably threw away, but would have wished she hadn't, was a beautiful summer's day colour snap of all four of her children sitting on the doorstep of 57 Risley Avenue, my grandparents last address, with myself, my brother John, and our other brothers Peter and Mark.

The reason my curiosity has been piqued again is down to a new batch of photographs of Church Road from the 1900s to the 1960s turning up on a Tottenham Facebook group page and one of my cousins commenting on them with information that I know to be completely wrong. He claims that our grandfather, Oliver Vandepeer, used to also be known as Clive, but I certainly never heard him called that and I'm two years older than my cousin and used to stay with my grandparents every weekend from the early sixties until the early seventies. No one else stayed there, they

didn't have the room. My grandfather did use a pseudonym, but that was George Edwards (Edward was his middle name) and was used to avoid paying the taxman any more than was necessary. He also says my grandmother's name was Kate, but she was actually Kathleen.

My cousin also claims that my grandparents drank in the Castle pub in Church Road, but again I never, ever saw this, and he would have been too young to actually witness it either. My grandfather would only ever drink shandy, and my grandmother never drank at all; she was an injecting diabetic who also had thyroid problems and rarely left the house in the last decade or so of her life. She died in 1976.

These aren't things I'm willing to risk getting into an argument about (I can't really be bothered getting into



arguments about much these days), but it's annoying and has sent me scurrying off looking stuff up, checking the available censuses, and arranging to look through the Tottenham and Wood Green Weekly Herald newspaper archives that are held at Bruce Castle Museum.

Why am I inflicting this on myself? It's not like I don't have plenty of other things to be doing and thinking about!

LOCO CITATO

*[[“There is nothing quite so terrifying as a mad sheep.”
(Claud Cockburn) ...]]*

From: richcoad@sonic.net

September 29

Rich Coad writes:

Thanks for sending *This Here...* which I really should have responded to before. (“Too fuckin’ right” says a toothless git in Vegas.) I really planned to write to you about issue 90, since you wrote in there about Pylon, one of my favorite bands from the period if only for the absolutely fabulous single “Cool”, which neither you nor Lucy rate amongst the very best of the late 70s, thus showing a disheartening lack of discernment. I still have the 10” 45 with a picture sleeve on the Armageddon label that features “Cool” and three other numbers. I see on the copyright that this was released in 1980 but that does not mean my disdain for 80s music is misplaced as obviously the band had been around since before the bad times came. They are also responsible for one of the best concerts I have ever seen and certainly the best at the I-Beam. Now, the I-Beam was primarily a gay disco on upper Haight Street in San Francisco. Once, at a suburban, well, Daly City, movie theater I had to stifle my laughter when the young woman in the seat behind told her companion that “Joey is taking me to the I-Beam next week. I swear, if it’s a gay place I will kill him.” but no reports of murder were made the next weekend. These girls were endlessly entertaining dropping such bon-mots as “a pound of muscle weighs more than a pound of fat” and “I can get my whole fist in my mouth”. I have no idea what the movie was but I remember them. The I-Beam also put on live music, increasingly so. Pylon sold the place out - it was basically a large dance floor on the second story of a commercial block. They had the crowd energized from the get go and by the time the rather hypnotic beat of “Cool” came on everybody was bouncing in unison. I’m still a bit surprised the floor didn’t give way.

As for religious music, I would point you to a lot of extremely good gospel. The young Elvis, in the movie of the same name, where the Peaky Blinders chap played the adult Elvis, had a good awakening when he snuck into the revival tent. I do believe that the music could do that. Norman Greenbaum I saw playing in the gymnasium of Saint Elizabeth’s High School, Fruitvale and E. 14th in East

Oakland, the bad part of town then. Don’t recall anything other than “Spirit In The Sky”. He lived in Sonoma County and, before the song was rediscovered and royalty checks started rolling in, was a cook at Jerome’s Hot Dogs in Cotati.

I’ve cut down on drinking although, when I have some good single malt scotch around, a whisky or two every evening does seem to happen until the bottle is empty.

[[I’ve got a couple of bottles you really need to come over and empty, since I don’t drink scotch...]]

I don’t very often have beer around at home but I do enjoy our monthly get togethers at the Henhouse Record Party (where the bartender will play your very own records if you bring them in and ask politely). Henhouse makes very good hoppy IPAs, still my favorite style of beer, and has a series of conspiracy named labels with an explanation of the conspiracy that invariably begins with “As we all know...”

I hope both of your surgeries go smoothly and recoveries are fast and easy. I go for my annual Medicare checkup tomorrow where I will be told to try and lose weight (I do, but evidently not hard enough) and get a colonoscopy next year. Not looking forward to that latter but it beats undiagnosed colon cancer. That should be all since I don’t think much has changed in the last year.

[[I did mine using the Cologuard (shit in a bucket) kit last year...]]

‘Anorak’ was, well, anorak-y.

I find myself outside of the fannish mainstream when it comes to movies and TV these days. I’m enjoying a couple of Japanese anime that nobody else seems to care about; a Russian series about hikers killed in the Urals was pretty good. I have

zero interest anymore in any “franchise” movies, except possibly the Japanese ‘Baby Cart’ series. Tried a bit of ‘Wednesday 2’ and ‘Alien Earth’ and got bored. Tonight, for Silent Movie Day, we will watch Douglas Fairbanks in “The Black Pirate”. I was thinking of going to see “One Battle After Another” since it is based on Pynchon’s “Vineland” but it’s nearly 3 hours long. I went to see “The Brutalist” which was that long and was really ready for it to end sooner than it did. I can do a 3 hour opera but like my movies under 110 minutes .

[[Not many of those these days...]]

Too bad I didn’t know about **David Hodson’s** discovery of cod-eating Anglo-Saxons when at the Newbury Corflu. Stacy, my wife, was an archeology student specializing in identifying fish bones from midden heaps. I’m sure she’d be interested in David’s evidence.



