



VIBRATOR 2.0.6

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS: CORFLU, FAN SEX,
BICYCLES, HYMNS, BUTT PLUGS,
HOLIDAYS. FAN FUNDS, TRANSNISTRIA

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Oh, no, Consuela, put down your maracas and stop dancing in the streets. The World Cup is over. More pressing matters are at hand. Can it be that evil Graham Charnock has conspired to launch another evil edition of Vibrator upon us, namely Vibrator 2.0.6, for distribution at the end of July 2014. What will be the reaction? Supreme indifference from fellow fanzine producers, and Randy Byers, who think because they also produce fanzines for trade don't have to be bothered to write locs? You know who you are. And from certain SMOFs, who obviously live in a world of their own? Jonathan MacAlmont where are you when nobody needs you? Yes, is the answer or nowhere if you are answering the previous question, if anything gone before is any indication. Can I just say here that no more subtle innuendoes, or even unsubtle ones, about the name of this fanzine will be tolerated, no Claire, not even your revelation that you wake up every morning with a Vibrator on your bedside table. We are not living in a universe populated by oafs like Richard McMahon any more (this reference will only be appreciated by subscribers to the first run of Vibrator, most of whom have now probably died anyway, but not Richard McMahon, I hope. He was an idiot but like most idiots deserves to live, for a reasonable time at least.)

Remember to stay in touch with me at graham@cartiledgeworld.co.uk

TYNECON III: THE CORFLU – AN ANNOUNCEMENT

We have just held the first committee meeting for Corflu 32. Of course what was discussed and what was decided there cannot possibly be discussed in a public forum, but that doesn't stop me making up a totally fictitious account of it.

It was held at a secret location somewhere in Croydon. Members of Croydon's notorious Swinger Scene would have no trouble recognising it from the barest description, suffice to say it had one of those fancy French foot baths in the toilet. Say no more.

When Pat and I arrived Mike Meara was already there and he had very clean feet. He offered to shake my hand as if we were in the process of attempting to settle some long-standing duelling feud, but I insisted on a kiss, although not a full on the lips kiss, because I think that leads to the establishment of a relationship which might not eventually be fully realized and would ultimately only lead to disappointment. We ended up kissing the insides of each other's arms. And I have to report, Mike, a nasty rash has already developed on mine.

Claire and Mark were also there, fortunately, otherwise we might have had to break in, and didn't require any hugging, which was fortunate because I don't think I would have managed to get my arms around either of them, let alone both together. I was somewhat startled to see the work-out gym equipment set up in their front room (oh, no, that's blown the secret identity of the location!), since it obviously wasn't being put to any use that had had positive results. I think they need it to tone-up for when they want to pick up the occasional book to read, such as the huge book on wine that graced their coffee-table. Hours of toiling in the salt-mines of Loncon 3 had reduced them to mere shadows of themselves, but mental shadows who tended to gibber a lot rather than physical ones.

Rob Jackson turned up next, thankfully smelling not too bad, since he had obviously washed his feet before leaving home. Rob pulled out his Cthulu The King plushie donated by Ken Forman. Pat pulled out her Peter the Fish official ITB mascot and a puppet battle ensued. We sat down to a scrumptious repast as provided by Claire, consisting of two kinds of tart, one vegetable and one containing little bits of meat in the form of chorizo, which is a kind of posh sausage Croydon swingers eat, and an abundance of salads. Eventually, having smelt food from as far away as the Blackwall Tunnel, and having managed to point her car in the right direction, Sandra Bond arrived and joined us.

Eventually, after several hours, Pat managed to establish Skype contact with Doug Bell and Christina Lake, and with Uncle Johnny.

“What is that rustling sound?” Doug immediately asked suspiciously. It was Rob, who had bought four tubs of exotic chocolate selected by Coral. They were delicious and we fortunately managed to avoid those Coral had laced with cyanide, especially Doug and Christina who by being several hundred miles away, managed to avoid them all. There is a limit to what you can achieve with Skype, and it does not include chocolate-sharing. Johnny was his usual jolly joke-cracking self, regaling us with tall stories of how much carry over funds we might expect from Corflu 31. “I can’t disclose the exact sum,” he said, “but I think it might at least provide a fish supper for three or four members of the committee, and perhaps a bottle of Sprite.” Johnny unfortunately kept breaking up, I suspect because his dialysis machine was interfering with the connection. Well, with some element of *his* connection.

So we settled to discuss the programme. “How about a Sumo wrestling competition between Farah Mendelsohn and Martin Easterbrook,” I suggested. “With perhaps Steve Green and Theresa Derwin forming a tag team to participate,” added Rob. “That’s not fair,” said Claire. “I consider them all my friends and would find it hard to decide who to root for, very much in a pig sense.” “I too would find it hard to decide who to come down on,” said Mike Meara, “But if a step-ladder was provided it would certainly make it easier.”

“The important thing,” said Pat, “Is that we somehow get Roy Kettle involved in the programme since I know he always feels left out and overlooked at this sort of event.” This was greeted with snorts of laughter and snorts of a different kind from Sandra who had bought her nitrous oxide inhaler along with her.

“I’d like to take my clothes off,” said Christina. The table we were sitting at immediately arose several inches. “Is that a suggestion for a programme item?” Mike asked keenly.

“No, I just feel bored.”

“I’ve just bought a new bicycle,” said Doug, “and have been watching a lot of the Tour de France.” There was a deep, heart-felt sigh from Christina, almost as deep a one which rolled around the company whenever Ken Forman’s name was mentioned.

