

THE (ELEVENTH) FORTNIGHTLY Ffix



*“Give them a bottle of brandy and a pistol,
and see who comes out.” [Greg Pickersgill]*

Rumours of This Fanzine’s Demise...

...have been surprisingly absent, other than a concerned aside from David Flint during an exchange on the dreaded Facebook (intriguingly, I now have sufficient ‘friends’ on that social network to populate four simultaneous Novacons, which sounds unlikely even to someone of my immense ego).

I had fully intended to have a new *FFix* out three weeks ago (the latest having appeared back on 10 April), but failed to factor in the triple-whammy of post-convention exhaustion (as I mentioned last time, three conventions spread across five weekends really isn’t sensible for someone of my advanced laziness), getting my *FAPazine* together and working at least three afternoons per week on the UK elections.

The good news is, Lorely Burt was re-elected as Liberal Democrat MP for Solihull, despite boundary changes which technically handed the seat back to the much heavier-funded Tories, who demanded two recounts before we finally staggered out of the polling centre at 7:30am.

To add to the fun, I had to be back there for 1pm, when the local council ballots were processed. As some of you are already aware, I failed to wrest one of the town’s most hardline Tory wards from its incumbent councillor, but 2447 votes (36.7% of ballots cast) to her 3090 (46.3%) was quite respectable, especially considering I wasn’t approached to stand until less than two months out. I can’t be a candidate in that particular ward again next May, as one of our own is up for re-election (her own campaign ran for more than a year before what was generally considered a shock victory in 2007), and there’s only one Tory seeking another term over on our side of the borough, but the future is wide open. (There were suggestions from Doug Berry, Jane Carnall and Robin Postal White that I should raise my game and try to seize the throne, but I foresee certain constitutional hurdles -- not least that, as I’m both an anti-monarchist and agnostic, I’d be unable to swear allegiance before God to myself. Go pick the bones out of that one, Dr David Starkey.)

In other news, I’ve just heard there’s a vacancy on the editorial team at a health industry publisher in the city centre, and fully intend to get my c.v. off on Monday. I’ve even placed an order for a few unscruffy shirts should I get to the interview stage. Even if nothing comes of this, at least I’ll have something smarter to wear next time I go out canvassing.

Last Chance to See?

The latest issue of Christina Lake and Doug Bell’s excellent fanzine *Head* contains a lively account of Novacon 39 by Chris which in part mentions one of the bonkers ideas I occasionally get when the hour is late and the alcohol intake is high. Worryingly, I still harbour a suspicion that there’s a kernel of genuine inspiration hidden within.

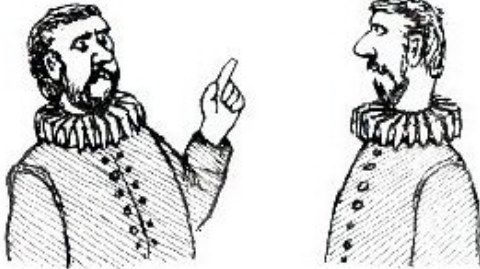
For several years, LiveJournal (yes, Peter Weston, yet another of those online whatchamacallits which will one day destroy Fandom As We Know It, much as Skynet plots the demise of humanity*) has hosted an annual challenge: produce a novel-length manuscript during the calendar month of November. You'll note I didn't suggest these were actually novels, or any kind of publishable literature, but there will no doubt be a few gems out there among the near-infinite ranks of monkey typists.**

SHAKESPEARE FANDOM—A TECHNICAL HITCH

I CAN CALL
FANZINES FROM
THE VASTY DEEP

WHY, SO CAN I, OR SO CAN
ANY MAN, BUT WILL THEY COME
WHEN YOU DO CALL FOR THEM?

PARTICULARLY IF
THERE'S A PROBLEM
WITH THE WEBSITE



[*Is it cute or deranged that I was slightly reassured when MS Word identified "Skynet" as a spelling error? Yes, I suspected you'd all say that.]

[**No, I'm not calling all those who take part in this event a monkey, although I received quite a few fiction submissions during my first stint on *Critical Wave* which had more than a faint whiff of banana about them.]

Anyway, the idea is this: that British sf fans set themselves a similar challenge to produce a fanzine during the month of September. Distribute copies by 30 September and you'd actually qualify for the Nova Awards, although that's kind of in flux right now and there's a definite possibility the 2010 Novas may be the last presented in that particular format. Or it may stay exactly the same. Novacon is always a bit like that.

Though some of us still warm to the sensation of collated slivers of dead tree being thrust into our hands, it would be hypocritical of me not to point out the opportunities offered by electronic publishing, most notably via Bill Burns' award-winning website eFanzines.com.

And no reason, of course, why it has to be just British fans (indeed, one of the first changes I made when I took over the Novas in 2004 was to open the awards up to all of Irish fandom); the more, the merrier, say I, whilst noting the event which sparked this chain of thought has the curiously parochial title NaNoWriMo (for National Novel Writing Month). C'mon, folks, it's one thing to dub the US heat of a game ripped off from English rounders a "World Series", but there are apparently more LiveJournal accounts based outside the fifty states these days that there are within -- and it's not as if either IntNoWriMo or GloNoWriMo sound any more daft.

Down the Loccol

I heard from: David Hardy; Jeff Boman; Lloyd Penney ("The loccol shows that no matter what side of the political spectrum you're on, from liberal to conservative and everything in between, there are creeps and crooks that show up in high levels of power, and need to be knocked down. We have one MP who had a temper tantrum at an international airport, and may have abused her privileges terribly. Her party campaigned on transparency, and has been extremely opaque, refusing to comment on her dismissal from Cabinet. The usual line is that the government refuses to comment or reveal details based on security matters. These days, all governments use that line to hide behind."); Jannie Shea (my apologies for the erroneous name-change); Chris Holmes ("Wow! Only thirty-two years in between appearances and here I am on the cover of your latest fanzine... Thank you for the thrill." -- for context, Chris produced the cover artwork for *Astron #2*, published spring of 1978); Bridget Wilkinson ("Good to

see this again.”); Paul Birch (“*The FFix #10's* extensive letters column felt like a literate version of Facebook -- nice one, Mr Editor! Oh, yeah, like the groomed-beard photo of you, kind of a tamed grizzly bear look -- we could do with some people with sharpened teeth and claws in political office!”); Dave Hodson (“It's nice to see Arthur [*Thomson*]s work still appearing, he was a class act! Did anyone ever publish a collection of his work?” -- there are two volumes, I believe, but there may be some overlap); Arnie Katz (thanks for your support).

Finally, thanks to everyone who sent cards or similar messages of goodwill to mark my half-century in late April. It meant a great deal, and sharing the occasion with my younger god-daughter Heloise Tudor (who hit her teens that very same day) even more so.

This has the eleventh edition of *The Fortnightly Fix*, dated 14 May 2010. Hurlled into the aether by Steve Green, who can be contacted via stevegreen@livejournal.com. Illustrations by Pete Lyon (pg.1), D West (pg.2); is this another portent of some 1980s Revival? My usual thanks to Bill Burns for hosting this issue and its twelve predecessors at efanzines.com. A Gutter Press publication. May cause nausea and drowsiness. Do not exceed the stated dose.