From: portablezine@gmail.com

October 1

W^m Breiding writes:

I was quite taken by The Call in the 80s. It never occurred to me that they were a Christian Rock band. But thinking on some of their lyrics I can see it. My friend Jeff (RIP), who was frequently amused by my fervent search for obscure indie pop bands (before that was a category), would frequently make fun of Been's vocals as they could get a bit histrionic, but that was why I liked them - and the atmospheric pictures the band painted. I suppose they might have fit into a category of band that I made up, Cry Baby Rockers, who were mostly British and whom I alternately called Wavin' Whiners. Michael Been's son Robert went on to form a band in the early Aughts called Black Rebel Motorcycle Club which I did not like. I mean come on, with a name like that? Gimme Pylon, dude!

I can't say you are positively correct about UK bands not doing the Christian thing. Both Bono from U2 and Mike Scott of the Waterboys were flaunting their love fest with Christ in the early days of their careers. And what do you think U2's "With or Without You" might be about, eh? Mike Scott was a bit more Celtic in his reverence, but if there was anyone more hungry for God than Mike Scott in the Pop Scene I can not think of them, with the exception of Sam, *nee*, Leslie Phillips, but she don't count being a former actual Christian Pop singer.

[[I'd say "flaunting" is overstating things a bit. Interestingly, Jen's UK editor at one of the Christian fiction houses she wrote for cautioned against overt worshipping for the British market, noting that it didn't go down well. And of course, as any fule kno, U2's "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" is about failing to find a Xmas present for Bono's mum...]]

Mark Nelson's riff on Heath Row was amusing. But I have to say Mark missed the obvious: Heath is feeding all his apas and fanzines to an AI, giving samples of idiosyncratic prose stylings, and letting it have at it. However, Heath does exist. Attached, Heath and Caitlin on June 1st of this year in Albuquerque on their way to Wisconsin.

[[Photo atop next column...]]

I've been toned down in my loccking of late. Is it ennui, angst or weltshmerz? Only Mike Scott and Bono know for sure.

The both of y'all stay healthy so's we can see you at Corflu!

[[Very much looking forward to that...]]



From: Alison@kittywompus.com

October 2

Alison Scott writes:

I am, as you know Nic, the very soul of reasonableness.

I was on a token controlled regular line quite recently – to Falmouth, and you see them a lot on heritage railways. (I am not all that keen on heritage railways, but they are beloved of morris dancers including the Chingford Morris Men who I play for).

The business of travelling around a large city (as mentioned by **Gary Mattingly**) has been facilitated for me by the provision of the not-so-snappily named 60+ London Oyster Photocard. I do not really like being over 60 – in my head I am about 24 – but this is a solid upside, providing free travel on London buses, tubes, trains, trams, overground, and DLR. So some journeys are long, complicated, or both, but free is a powerful incentive and I can read a book. I really need one of those world scratch off maps but for all the various bits of London.

[[Definitely one of the solid advantages of the UK...]]

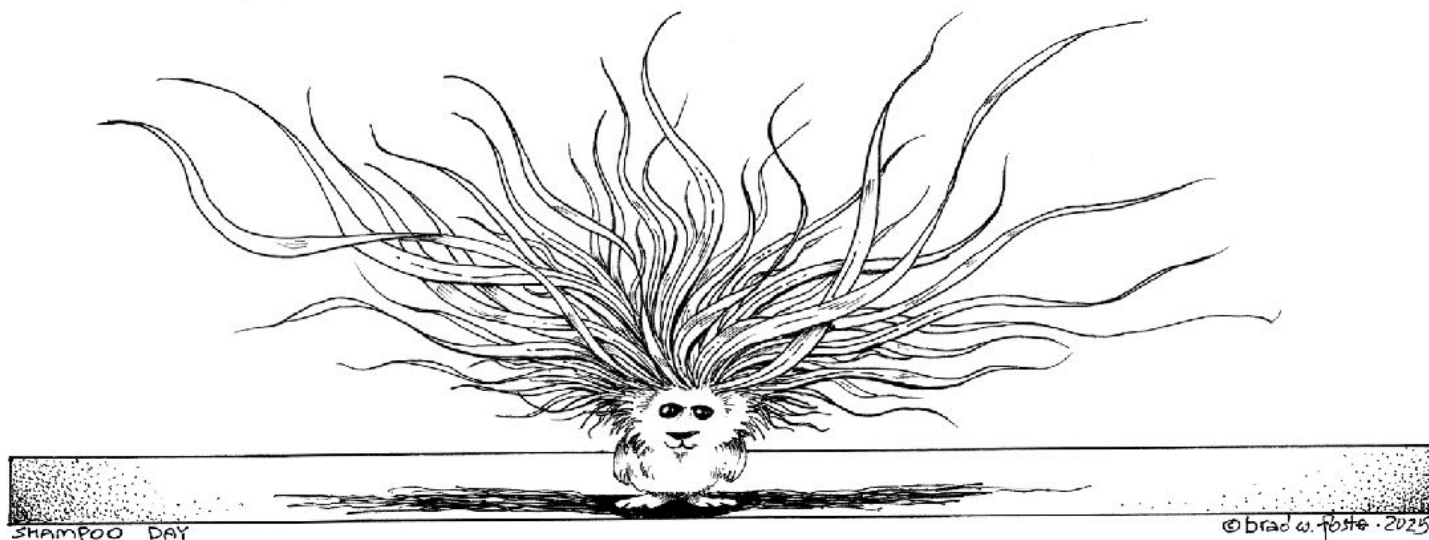
From: srjeffery@aol.com

October 2

Steve Jeffery writes:

In 'Health Diary' you encouragingly wrote "also got me the observation that if a serious problem had been clocked I'd be on my way to hospital rather than getting to go home..."