I’d like to go into more detail about what was decided, of course, but as I’ve said I am sworn to secrecy especially since many of the decisions will undoubtedly strike many potential customers as deeply offensive (Panel: ‘Sexism in Fandom – Why isn’t there more of it?’ ‘Why beat yourself up when you can pay someone else to do it’ a BDSM panel chaired by Uncle Johnny). I can only suggest you turn up at the convention to decide for yourself.

After the meeting was over we explored Claire and Mark’s garden. They thoughtfully supplied us with machetes to hack through the undergrowth. Thus we discovered lost Mayan Kingdoms, and also, nestled in the overgrown grass on the lawn we found a pigeon suffering from such extreme inertia we initially took it to be dead, or perhaps a member of the committee, but then it twitched a bit, although not much. It didn’t look damaged, but I think if it continued to sit there so fatalistically it might not remain that way for long. Claire said she would keep an eye on it, which I understood to mean she would revisit it in several days time to see if it was still there or had been magically transformed into a mangled lump of feathers. Watch this space.

BILL WRIGHT THOUGHT VIBRATOR WAS A VIRUS, BUT I MANAGED TO PERSUADE HIM TO OPEN IT. DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN EFFECT YET...

Issue five seems to be devoted to chronicling the dangerous pursuits of you and your cronies' disreputable youth from the elevated perspective of maturity in old age. I liked the picture of Peter Roberts and Greg Pickersgill hanging out at Lawrence Road. Why bother to wade through interminably long tomes of dark fiction when one can pick up the same vibes in a few crisp anecdotes by the editor/publisher of New Vibrator?

There's a zillion stories in there focussed on that quality of utter sanity I think of as sardonic nihilism. I have this vision of literary researchers generations hence mining eFanzines for such ideas, harvesting perspectives from us twenty first century savants as bases for their PH Ds in Literature or their magnum opuses uncovering astonishing insights into the human condition. History will transmogrify us into sages of the sevagram, progenitors of an age of omphalistic epistemology that will mark the first faltering footfalls of post-apocalyptic humanity into a nexialist future as far removed from the nihilist philosophy of our age as mankind can encompass given the limitations of the senses and our incapacity to encompass in symbolic logic the totality of the vast and unknowable scheme of things.

The above says in stream-of-conscious babble the essence of what I was trying to convey at Continuum X, the 53rd Australian National Science Fiction Convention in Melbourne in June 2014, in my essay on Science Fiction and the Scientific Method.

I loved the LetterCol with its focus on death, in particular the obituary to the late and unlamented Felix Dennis (1947 - 2014) albeit such unflattering animadversions on the departed are best done in verse.

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(Editor's note: You certainly like to use obscure words, don't you, Bill.)

IAN WILLIAMS JUST MISSED GETTING HIS LOC INTO THE LAST ISSUE, BUT THE BEAUTY OF DOING A FREQUENT FANZINE IS I CAN STILL RUN IT NOT MANY WEEKS AFTER HAVING RECEIVED IT.

I never bother trying to kill flies as my cats will happily do it for me and entertain me at the same time.

No doubt you've been inundated with locs on the subject of death as it's the one thing every human being on the planet has in common (and with every other living thing on the planet).

My father died from an angina at the age of 69 (just three years older than I am now). Can't say it bothered me as I only met him about four times in my life and my heart appears quite sound. On my mother's side of the family living relatively healthily till their 90's is not uncommon. Admittedly this can be a mixed blessing but given the choice I'd opt for the additional 20+ years (or more: my great grandmother was 102 when she went).

I've suffered from depression and deep angst (in my early 30's) about death and still have odd twinges that way even now. Being an atheist with no belief in anything transcendent, there's no upside.

But what the hell. I believe in enjoying life while you've got it as long as what you do doesn't impact negatively on anyone else. So I drink frequently but moderately, read, listen to music (still The Grateful Dead, et al), watch films and good tv, and eat too much -my one serious vice. I also pat myself on the back for being actively involved (and founder and co-director of) a successful small local animal rescue charity with which my main concern is rescuing and re-homing cats, too many in my own home. In other words, I'm happy. I'd still rather not get old and die but it's better than dying and not getting old.

I promise I won't send you a picture of my garden because it's mostly two strips of tatty lawn, which nearly always need mowing, divided by a wooden walkway and framed on three sides by some form of conifer chopped off at the six foot mark. Boring.

Hope all is well but if not at least it gives you something to grumble about. My grumble is I can't afford someone to do the housework which is why my house is a tip.

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IN TRIBUTE TO IAN WILLIAMS AND HIS STERLING WORK FOR DESTITUTE AND HOMELESS PUSSIES, HERE IS THIS MONTH'S FANNISH ARCHIVE PHOTO:



Ian is second from the left. Isn't he a cutie? Strange to believe he hasn't found any woman who can satisfy his insatiable sexual lusts, let alone clean up after him. I don't know who the other reprobates are, except perhaps for the chap on the extreme right who appears to be either Andy Kaufman or Roy Kettle with a crudely photoshopped beard.