Encouraging because I've just come back from a walk across the canal and footpath to that there Yarnton (our nearest neighbour village) for an ECG and blood draw as a follow up from following being sent home from a routine check a couple of weeks ago with a box of blood pressure pills and a dinky pump and sleeve gadget to take my blood pressures twice day for the next fortnight.



Encouraging because after being hooked up to the Machine that Goes Ping (or possibly Beep) and relieved of not even barely an armful of the red stuff (I didn't even cry or faint, honest. I am so brave) the nice tech didn't flinch when I mentioned going off to explore a different footpath for the walk home.

No idea what the ECG results were because I was lying down staring up at the dead flies in the light fixture and attached to more cables than those spilling out the back of my PC. At least it didn't make that continuous high pitched beeeeeep that has people rushing into the room in medical dramas like Casualty (or a detective procedural where someone come in and smothers off the last remaining witness.)

A follow-up email a few hours later mentions making a routine appointment with my GP to follow up my ECG result. I liked the sound of that "routine", rather than "urgently", or "lie down immediately and wait for the ambulance to arrive".

[[As you would...]]

Which, given the current state of the NHS, might be any time in the next fortnight.

I don't like old. It hurts, or at any rate aches, most of the time. But I suspect my fault for 40 years of ciggies.

[[Over 50 for me and still puffing, even as I write this...]]

Shame to lose Rick Davies. I saw Supertramp at Reading Uni in, um, possibly 74 or 75, on the tour after the release of 'Crime of the Century' when doing the college circuit was still a thing for up and coming bands. It's still a good album.

The Christian Rock band I remember was Out of Darkness, who I must have seen when I was still at school, with a very Hendrix inspired guitarist.

(I have a vague memory that Badger, the band formed by Tony Kaye after Rick Wakeman stepped into his keyboard slot in Yes, was a sort of Christian rock band.)

The other band from my schooldays were the very Genesis prog inspired Sindelfingen which featured a couple of classmates and made one privately pressed lp, 'Odgipig' (astonishingly available on CD and even YouTube). Unfortunately the original issue didn't include their 15 minute live closer "The Princess and the Predator".

And now I've found Sindelfingen's The Princess and the Predator on a YouTube mix (the track was included as a bonus on the extended reissue CD), along with Porcupine Tree, who get sf fan credits for from Suzanne Barbieri's hubby Richard (ex Japan) on keyboards.

I did have the first Badger album on vinyl many years back, which had a cute Roger Dean cover painting of a couple of said creatures (though whether they were "steenkin' badgers" or not was not mentioned.)

I'm wondering how many electrical engineers are in *This Here...*'s readership and got to your description of the block working token method in 'Anorak' and recognised it as a precursor version of the LOTO (Lock out Tag Out) safety system when working with electrical and powered equipment. (Fresh in memory because I've just had to refresher training on this). It's a very similar principle, where the token in this case is a lock and key system (or multiple locks and keys if a group of engineers are all working on the same piece of equipment) and which cannot be released back for use until everyone has finished their work and removed their locks so the machine can be restarted.

[[I remember it well from my days working construction on some of the larger projects...]]

The idea, of course, is that each key is the personal possession of the engineer and remains with them, and

only with them, though the whole course of the work. (Yes, there's a huge amount of training and trust in this, usually backed up by severe sanctions.) There are systems for shift changes where the new people put their locks on *before* the outgoing shift remove theirs. (If you remember that playground game where a group of people put their hands on top of each others in turn until they run out of hands, and the person whose hand is at the bottom takes it away and puts it on top. [Does it even have a name?]) Anyway, it's a bit like that. And there are contingencies for cases when Fred is called away for an emergency or falls sick (short of wheeling his hospital bed into the plant room).

[[The game is apparently just called "hand stacking"...]]

But the principle is the same. The person who holds the last lock and key to be released is in full control and nothing happens until they are finished and remove their lock on the system. And even a quarter way into the 21st century, where there is a mobile phone app for everything*, this physical lock and key and tag system is still the safest and best one in use.

(* don't get me started on mobile app bus tickets, where you have to wait five minutes at each stop when some numpty tries every combination on their phone try and to pay for a ticket because they have forgotten what a pound coin (or even a debit card) looks like and nobody can calculate small change any more.)

From: jakaufman@aol.com

October 9

Jerry Kaufman writes:

I haven't got a lot to say this month, but did find some grist for the grindstone that is my mind. Your piece, with **Peter Honey**, on railway tokens, was pretty interesting. I've never considered the problems of single track railways that go through tunnels. I wonder if the same system is used in the US. That's something I will have to look up later.

[[I believe the token system is still widely used in Australia, for one...]]

I liked the **Teddy Harvia** and **Brad Foster** art, especially the Foster piece on page 11 of the mountain goats on the tall rock spire and its call-back to *White Heat*, possibly Cagney's best movie.

In my letter, I thanked you for reminding me of Pylon's existence. Not long after I wrote that, I stopped into our local book and record store, Hex Enduction (I have no idea why it's called that) and found a copy of Pylon's album *Gyrate*. I've played it once, and was plunged back into my CBGB days when this was the sort of raw, rough, and rhythmic music I went there to hear.