FANNISH INFIDELITIES

A recent conversation about the late and apparently much lamented Vince Clarke, sparked a connection in my mind and led to me spending two hours reading the relevant portions of Rob Hansen's excellent fan history on his website. It has reminded me just how little fifties and indeed early sixties fandom really interests me, and why to a degree I eventually found Peter Weston's Relapses futile and self-involved examples of the worst kind of fan-history binding. If I need endless reminiscences of Ron Bennett and Frank Arnold, I'll probably be in a care home and you would be welcome to turn off my life-support machine. Things picked up in the Seventies a bit where I was surprised to see myself mentioned as often as I was and quoted as saying things and holding opinions I had completely forgotten.

The interest in the Inchmery incident, for example, when Joy Clarke, ostensibly Vince's wife, ran off to America with Sandy Sanderson, ostensibly their lodger, is of course the prurient one of sexual and marital infidelity and open-marriages in fandom. It must have seemed shocking at the time, and certainly it sent Vince Clarke into a spiral of disillusioned Gafiation (it seems). Open marriages are never as convenient for some as they are for others, hence the amazing amount of blood and death which surrounds Mormon polygamous marriages. Dealing with sexual jealousy probably requires a hardened soul, if not a hardened sexual organ.

But such pranks seemed to be everywhere in the sixties and seventies, before AIDS made sleeping around literally the kiss of death. If you weren't having an extra-marital affair in those days you were often considered passé. Germaine Greer for example was once reported as having walked into a party and remarked how surprised she was to see how many familiar faces she had once sat upon. But this sort of sexual bragging also went on a lot in those days. Such behaviour was much more *accepted*, and infidelities, although always interesting and gossip worthy, whether they were Simone Walsh's estrangement from Tony, or Malcolm Edwards and Roy Kettle feuding over Chris Atkinson, or Brunner's sexual excesses centred around his home in Hampstead, seemed to become far less of a *cause celebre*. Since lots of them now involved my own friends appearing rather silly with their pants around their

ankles, I really couldn't take much of it seriously at the time, and haven't since when faced with the likes of Steve Green and company confessing their sexual extravagances on Facebook.

However, friends, details of your own infidelities and their outcomes will always be welcome here in Vibrator, but I suspect I will not get any takers.

BIKING MEMORIES

The publicity around the Tour de France this year taking place, in part at least, in the UK has sparked a whole raft of bicycle related programmes on TV, mostly nostalgia related. I thought I'd like to share with you what part bicycles have played in my life. My earliest bike was a strange thing, a Monarch racing fixed-wheel bike manufactured in Sweden. My Dad was a speedway bike engineer and managed to pick it up somehow. It had a small frame, with a peculiar bend in the top frame, just forward of the saddle, which itself was comfortably padded. It also had a fixed wheel (no gears, direct drive to the rear wheel, it was designed to race on the flat, not go up hills) and no brakes. The fixed wheel acted as a brake when you pedalled **backwards**. As a family, given our speedway connection, we used to visit lots of speedway meets at Wembley Stadium, where my father worked, and other venues, but I don't recall ever going to a bicycle track racing event. Never mind.

We lived in a close which had a circular **alley** servicing the back gardens of properties on both sides of the road. It made an excellent speedway track and I soon learnt the technique of going into a corner, back pedalling to brake, and drifting into the bend with my foot on the floor. This was a technique borrowed from speedway riders, who would coast into bends with one foot extended onto the cinders. Those riders had special welded steel plates attached to their boots. My father used to produce them like a bespoke shoemaker. I had no such luxury and must have got through endless pairs of plimsolls (no trainers in those days). My alley-racing career came to an abrupt halt when I charged across the street from the exit from one alley to the entry to the other directly opposite and promptly collided with the old woman who lived three doors away and sent her flying with her skirts above her head. I thought I had killed her. I hadn't, but it certainly put a damper on my career as a boy-racer.

Then one Christmas morning I woke up to find something at the end of my bed. My parents had wrapped it up in brown paper, and done a damn good job of it, but it was still clearly definable as a **proper** bike. I ripped the packaging off, which probably took a quarter of an hour in itself, and there was a Dawes touring/sprinting bike with real drop handle-bars and real grown-up 28" wheels. For the next couple of years I experienced the freedom that owning a **proper** bike gave to you. I could visit my friends who lived more than five miles away. I could cycle along the towpath of the Grand Union Canal which was located at the back of our house. I could visit exotic second hand Plus Books on the Harrow Road and return with a saddle-bag full of old sf magazines. I could bicycle to Neasden to stalk beautiful girls I was infatuated with. I must have fallen off it often enough, but there was nothing so traumatic as to stick in my memory for long. It was one of the best Christmas presents I had ever had. Eventually of course even the bike was not enough to satisfy the explorer in my soul, and I bought an NSU scooter which enabled me to occasionally extend my travels as far as Heathrow Airport. It also looked way cooler than a bicycle. It was the end of an era. But I was still distraught when I returned home after a long period living away, to find my father had sold the Monarch racing bike.

R-LAURRAINE TUTIHASI HAS REPLIED TO VIBRATOR 2.0.4

A lot of us seem to have those old Pentax SLRs. I have one, or had. And my husband has one. I gave up still photography more or less except that I've found my iPhone very handy for taking photos at the drop of a hat since I have it on me most of the time. Otherwise I started taking videos in 1999 and am still using the camera I bought then; it's probably due for replacement soon. I asked Mike about your Nikon D40, and he said it was a less expensive model than the one he has. I think he's on his second or third Nikon digital SLR. He always looks for a lot of extra features, because a lot of his photography is astrophotography. What I would really like is some sort of extension to my brain that would allow me to save photos just with my eyes.

Regarding the book *How to Find Lost Objects*, many years ago a Catholic colleague at work suggested I ask Saint Anthony for help to find lost objects. I've only used his help a couple of times, but he always seems to come through. You don't have to be Catholic to ask for help.

I enjoyed looking at Pat's garden photos. Being out in the desert, my garden looks very different, mostly cacti.

I haven't seen any swifts here, but I've seen barn swallows. On a related note, a prairie falcon flew very close to us as we were driving this morning. I wish I had the ability to put half my brain to sleep. Think how much more I could accomplish.

I was happy to learn that the lost cat found a new home.

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ENGLISH HYMNS

As someone born to godless parents, my first real experience of English Hymns was in Grammar School, where at morning assembly we were forced to sing at least three from the Common English Hymnal. The numbers of the hymns for that day were conveniently posted on an ornate gilded board to one side of the stage. Whereas the tunes, usually played on a grand piano by the school's current music swot, (one was Christine Merchant who went on to be Chris Priest's first wife) could sometimes be stirring (although often borrowed from totally non-religious folk tunes) and the lyrics could sometimes be heroic, I was developing sufficient critical faculties to recognize most of them as cant and religious propaganda. The same school had Religious Studies, but of course it had little to do with Comparative Religions, and mostly consisted of exploring various bible texts, but seldom questioning their validity. Even today watching Songs of Praise on TV, whilst some of the performances by solo singers are virtuoso, I am always brought up short by the triteness of the lyrics, often coupled with jingoistic patriotic sentiments.

Jerusalem (which is the anthem rolled out at every sporting opportunity plus Women's Institute meetings), is a very fine example of William Blake's poetry, providing we bear in mind he was a madman. It is just one which sticks in one's throat when considering the constant exhortations these days to become a multi-ethnic society. This hymn simply doesn't work given today's modern political climate, and yet it is trotted out at any old excuse.

*And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen!*

*And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?*

*Bring me my Bow of burning gold;
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!*

*I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:*

*Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green & pleasant Land*

I'm sorry, William Blake, but those feet never did walk upon England's mountains green, far less was the holy lamb of God on England's pleasant pastures ever seen, and that fucking countenance divine (whatever that is) has never ever been seen shining forth upon our clouded hills (although you sure got the clouded bit right). And Jerusalem was never builded here among our dark satanic mills, notwithstanding *builded* it being a non-existent conjugation of the verb, and notwithstanding that the mills killed more and more people from emphysema than it ever raised up into Heaven. I'm perfectly willing to give up any Mental Fight (I am on Facebook after all and have successfully dealt with Gary Farber) and my sword can sleep in my hand for ever as far as I am concerned. As for your chariot of fire, you will never find one which will take you south of the river.

Cumbaya, my lordy.

LLOYD PENNEY LOST HIS FIRST ATTEMPT AT A LOC, SO HAD TO REWRITE IT. THERE'S DEDICATION FOR YOU.

2.0.4...I can think of a few people where I'd say, "Still alive, hm?" or "I thought s/he'd died years ago." or "I think s/he looks like s/he'd died years ago." We're all getting up there...there's another pathetic euphemism about getting older, and therefore closer to death. We balance our discomfort with death with the feelings of the widow or widower left behind, and often make a hash of things. Yvonne's a pretty straight shooter when it comes to saying what should be said, and asked Susan Manchester recently, "How's life after Mike's death?" Mike is of course the much-missed Mike Glicksohn. Susan told Yvonne how she was feeling, and revealed that Yvonne was one of the few people to ask that kind of question. Yvonne's father died close to 30 years ago, and her mother is still alive, and living in a home. My mother died a few years ago of colon cancer, and my father is still out there...somewhere. I think Yvonne's mother will be next, and that will cause a huge fuss. My father? Well, who really knows...

Easy to find things lost in your home, like your fly, Graham...start in the last place you'd look, and there it is. Starting in the first place you'd look just wastes time, and aggravates the fly.

(Don't tell the wife you got a Vibrator in the mail? Hell, I printed my Vibrators at work. I'd like to see what IT will say when they ask about the print queue file for the main printer...)

My loc...no way to win a FAAn Award? That's okay, I keep getting told I've got too many of the damned things, anyway. My doctor seems happy with my health, I keep taking the pretty pink and purple pills (they'll be other colours later on), and I get a call from his office saying that I need to go in for a sugar test. Diabetes? Who knows? Another part of getting old sucking.

2.0.5...Can't grease my palm for a Hugo vote, don't have one right now. However, keep me in mind for a FAAn Award. Can't have Lichtman winning them every year, can we?

Being a zombie isn't all it's cracked up to be. Most of them seem to sneak into public office, and they're too busy trying to eat brains to really use them. At least you can still count to ten...no, make that nine...eight...

Can't help but agree with Paul Skelton re this getting old, but being alive means you can still complain. I know what he speaks of re the death of Mike Glicksohn. Died too young, but then I would prefer to say the same for us all... when our time comes, of course.

Glastonbury has come and gone...I know one of the performers, Paul Alborough, better known as Professor Elemental, a gentleman steampunk rapper. I've seen him perform, he'll be in the Niagara Falls area in September, and I wish I could go and see him again, he's great.