From: fabficbks@aol.com

October 12

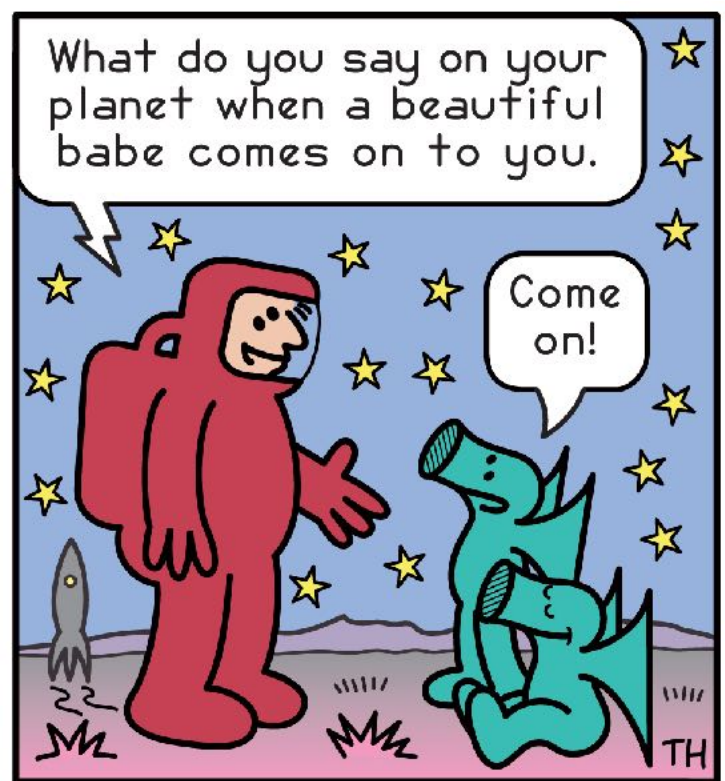
Bob Jennings writes:

Received *This Here...* #91 a couple of weeks ago, but I just got around to reading it today, and that I would shoot off a few random comments.

I think the reason I have been delaying reading your recent zines and not writing many comments these days is because most of your issues deal with current media, specifically current TV, plus streaming services that offer relatively new movies, plus discussions about musical groups and performers that I am generally not familiar with. I hardly ever watch television these days, and altho I do watch movies of assorted kinds, I don't generally keep up with the current or even nearly current flow of releases. This, of course, puts me at odds with most of current fandom, which seems to obsess about media, particularly visual media, and it also puts me on the fringes of being able to comment about most of the material that *This Here...* has been carrying of late.

[[Also, however, the likes of Perry Middlemiss and Gary Mattingly often seem to be clocking movies that are scores if not actually hundreds of years old. Admittedly I'm not usually that retrospective, but I will clock "older" movies from time to time (for certain values of...) eg 'V For Vendetta' recently...]]

Your editorial comments about momentary sadness may well just be a general symptom of Getting Old. Looking back at a long life, and seeing any number of things currently



happening that you don't approve of or agree with, things you also can't change, certainly can create lingering morose emotions. Objectively speaking, there probably never have been any Good Old Days, but sometimes it seems like the current set of problems, amplified by much better news coverage now than ever before, make even chaotic events of a few decades ago look pretty good by comparison.

[[I suspect it's also seasonal...]]

Count your blessings. Compared to a great number of people elsewhere on this planet, or a great number of people right here in this country, you are doing pretty well. Good things in your life easily offset the bad stuff, and if you get a few moments of extreme sadness, savor the experience because your few moments of sadness are just that, momentary; unlike other people in other places.

I hope by now your surgery has come and gone successfully. Medical problems are an aggravating part of life, another problem with Getting Old. It looks like you have pretty good care givers helping you out, and so far you have successfully negotiated a whole bunch of problems. I'm with you on seriously investigating the situation before adding more medications to the mix currently being taken.

I only take three medications myself, but doctors occasionally suggest changes, and I like to know exactly why and what the results are expected to be before making any changes. Sometimes changes are for the better. A medication a few years ago that was supposed to help my high blood pressure problem made me extremely tired with feelings of extreme vertigo when I stood up suddenly. I decided that knocking off twenty five pounds would be a better help with the high blood pressure, and it was. When my doctor and I discussed the situation later he changed me to a different medication that eliminated the fatigue and vertigo problems completely.

[[I tend to just deal with side effects, although none so serious as those. Jen has a regime of lots of meds, I'm only on the one for the leukemia, but also a 90-day course of terbinafine for grotty feet which I'm almost done with...]]

I tried to read your article on railway tokens and the problems with single track tunnels in the UK, with the assorted problems created over the years. Railway buffs

were undoubtedly fascinated, and I really tried to follow everything, but my eyes sort of glazed over and I found I was missing entire paragraphs, then half a page of text, so I gave up. Railroad nostalgia is not my thing.

[[I bet you don't even own a proper anorak, do you?...]]

David Hodson's column covered several different subjects all at once. I think the desire to Publish Something is a near universal ambition of most stf fans. The ambition, of course, is not to publish something in learned journals, or newspapers, or general circulation magazines (back when general circulation magazines actually existed). No, the desire is to publish Fiction, specifically science fiction or fantasy fiction, presented in one of the recognized publications devoted to stf fiction (back when they still existed), or even better, in B*O*O*K format!.

This dream rarely becomes reality because writing fiction is notably different from writing articles, or writing opinion, or even writing humor. In addition to having something resembling an interesting plot with recognized linear development, fiction has to introduce interesting characters, interesting situations, and the story has to be told in a way that will keep the reader engaged from the first sentence to the last.

This is beyond the ability of most fans, altho it certainly hasn't stopped most fans from trying. Most people give up after a dozen or so tries, after being rejected every time, but some keep at it anyway. The internet and the ability to self-publish in pixel format, plus platforms that will allow them to sell their efforts has meant that a fair

number of really putrid authors have managed to turn out lots of books that nobody wants to read, stories that are critically savaged, works that never sell, yet the pixel format allows these people to keep on producing drivel anyway.

I have also long held a theory that most published writers of fiction (not all, but most) write themselves out after three or four years. They have exhausted their reservoir of interesting ideas and plots and having said what they wanted to say, they wander back into their mundane lives having being Successful for a short, but significant period of time. Yeah, there are people like Stephen King, Agatha Christie, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and others who can turn the fiction spigot on and keep it running for



years and years. But I suggest that these people are the exceptions, not the rule.

[[Erle Stanley Gardner...]]