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WE'RE NOT GOING ON A SUMMER HOLIDAY

They tell me the summer school holidays are about to begin. I don't know how to tell you how much this knowledge fills me with a quaking fear. First of all the Supermarkets will be crowded with squealing children, no matter what time you intend to go, even at 2.00 am. And forget about going to any tourist venue like Theme Parks, or even the humble London Zoo. Possibly fewer families will be flying to Kuala Lumpur on Air Malaysia, but still the cafes and bistros in Crouch End and Hornsey and Islington will be heaving with mummies and buggies as well as Single-Somethings seeking Love & Attachment.

When I was a kid the holiday season would start with my mother ordering lots of free catalogues from the various tourist boards around the country. They would arrive from Llandudno, Torquay and other exotic places few of us had ever heard of before, and Swansea, all glossy productions with seductive pictures of seafronts, sandy beaches, ornamental gardens and swish hotels. At least a week passed then while we gloated over pictures of such exotic delights. I don't recall we ever booked hotels, but once we had decided on a destination we loaded up the family car and set off in a spirit of adventure. We normally ended up in a hotel or boarding house of some description by pot luck, although I remember one occasion when my father hauled up outside an establishment and my father went to investigate and came back in a distinctly short temper, proclaiming it was a *doss-house* . That quite interested me at the time, because I didn't really know what a *doss-house* was, except that it seemed to have connotations of forbidden excitement. My parents were strange people to travel with, not sophisticated at all, but subject to occasional flirtations with what could only be racial memories of sophistication. I remember my mother objecting to using a toilet in her hotel room, because *a man had been in there* . For some time I speculated about what evidence of his presence she might have found there, then found it better to close off all avenues of speculation. My father was also prone to see people he thought he knew in hotel situations, even if he had never been to the town in question before. He once leapt up and accosted a stranger refusing to believe the man wasn't an old friend. Being from Yorkshire they were also often troubled by spirits. I remember sitting in a lounge with them and my mother becoming very flustered because a picture on the wall behind where my father sat suddenly lifted itself several inches from the wall. Soon I learnt to ignore such strange behaviours and just take my bucket and spade and play on the beach.

JUST AS I WAS BEGINNING TO LOSE HOPE, ROBERT LICHTMAN STEPPED UP THE THE PLATE, DEPENDABLE AS ALWAYS

Determined not to die prematurely of a sudden heart attack brought on by one too many instance of "coming from behind with a final sprint," I'm writing *many* days before the end of July. Something apparently happened to me when Arnie's *fanstuff* stopped—suddenly I had some respite from having to respond quickly to stay in the conversation there and I relaxed, but perhaps too much since twice my letters have arrived nearly on your deadline day. (Arnie's since produced four issues of a sort-of-genzine, *Claptrap*, but it hasn't grabbed my attention in the same way. And you've produced all five revival issues of *Vibrator* since his last *fanstuff* turned up in late December.) I haven't kept up with writing that nice Mr. Hooper about his *Flag*, either; my last LoC was on the tenth issue last November. It doesn't help when his lead essays are about things that I find hard to get a handle on, like current science fiction. And he seems to have slacked off, too—you've done three issues since his last came out in May. I wouldn't characterize either Arnie's or Andy's zines as "crap," but right now I find that *Vibrator* is the happening thing and I want to be in every issue so long as I'm able to breathe and type.

Even though a few issues back you wrote (to me) that you didn't use photographs, I'm glad that you appear to have changed your mind. It was good to see that photo of Peter and Greg on the staircase back of Lawrence Road, and it reminded me that long ago I downloaded three photos of Pat sitting around in various poses on what appears to be those same stairs in 1977, as well as two of you on what might also be those stairs. Perhaps you could run one or more of those in a future issue. **[attaching them fyi since I don't recall where I got them from]**

So many dangerous things, so little time! I've never used bath salts (unless they have an American name that I'm not equating with your term), but your closing sentence regarding drug/food interactions in that section of your essay brought back some memories: "And if you eat a grapefruit as well you are truly doomed." Back in the late '80s and early '90s, when I would drive down from Glen Ellen to Oakland every weekend to visit with Carol *and* I was still smoking, when making the return trip I loved to stop at a convenience store, pick up a pint of grapefruit juice, and chug on it between puffs on my pipe. And then I read about grapefruit's alleged dangers and quit cold turkey. It wasn't until some years later, though, that some questionable results on a chest x-ray led me to drop the smoking, too.

"Time was you could go out and protest, and be safe because you thought people had a human right to protest. They never did, of course, and still never do." As you describe, these days what might happen to you is variable and could include being arrested for unlawful urination; but back in the day—well, *my* day—I used to protest fairly regularly. One memorable occasion was being almost at the head of a giant peace march through the part of Los Angeles near the tar pits, my walking mate being none other than Harlan Ellison. (We already knew each other and conversed/commented on the scene.) But even more engraved in my mind than that was when I was part of a small group of protesters outside the front entrance of a posh Beverly Hills hotel with placards aimed at notorious Vietnamese "first lady" Madame Nhu. Word had reached us that she would be going out at a certain time, but the police also knew this and warned us more than once that if we didn't leave we'd be subject to arrest. We chose to ignore them, they went away, and Madame Nhu took a back entrance.

"I generally view Father's Day as merely a marketing scam. My own children know of my disdain and therefore never give me anything." "Disdain" is not a word I would assign to Father's Day; I've tended to simply ignore it, and in years past when I got a phone call or a card from one of my sons I politely thanked them and privately appreciated the gesture. But now that three of them are fathers themselves (and the hold-out is joining the club in a couple weeks), we pass around Father's Day wishes with some enjoyment. We still don't do gifts. (For me, it's enough keeping up with grandchildren's birthdays.)

It was something of a surprise to me when I read of Daniel Keyes' passing. I hadn't really thought of him by name for ages, but "Flowers for Algernon" has come up repeatedly over the years as a good example of a certain type of story. I confess to never having read the novel, but I was subscribing to *F&SF* when the short story appeared in the April 1959 issue (yes, I looked it up) and it stunned me with its excellence. Saw the movie, *Charly*, and also thought it very good—especially Cliff Robertson in the title role (for which he rightly won an Oscar). I see that it lost out for best picture that year to *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Brad Foster says in his letter that he liked seeing his little shrew in *color* in your third issue: "certainly look good in there, breaking up the long stretches of text a bit. Would be nice to see more in the future.....?" Personally, I'm quite fond of the words in *Vibrator*—and if any artwork was to add to the mix, I'd prefer it small like Brad's shrew. I'm generally not a fan of "fillos" in fanzines. Having said that, I'm not immune to them in *Trap Door* but have restricted their use to stfnal Rotsler drawings sized to fit in those odd little spaces that sometimes occur at the ends of articles.

After writing of his parents' deaths and how they were "unexpected, but oddly not traumatic," Paul Skelton goes on to write, "the death that affected me the most was that of Mike Glicksohn. Partly because he was such a good friend and partly because it came like a bolt out of the blue." For me the equivalent was my high school friend, Calvin Demmon, who I got involved in fandom where he made quite a name for himself as a humorist. And he was a wonderful human being. Sadly, because he'd been fighting it (leukemia) for quite a long time, his death wasn't unexpected but instead inevitable. I devoted a large part of the 25th *Trap Door* to marking his passing along with old friends (and fellow coeditors with him) Andy Main and John D. Berry. You can have a look on efanazines if you're interested.

Robert Lichtman can be found at robertlichtman@yahoo.com



DAVID REDD, HONORARY TREASURER OF A PARISH IN HAVERFORDWEST TORE HIMSELF AWAY FROM HIS ECUMENICAL DUTIES TO COMMENT:

A fanzine came in the post! Echo of a vanished past? How quaint. Oh, for the time to spend all day as an sf fan doing fan things ("gazing out of the window" – recent Pickersgill description of ideal fannish activity.)

No, reading Vibrator does make me feel old and tired compared to you lively Young Turks. I'm just glad somebody out there still has the energy, notably Robert Lichtman I see.

The name of Kent Moomaw returns to me. Can't recall when it reached me first, but I must have been very affected by his story once. We should remember.

On Felix Dennis: brief but insight-packed piece of sociology; I nearly wrote psychopathology, but that would be clinically wrong. How fascinating, as long as I didn't have to meet him.

As for Glastonbury, in terms of publicity gained the true headliner was indeed Dolly, who I'm sure could give Robert Silverberg lessons in being totally professional. Bryan Ferry? I was quite taken with his image as an overcoat salesman for M&S.

David Redd can be found at dave_redd@hotmail.com

PHILIP TURNER WAS ALSO CONSIDERATE ENOUGH TO COMMENT:

Thank you for the copy of your educational magazine Vibrator (edition 2.0.5). Having just survived an often tedious World Cup, I particularly enjoyed the story about the Brazilian referee on page 3.

In conclusion, be advised that my copy of V2.0.5 has a dried-out circular ring on the back -- not from a mug but from a saucer. I have no idea how it got wet in the first place but this unique marque of distinction must have sent the collector's value of this particular ish into the stratosphere.

Philip Turner can be found at farrago2@lineone.net

EVEN DAVE LANGFORD TOOK TIME OUT FROM HIS BUSY SCHEDULE REWRITING JOHN CLUTE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SF ENCYCOPAEDIA, AND CONFESSED HE HAD PASSED UP ON BUYING A COPY OF THE BREAKING OF BUMBO BECAUSE HE LISTENED TO THE OPINIONS OF SOME OLD TOSSER.

You give a good word in passing to Andrew Sinclair's 'The Breaking of Bumbo'. I saw a copy in a second-hand bookshop once (gosh, this is the kind of fannish reminiscence Peter Roberts used to do so well) but didn't find the blurb sufficiently compelling. Kingsley Amis describes it in his memoirs as "to me unreadable", but then old Sir K had a lot of funny prejudices. Which were amply confirmed by a pub rendezvous:

"When the drinks came, Sinclair plunged his hand confidently into his top inner breast pocket. As in a dream I watched that confidence vanish in an instant, to be as quickly replaced by puzzlement, disbelief, consternation. Soon he was doing an imitation of a free-falling parachutist frenziedly trying to locate his unpulled ripcord. Finally his movements slowed, ceased, and shame possessed him. 'I must have left my wallet in my other jacket,' he said."

The one point of theology on which Amis Senior and Martin Hoare would agree is that the lowest circle of hell is reserved for them as don't buy their round.

Dave Langford can be found at drl@ansible.co.uk

UNCLE JOHNNY THINKS IN THE INTERESTS OF GENDER PARITY I SHOULD FEATURE BUTT PLUGS ALONGSIDE VIBRATORS

I am quite concerned, being an overly- literal sort of minded person, that your vibrators, rather like my LoC's, are quite behind the times. I notice you haven't dared to put a male one (that is, one specifically designed for the male arsehole) on your header yet. If you are short of actual imagery, let me know. I can send you a piccy.