For most writers, getting their stories into print professionally is the ultimate thrill. It would be nice if they actually made some money out of the process, but I think for most, just getting their material Out There, being Professionally Published is the major accomplishment, and it certainly has bragging rights within the hobby. Unfortunately these days it is even more difficult to get professionally published than ever before. Most of the fiction magazines are dead or dying, on-line fiction mags have limited readerships, and most pay not much money for the stuff they do turn out. The competition to become a published writher is even more ferocious now than ever before because of the declining market, plus the much larger base of wannabe authors trying to compete in the same genre.

But none of this makes the Urge to Publish any less intense, and I'm sure the number of people who will try to write fiction and break into the market is not going to decline in the future.

Good Heavens! I hope Mr. **Hodson** lives in a secure, gated community with competent security guards after posting this bon-mot: "At least I won't be producing gooey eyed pictures of cats; I detest the little fuckers!" Anti-feline sentiment in science fiction fandom! This heresy will not go unpunished!

[[I'm much more of a doggo person meself an'all...]]

Great names for rock bands? The more obtuse the better. How about The Zucchini Whisperers, or The Thin Veneer Pizza Blasters, or The Avalanche Warblers, or The Color Coordinated Condoms. All probably too tame for today's hard rockers.

From: jabberwocky2000@hotmail.com

October 13

Brad Foster writes:

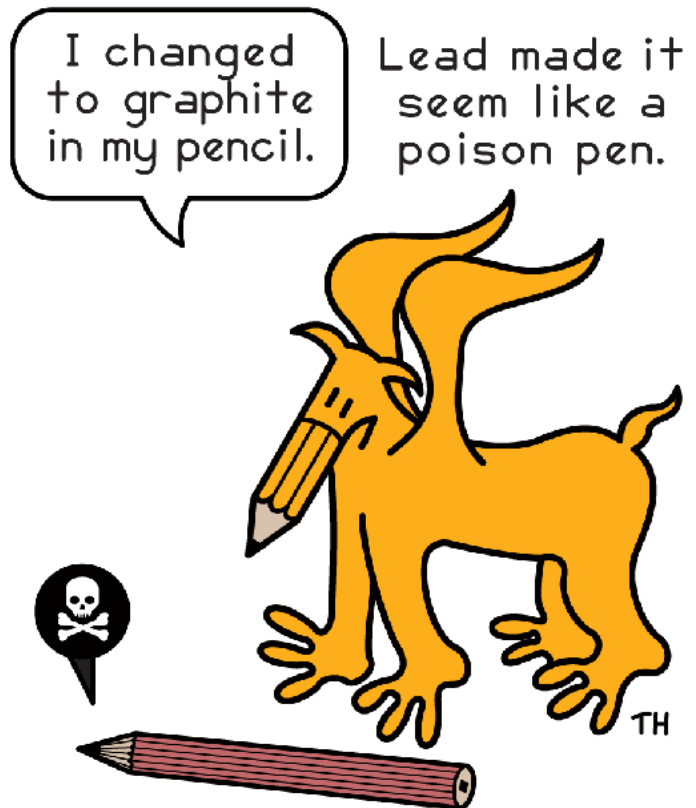
Issue number 91 has digitally arrived. Closing in on the momentous issue 100, making any big plans for that? Maybe a four hundred page physically printed zine with holographic cover and accompanying audio track to all text read in the voice of Don "In A World..." LaFontaine.

I just toss that out as a suggestion....

[[I have also tossed that suggestion out. Please do not confuse me with C Garcia...]]

Three fillos attached to replace the three you used this time. (Well, you used four, but the Bug on p19 was originally seen back in issue #89, not sure how it managed to sneak into a new issue. Bugs though, they do get around despite our best

efforts.) I do appreciate you giving the long tall one a nice showing on the page. This time there is not only another tall thing one, but a long horizontal piece as well. Been playing more with odd sizes on some of these little toons recently, going to see just how long and thin, or tall and thin, I can ultimately get.



I do not think I personally have had any **Mattingly** Moments of overwhelming sadness, my natural inclination to find the humor in things, plus being kind of slow to pick up on what is actually happening around me, seems to be a sufficient barrier to getting -too- sad at times. Also trying to step away from following the never-ending onslaught of madness coming from the Trump administration day by day helps. What a shit show.

You have two heartbeats? Okay, you might be taking this science fiction fan thing a bit too far if you are altering your physical being just to be more skiffy!

Looks like by the time you get this you might either have already had your surgery, are just about to have your surgery, or are still working to figure out when the hell they are going to schedule your surgery. So, depending on the case, hope things went/go well.

Not seen the new Superman yet, have friends with all the streaming stuff set up, so expecting to do our monthly visit and see it then. Have seen such wide range of views, from love to hate, that can go in pretty much with no expectations and see how it works out for us.

Just wrapped up the last of those six-in-a-row events I mentioned in my last loc, so nice to -not- have to be getting ready for yet another one this next weekend. Some shows did well sales-wise, others not quite so much. But, overall, bit of a profit to add to the coffers after a long dry year, and had fun at each and every one with the various, comic, sf, music, or fine arts folks who showed up. (The Denton Arts & Jazz Festival is always one of my favorites. I don't get to all of the music since working my own area there, but do try. This year most fun was the wonderful your orchestral jazz group, and some ladies skipping around a stage for a while that reminded me of the "One Grecian urn, two Grecian urns..." scene from 'The Music Man' movie.) But definitely worn out, now back to trying to catch up on mail and promised projects, and get some new art done!

Regarding **Leigh Edmonds'** comments about trying to find, let alone understand, the instructions on how to run a modern television: I have found YouTube an excellent source for "how do I actually DO anything with this new electronic doo-hickey I just acquired" type questions. Can type in the name and model number, and will often find dozens of helpful videos from folks taking you step by step through whatever might need to be done. Might take a little searching to find just the right one for my specific question, but usually always very helpful, much more than the weird "manuals" these days.

[[He's undoubtedly slept through them all...]]