Of course you can avoid thinking about death. I do it all the time. I've seen enough of it not to let it get to me too much. After all, from the moment you slip down your mothers helter-skelter, death is the next thing on the agenda, the inevitable heads that trumps life's tails. At some point, you have to stop, so just hope for the best. The worst thing about it is the effect on your loved ones and friends, particularly when its sudden. Sudden is best from your point of view but the shock wave that travels out to everybody you knew is very destructive. My mother, who died in 2006, dropped dead right in front of me and Audrey. My aunt, her sister, on being apprised of the news, yelled " But I was only talking to her on the phone at lunchtime!!!". My dear friend Manjusvara died suddenly in 2011. He had only been to lunch with us the week before. He wasn't ill in any way. We walked about three miles over the fields after that lunch. He had collapsed while preparing to give a lecture while up in some remote bit of Scotland 90 miles from the nearest hospital- he was fit enough to drive there from Bristol.

But when someone is desperately ill, death is often an okay outcome. When they wheel you in to the operating theatre, and the anaesthetist asks you to count, remember that if you dont wake up, its been good on the whole, and it would probably be better than waking up in the knowledge that at some indeterminate point after god knows what in the way of pain shit and vomit, you are going to go to sleep again, but you 'll never know just when exactly. Life is for living, not enduring come what may.

Probably none of the above is entirely to the point of your remarks, but there you are. I'm getting old and my mind wanders.

The picture of Gregory with Professor Roberts on the front of 0.5 puts me in mind of those who have, as it were , absented themselves without recourse to the grim reaper. That too can involve grief and bewilderment, but best say no more. A bee sting may not kill you, but it can make you bloody cross.

Your summary of Glasto was so fucking miserable. I've already forgotten the names of the acts I saw that I quite liked, but Metallica was not among them. Guitar Heroes are so last century. I wish you could get your head around the idea that times have changed, the world has moved on. The kidz feel the same way about your guitar heroes as I felt about my Dad's top horn players in in nineteen fifty whatever. It was fun while it lasted, but now its gone, so cheer up, and open your ears to something different.

Remind me to put Mark Plummer and Alison Scott on the loccers list when the FAAn's come around for voting again. You had better print that just so you can start Taral Wayne off again. Nothing like annoying your readership.

Uncle Johnny can be found at johnsila32@gmail.com



FAN FUNDS

I have never been known as one who fears to go where no others dare tread. In fact one of my ***friends*** calls me a loose cannon (less of a friend now that he once was) but I feel I am taking my fannish fate in my hands if I dare to broach here the subject of Fan Funds. Let me lay out my stall. I am not against Fan Funds in general. How could I be? I stood in a TAFF race myself. I buy stuff at auctions without really caring where the money goes. But recently I have been taken to task for being less than enthusiastic about them because they are unaccountable. My misgivings as far as this area is concerned have been pounced upon lately as being Unfannish, and Untraditional, and lots of other Uns. Some people have even seemed to take me raising the ghost of such as Abi Frost as a personal insult, because, gosh, it associates them with an act of fraud. Well, yes, Taff was associated pretty directly with an act of fraud. I have even been told by people who should know better, to shut up. Well, I don't go for that, because it associates me too, since I once stood for TAFF, but I at least am now able to stand back a little and believe I should be able to comment. My main problem is with fan funds touting themselves as charities. They are not. Registered charities have to produce regular properly audited accounts so people who contribute to them can be assured the best use is being made of their contributions. Fan Funds are not registered charities (as far as I know) and those who run them are largely self-appointed as far as I can see. How can I get a place on the board of The League of Fan Fund Organisers? Far from being true charities they are in fact the equivalent of someone sitting by the side of the road with a paper cup. How many of us feel instinctively happy about contributing to those cases? Of course the paper cup holders are people we know, love, respect and trust, this being fandom, but as we all know from reviewing the case of Abi Frost, and international banking, things can all too easily go pear-shaped in the absence of controls. Am I wrong to be concerned about this? Especially when no one else seems to care? I guess my main point is that if Fan Funds masquerade as charities, why don't they register themselves as such, apart from it being against Established Fannish Traditions? I'd feel happier personally about contributing to TAFF or the Corflu 50 under these circumstances, because as you've probably worked out by now, I care not a jot for Old Fannish Traditions. Especially one which are all too easy for emotionally fragile fans like Abi Frost to manipulate.

I FELT IT ONLY FAIR TO RUN THIS PIECE PAST CLAIRE BRIALEY BECAUSE SHE NOT ONLY KNOWS A LOT ABOUT THIS BUT HELPS MANAGE FAN FUNDS AND FRANKLY BECAUSE I NEEDED SOMEONE TO TELL ME I WASN'T ENTIRELY TALKING CRAP. CLAIRE RESPONDED THUS:

No one elected me. I've never won, or actually stood for, a fan fund. I've nominated and campaigned for other people; like many fans I've helped to raise money for the funds, and contributed cash directly as well as by voting. But I've also edited several fan fund trip reports, administered races, and handled a lot of the actual money. As professionally, so in my hobbies: I am the background bureaucrat.

The League of Fan Funds is a UK umbrella body formed last century to help co-ordinate fundraising at cons, raise the profile of the funds generally, and hold any cash securely that isn't needed yet. At least one earlier member had previously won TAFF, but mostly we've just been volunteers who were willing to do the work and who our fellow fans were willing to trust. It's a community. It's what we do.

But this isn't the only reason Graham's correct that the fan funds aren't actually accountable. Taking that literally, a lot of TAFF and GUFF winners will tell you I've nagged them to publish accounts showing what they spent money on and where the funding came from. Most haven't. But LFF itself *has* regularly published how money was raised, and which specific funds it was passed on to.

Still, there's no audit. There are usually no questions. The European treasury for GUFF and TAFF each have a typical turnover of several thousand pounds per administrator – similar to a small con. Cons, and most fannish endeavours, run like this too (we give people a membership fee, and expect to get a convention. Usually that works). Eastercons used to publish accounts too; most people didn't seem to read them, and I haven't seen any for a while.

Things have gone wrong several times, and some changes get made in response. Both TAFF and GUFF have their own bank accounts now in the UK, for instance; maybe that gives both voters and administrators some peace of mind. But administrators obviously change every couple of years, and so we need to change the signatories. The surprising amount of time and hassle even that takes is partly why I wouldn't support going down the registered charity route. LFF always told people that if they want to support a charity, and use Gift Aid, they can donate to the SF Foundation; some people in our community can tell us precisely how much more work that involves...

The administrators – the delegates – *are* elected. We trust them to take the trip and administer the next races and replenish the fund; there aren't rules for them to follow, but there are guidelines and FAQs and predecessors to ask. We vote for them, and they get to do it their way. At least, when I vote I always think about everything the winner will need to do. Does everyone? – **Claire Brialey**

TRANSNISTRIA

No, sorry, I didn't just sneeze. Transnistria actually exists. It is a small autonomous but unrecognized breakaway state sandwiched between Moldova and the Ukraine, formed in 1990 and further bolstered by the infamous Transnistrian War of 1992. Most of its inhabitants are Russian speaking, and its security is controlled by Russia, so although no one actually recognizes it, it obviously does have a fair degree of muscle. Mostly it straddles the River Dniester on the border between Moldova and the Ukraine. Its inhabitants (approx 150,000) must be very fond of their river and probably go canoeing and kayaking in summer.



Possibly its most famous celebrity is Nikolay Zelinsky.

Zelinsky studied at the University of Odessa and at the universities of Leipzig and Gottingen in Germany. Zelinsky was one of the founders of theory on organic catalysis. He is the inventor of the first effective filtering activated charcoal gas mask in the world (1915). It shows what goodness can flow from a tiny overlooked state in Eastern Europe, although his invention was just one year too late to help people who died from gas attacks in WW1.

Apparently there are 142 currently unrecognized small breakaway states in Eastern Europe, a lot of them along rivers, and most of them supplied with weapons by Russia just in case anybody threatens them. I don't know why anyone should, but Eastern European politics is not exactly subject to rationality.

OH SHIT UNLESS SOMEONE ELSE WRITES A LOC I WILL HAVE TO FILL UP THE REMAINING SPACE IN THIS ISSUE MYSELF

What can I talk about? Well what's happened to me recently. Well, my favourite video camera died on me, so I've just had to buy another one. Then I drank a bottle of Vodka and just somehow had to find another one to replace it. My life seems to consist of buying stuff to replace stuff I already had. It especially applies to food. Every week we go to the Supermarket and buy exactly the same stuff we bought last week, I'm sorry but the thrill of that particular experience seems to have passed. I am now even previewing bookcases on ebay to replace bookcases which have not yet even ceased to function as bookcases. I don't know about you, but I watch a lot of aspirational TV, where

people view ideal (and some not so ideal) homes they would like to buy. Then I look at my own home, which is crammed to the rafters with kipple, and cannot conceive of selling it even though a neighbouring property sold for 650K. Some things you can't, or simply don't want to replace, I guess.

WAHF: Jim Linwood, who took time out of busy schedule to tell us he was too busy to send a loc. Back in the days when locs were locs, WAHF's were usually reserved for people whose comments were either too short, inconsequential, or too inane and rambling to use but who had at least invested both time and money to do so. I'm sorry but I'm not going to do WAHFs in this email age. I could alternatively publish a list of people I've never heard from, but I fear it would be far too long to consider.

THANKS TO D. WEST FOR THIS MONTH'S HEALTH ALERT

I'VE GOT
DIABETES



HEY, THESE DAYS
EVERYBODY'S
GOT DIABETES



IN FACT, IF
YOU HAVEN'T
GOT DIABETES
THERE MUST
BE SOMETHING
WRONG WITH YOU

Hey ho. Another deadline approaches marching ever nearer like a plague of implacable Arnold Akien dolls dressed in SAS camouflage suits. Graham, they seem to say, what have we left undone, what unrepeatabe opportunities have we squandered in our search for Fannish hedonism. What tails remain unpinned on what donkeys? More importantly, who have we singularly failed to annoy and antagonize. Who's skin have we failed to get under to the degree that they want nothing more than to rip us off like scabs. Who remains with their smug complacency unstirred. Who remains with their jugulars intact? Far too many, Graham, far too many. Well, thanks Arnold. Now at least another month before we can see if we are really capable of Doing Better.

Meanwhile please sharpen your quills in readiness before applying them to the sheets of virtual parchment you see before you, and let us have a loc (I refuse to call them emocs) I will cry if you don't and may even be tempted to cross you off my virtual mailing list. Write now before the circus that is Loncon3 leaves you drained of strength and will to live.

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