I feel like I have failed a trivia context after reading all of those lines on **Teddy Harvia's** cartoon on page 16. The first is clearly riffing on Star Wars, which implies that all of the others are doing the same from famous movies/books/whatnot... yet I was unable to identify any others. I fear I will now be kept back another year in "Understanding Parody School". Bummer.

And with that, so long until next time!

From: gsmattingly@yahoo.com

October 19

Gary Mattingly writes:

'Egotorial': A "Mattingly Moment"? Hmm . . . Yes, sometimes there seems to be so many things that aren't good out there that it becomes a bit overwhelming. I think that is why I frequently turn to the various Facebook reels with dogs, bats, cats, possums, jumping spiders, etc. I need to go hiking more with the dogs, maybe. I'm glad you can maintain a sliver of optimism. With respect to forgetfulness, I frequently find myself repeating things over and over that I have to remember, in between leaving home and returning home. This relates, more often than not, to things I think of or remember that I need or need to do, that come to mind in

that meditative state encountered when walking the dogs. This happens with some frequency. If I don't remember when I get back, days may pass before I go, oh yeah, I need to do that.

'Corflux': Well, I actually finally bought a membership and reserved a room for Santa Rosa. Now if we could also get **Jay Kinney** to show up. . . . I may try to go to the wine tasting on Thursday morning, although I am not enthusiastic about having to stay Wednesday night in order to go to it. I also just found out that Energize Hot Yoga is 2 min (0.3 mi) away from the hotel. They have hot Pilates and hot Yoga. I have looked online but cannot immediately find any strictly vegetarian/vegan restaurants in Santa Rosa, although there are a number that have veg options. Abyssinia restaurant looks interesting. It seems to be one mile away from the hotel.

[[Personally I would love to see Jay, and I hope he manages a look-in...]]

'Health Diary': Good luck with the operations and the various doctors. I do believe you've held a job with one company longer than me. I think my longest is just under ten years. Most of my electrical engineering jobs were under five years. However, this isn't particularly uncommon in silicon valley. Want a bigger raise? Find a new employer. Relative to your doctor rant, I do think a doctor can give very good advice even though they don't follow their own advice. Well, you certainly are being thoroughly tested and prescribed. I'm currently just trying to get my yearly eye exam by the ophthalmologist that I prefer. Unfortunately, she seems to be preferred by many because it is really hard to get an appointment. Plus, I have to remember (remember that forgetfulness thing) to call early on Monday mornings to try to get the appointment because that is the one day of the week when her schedule gets updated and another week is opened up. It is a small window. I just have to keep remembering and keep trying.

As I probably have noted numerous times, I don't drink that much alcohol anymore, other than a few times a year (like that wine tasting thing noted above). I suppose what I should cut down is carbonated beverages. Even without sugar, they seem to be bad for you. Now if I could also make my desire for things with sugar in them, like cookies, ice cream, etc. go away . . . I don't indulge a lot, but, unfortunately, I do more often than I like.

'Movie Night': I think I have all of the Star Wars movies and I also believe I have seen them all. I can't recall re-watching any of them. Maybe some day.

I cannot immediately find anything to disagree with relative to your review of Superman.

TV Guide: Haven't seen 'Family Law'. I did watch all 16 episodes of 'Extraordinary Attorney Woo', a Korean series on Netflix, which I enjoyed. There are a number of likable

characters. Unfortunately, season 2 seems to be in question. The leading actress, who plays an autistic lawyer seemingly has indicated no desire to continue in the role. She is not autistic, but I thought she was very good. Admittedly, I cannot think of anyone I know that is autistic, so I have little exposure in that area.

[[You continue to be more esoteric than me...]]

'Radio Winston': I have the 'Red Moon' album by the Call. I don't recall knowing that they were a Christian band. I have the 'Much Afraid' album by Jars of Clay but vaguely remember knowing they were a Christian band. I wondered about Counting Crows, but they're not. Adam Duritz, the lead singer, is Jewish, and I guess some lyrics may make a vague allusion to religion. I have their 'August and Everything After' album. I like a lot of it.

"Round Here" by Counting Crows

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xS8t4J3_Dc&list=PLNPGM2D7aODeO2EBAT2yHtdVgGZH6GKSU&index=1

"My Life Started Today" by Claudia Brücken is all right, but I don't like it enough to run out and buy her music.

Similar response to "No One Knows" by Bad Camper.

'Anorak': Interesting. I didn't know about tokens. (of course, there is a huge amount I don't know about trains, so . . .). Scanners are used by today's train systems. Then it is all connected to a computer system, which would deal with things appropriately. Of course, if there was a power outage and no backup power, that could be a problem. If the scanner is broken, another problem.

[[As far as I can tell the token system hasn't seen much if any use on US railways at all...]]

"RFID tags: Each railcar is equipped with an RFID tag that contains its unique identification number.

Trackside scanners: As trains pass, scanners installed along the tracks read the RFID tags in real-time.

Automatic tracking: This information is transmitted to a central system, creating a log of when and where each car was located without manual intervention."

"RFID tags are used extensively throughout the rail system for safety, tracking, and Positive Train Control (PTC)."

Further investigation:

"Computerized control systems: Modern,

heavily used single lines are often controlled from a central location, like a control room.

Operators use systems that break the line into blocks, each protected by signals at either end.

These systems use track circuits and other sensors to monitor each block and ensure that signals display a "stop" or "slow" indication if a train is present.

Track circuits: This is a fundamental method for detecting trains.

The two rails of a track section form an electrical circuit. When a train's wheels and axle connect the rails, it completes the circuit.

Electronic equipment monitors this circuit and detects the presence of a train when the circuit is completed.

More advanced systems use alternating current (AC) frequencies that are coded to provide more information and prevent false readings."

'The Old Sod': Other than publishing fmz, I've never felt the urge to publish a book or something similar. I never thought my writing capabilities were particularly marvelous and I

don't think any of my English teachers thought that. Now I was more often than not in advanced English classes, but that doesn't necessarily mean I could write anything that someone would buy. Good luck on your efforts. Oh yeah, the other thing is that I probably don't have the willpower to actually track down all the information necessary for a book nor the willpower to actually complete it. Hm, I probably have studied more South African history from around the time the Portuguese got there to the Boer War than anyone who wasn't actually pursuing a history degree concentrating on that area and that period. I never felt the urge to publish anything on the topic, other than a paper at the end of the semester that I was studying it (independent study. I was the only person in the class studying that topic. This was in high school in the US). The paper wasn't totally required, just desired by the instructor. The independent study class was invitational only and everyone automatically got an A. However, I did create a computer program with questions and multiple-choice answers about South African history. My chemistry professor found my study interesting and allowed me to use the one terminal he had in class to create it. It was actually connected to the school district's central computer. This was back in 1969 or 1970.



[[It's possibly interesting to note that just about everybody in our local Writers' Group now has an ongoing book project underway, except me, although I suppose The Novel™ that I've had on the back burner for decades might count for something. Everyone's also aware, though, that I write a few thousand words a month for this here bloat of hippos at the very least. I try to write every day - latterly I've been slacking a bit...]]

'Loco Citato':

Dave Cockfield - Thinking about AI, I more often than not think about the huge data centers and power needed for said data centers. Bit of a problem . . .

Leigh Edmonds - Thanks for the 19-Twenty information. I hadn't heard them before.

Gary Mattingly - Well, after the lump surgery I went back to bikram and pilates classes. Seemingly no problems due to the surgery. Unfortunately, some idiot ran into the front of the yoga studio last week that I usually go to, so now I have to totally reschedule my classes at the three other studios associated with the local one. They are all in different nearby cities but still, a pain. Of course, it was no doubt a bigger pain to the manager of the local studio who was injured when the car hit the building and had to go to the hospital. Looks like the local studio won't open until sometime (nobody seems to know) in November. I have heard that the owner of the building isn't exactly quick to fix things.

'Indulge Me': Hab keine Angst.

Enjoyable artwork by **Brad W Foster**, **Teddy Harvia**, **Lucy Huntzinger**, and **Ulrika O'Brien**.

From: kevinwilliams48@googlemail.com

October 20

Kev Williams writes:

The thing I like about your *TH*... is its great real world variety of topics! I've never been a truly fannish fan and so these wide ranging pieces of real world stuff appeals to me. I, like you I suspect, have too broad a range of interests, so there never seems enough time to keep up! So here goes:

[[I do appreciate that observation mate! It might well look like the proverbial dog's breakfast in here to some, but yeah it reflects a range of interests which inevitably will include stuff that not everybody's into eg trains, crossword clues. There's arguments to be made (possibly in some future 'Omphaloskepsis' column) over whether having a range of topics is objectively "better" than a tighter focus...]]

The **Mattingly** moment: Being essentially a very optimistic person I do occasionally have such a moment and I have learned to stop myself to think about why it should be like that. What's happened to make me feel that way and

generally I can think of something and shake myself out of it.

When it comes to the mess that is the world, we none of us are immune to doom scrolling, but I prefer mine with facts and not fake, prejudicial bollocks. For me, that means daily doses of the *Guardian*. It is left leaning and liberal but it is pathologically fact based with great commentary and some terrific tongue in cheek observations by the like of John Crace. When I lived in the US in the early 90s pre-digital days, a paper copy of what was then called the Manchester Guardian would land on my welcome mat every month and reconnect me to reality. It was a collection of editorials, major commentaries and key world news headlines for that period. There is (I just checked) a Guardian US edition.

[[I too peruse that venerable organ on a daily basis...]]

It's good to hear your very comprehensive heart health test has turned out very well. I'm fortunate not having had any concerns in that department, but last May when up in Shropshire hiking, one of my pals dropped dead with no prior warning. It was an Atheroma – one of those things where arterial deposits breaks off and stops your heart. Enough to scare anybody witless. I do a lot of hiking and consider myself reasonably fit, but like you I've now booked a full cardiology assessment particularly looking at arterial health.

Your 'Radio Winston' column made me think about all of these heroes of ours that are passing away being in their late 70s to mid 80s. I try hard to keep up with current music, but find myself going back and playing the old stuff. This week we went to see the Van Morrison Alumni band. Led by Leo Green (sax) the line-up includes four other significant alumni, who together have played nearly a thousand gigs with Van. The old grump himself approves ("these songs are meant to be heard, and I'm glad Leo is carrying the torch"). It's an exceptional back-catalog, the band were tight and expert and do it well. Jo Harmon and Hayley Sanderson on vocal duties do their best and it works well on a slow version of "Brown eyed girl", on the ballads and uptempo numbers. But the great transcendent songs which Van magically growls and mumbles through ("Into the Mystic", "Listen to the Lion", "St Dominic's Preview") are his territory alone. Good gig, though poorly attended.

Another interesting wrinkle of the struggles of current musicians. Sunderland's great indie band, Field Music (if you don't know them - check them out - think a kind of herky-jerky mix of Steely Dan and Talking Heads) whom I've followed since they started, after 20 years and a Mercury Prize nomination, are struggling to make ends meet. They've come up with a very inventive solution - forming a Doors tribute band (the Fire Doors). They're big fans and apparently do a great gig. They're loving it and selling out far bigger arena and more gigs than they do as Field Music -

while feeding their own skills and creativity in the process, and promoting their own stuff, and getting solvent.

[[I did in fact read about them in the Grauniad a couple months back...]]

WAHF

Gloria Lucia Albasi : (Referring, presumably, to the email cover quote) : "Except perhaps a Mad Bunny? Great zine. Thanks so much for sending it!" ; **Bill Burns** ; **Perry Middlemiss** : "You will, no doubt, have noticed my absence from the fan publishing ranks of late. I've decided to take a little break. It was all becoming too much of a grind and not a lot of fun, so I figured to opt out for a while. I'm off to South America this coming Saturday for 5 weeks so that should keep me busy." ; **George Phillies** : "Another remarkably different issue" *[[Wot do he mean ey?...]]* ; **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** ;

FANZINES RECEIVED

With the usual thanks, and an attempted modicum of comment...

MURDEROUS INK PRESS NEWSLETTER 2.5 (Chuck Connor) - "Interim with updates" it sez here...

THE STF AMATEUR #25 (Heath Row) - Only two more of these to come, according to the editor. "In 2026, I'll find another way to pester you!"...

THE OBDURATE EYE #56 (Garth Spencer) - Leading with a fine editorial about civil (and "civilian") discourse. Go read it. Oddly missing last letters of words and names throughout the ish - capsule zine reviews in which I am described as "growing old ungracefully" (shan't argue) and that John Thiel "consistently omits the mailing address" in *Pablo Lennis*...

TWO CHAIRS IN PRINT 9 (David Grigg & Perry Middlemiss) - More amicable chat before **Perry** is off on more hols - sport, books, TV, and movies including 'Singing in the Rain'. Yes, really!...

A LONG AND WINDING ROAD (Kim Huett) - Science Fiction Fanzines in Australia Part One: 1939-1969. 142pp of this labor of love - copiously illustrated and rather goshwow, innit?...

RHYME & PARADOX #7 (Katrina Templeton) - Super fab to see another ish of *R&P*. Let's hope there's more to come...

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK #83 (Andy Hooper) - "Notes on a thoroughly "lost" horror host and the Arctic Heritage of Barry B. Longyear.", it sez here. I should clarify that these are in fact separate topics...

INDULGE ME

✕ **BOING!** : The saga continues with **Eli Cohen** not receiving #91 in the usual mailing, but the file *does* go through when I forward it separately. Also last month I get a bounce message off **Doug Bell**'s email, but that's accompanied by some guff which identifies *This Here...* as suspected spam. I'm wondering whether this is a function of the large number of "bcc" (140)...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (1)** : I actually do worry just a little that the **Killer** might be dangerously over-exercising in his indifferent 75mph casual stroll past, so thish offers genre candidates (no Brits). First up: **Laurette Spang**...



✕ **KEEP TAKING THE TABLETS** : Several years ago now I took the advice of **Ulrika O'Brien** in adding a vitamin D supplement to my daily intake, since this boosts the immune system and is recommended for most people during the winter months - it comes in sunlight y'know. Particularly since retirement I don't actually go out much so the supplement is helpful. Recent research suggests, though, that you need to make sure you're scoffing the right kind of vitamin D. The one you want is D3 (the immune system booster) - if you're taking D2 that's now shown to *reduce* the

amount of D3 in your system. *Huffington Post* explains it all: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/vitamin-d2-immune-system-study_uk_68ecc3aee4b04c87b806e739 ...

✕ **IN ARSE NEWS...**: No, (sadly) it's not the shurely soon come outbreak of **Nolly** tattoos, but a stern warning that doomscrolling on the lav can and perhaps will result in hemorrhoids. I have taken due note. *Popular Science* (among many others) has the sorry tale: <https://www.popsci.com/health/bathroom-doomscrolling-hemorrhoids/> This also DoBFO applies to reading fanzines under similar circumstances...

✕ **ZZZZZZZZZ**: Not referring to **Leigh Edmonds**, as you might have guessed, but to his fellow Antipodean, **Archbishop Gillespie** with whom it seems I may have something (else?) in common. Apparently (with the caveat that I may have got this all wrong, of course) His Bruceness likes to take a coffee of an evening because it helps him sleep. Not that I do this exactly, but caffeine doesn't seem to keep me awake either - I get up usually between 4:30 and 6am of a morning and ingest a couple of cups of coffee but then go back to kip after a couple of hours with no problem...

✕ **AGELESS BEAUTY (2) : Jennifer Hetrick...**



✕ **ANORAK EXTRA** : Most of us likely look back at the days of the nationalized British Rail through rose-tinted bins in comparison with the privatized fuckin' mess created by Thatcher. Is renationalization helping? The *Grauniad* has

the numbers: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/ng-interactive/2025/oct/13/most-of-great-britains-major-rail-operators-are-back-in-public-hands-is-it-working> ...

✕ **TV GUIDE EXTRA** : 'Gen V' was well good an'all, but to warn you, bloodier than ever for Reasons. Trific setup for 'The Boys' season 5...

✕ **RIP HETTIE ANSELL** : Sad news from my brother **Peter Honey** this week: our mother passed away on Wednesday at the grand age of 89. Mixed feelings round here, since we never had a relationship, with me originally being given up for adoption and later, when my son **Sean Carey** turned up the lineage, she didn't want any contact and in fact had changed her name decades ago, erasing the period of her earlier life. I wanted her to know, for the sake of some closure, that I never bore her any ill will and **Pete**, as he had promised to do, whispered this in her ear for me. Godspeed and good rest, old girl, and thanks bruv...



✕ **ANORAK EXTRA 2** : *Private Eye* had its own take on the Locomotion anniversary...



✕ **DREAMSIDE** : I just realized quite recently that my dream self is not only absent the handicaps of deafness and reduced mobility but also possesses original teeth. I don't think this is an idealized version as much as it is a younger one. Is this the case for anyone else?...

✕ **NEXTISH** : In theory (ahem) November 29th...

Chat

Global warming and humans killed off the sabertooth.



How fitting that global warming is now killing off humans.



TEDDY HARVIA

MIRANDA

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Locs & that to: 2657 Rungsted Street, Las Vegas NV 89142, or
Email fareynic@gmail.com

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"Well, it ain't the first close call I ever had
I'm sure you already know
I had some help from you Lord and the devil himself
It's been strictly touch and go"