



THE NAVEL

ALL THE FLUFF THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

COLOPHON

Welcome to the Distributed Eastercon Newsletter. Newsletter staff can be distinguished because they're wearing 1972 Eastercon badges from Chessmancon, but broadly speaking, it's the *Plokta* cabal. We want your digital photos—look out for the Colour Supplement. Bring them on a memory stick to us (perhaps in the bar, or around the place). Take camera phone photos of funny things and email them to us at **locs@plokta.com** or picture send them to **xxxxxx xxxxxx**. We also want copy, preferably in plain text format—again, on a memory stick, or emailed from your smart phone to **locs@plokta.com**. Or send us text messages. If all else fails, drop bits of paper into the box in Ops. We aren't running a general printing facility—suggest you try one of the many Chester copy shops. We can arrange to print out single copies of convention related material.

Note that the Newsletter is not in the place marked 'Newsletter' in your Read Me. Instead, we're in the bar. All you'll find in the other room is the Programme Office and they don't know anything about the newsletter; please leave them alone.

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If you're not in the bar...

Programme News

Got a star on your badge? You're on programme! Don't forget to pick up your programme participant letter from Registration. You will need to go to Green Room before your item; they are lovely people who will soothe any last minute nerves, sort out last minute details, and, more importantly, give you that last minute drink. The Green Room is next to con registration.

The League of Fan Funds auction is Sunday night, at 10pm. Come along and buy cool tat. We've also got a dealers' room table where you can get all sorts of interesting stuff right now without bidding or waiting. Call it Buy It Now. Except without the outrageous shipping charge that purports to be from Surbiton but is actually from Hong Kong.

When the Dealers' Room is not enough:

Bookshops in Chester

Dr Plokta's mother, a Chester native, offers the following guide.

The Oxfam bookshop at 19 Bridge Street Row East will be closed on Good Friday, open 9:30 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, closed on Easter Sunday and open 11am to 4pm on Easter Monday. (Dr Plokta's mother will be working there for much of Saturday and Monday.) They've recently had a large donation of SF and there are about 8 shelves of interest,

THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER I

90% are innies and 10% are outies (source:Wikipedia).

fact and fiction. There's a high-class remainder shop and a good second-hand one (with a lot of SF, occult and Arthurian material) side by side on the walls just east of the Northgate. The closest second-hand shop to the hotel, on the corner by the Watergate Street traffic lights, has SF only by accident. The other Oxfam shop, in Frodsham Street, has two shelves of SF. Ring for opening hours, which may not be the same as Bridge Street Row. There are three other charity shops in Frodsham Street, with little SF. The same applies to the two in Upper Northgate Street. There's another remainder shop near the top of the escalator from Pepper Street into the Grosvenor shopping centre. The only new bookshops are Waterstone's in Eastgate row South, and Smith's on Eastgate Street near the Eastgate.

Want to buy something else?

Shopping in Chester

Chester's two-storey shopping is often described as unique, but will be familiar to anyone who's used a shopping mall. Upper level shops are described as on

rows—if someone says a shop is on Watergate Street, it's ground level; if Watergate Street Row, it's the upper level.

The larger chain stores are mostly on Foregate Street or in the Grosvenor Precinct; Eastgate Street, Watergate Street, Northgate Street and Bridge Street have a more eclectic selection of shops.

John Dallman, official con Dirty Old Man, writing under the pen name of Gail Courtney, informs us that the Obligatory Eastercon Leather Sale is happening at Lakeland [*we thought they did PVC rather than leather—Ed*], the clothes shop on Bridge Street Row East.

Literary Corner:

Ian Fleming on Navels

“On the beaten stretch of sand below where James Bond was sitting, two golden girls in exciting bikinis packed up the game of Jokari which they had been so provocatively playing, and raced each other up the steps towards Bond's shelter. They flaunted their bodies at him, paused and chattered to see if he would respond, and, when he didn't, linked arms and sauntered on towards the town, leaving Bond wondering why it was that French girls had more prominent navels than any others. Was it that

French surgeons sought to add, even in this minute respect, to the future sex-appeal of girl babies?”

Feeling hungry?

Eating & Drinking

The con food in the main restaurant will be served between 5 and 9, not 5 and 7 as per ReadMe. Snacks are also being served in both the main bar and the con bar. Late night food (11pm - 1am) includes bacon and sausage baps and veggie faux-pigs. Vegan food is also available at the con—but you have to ask. Everything we've eaten so far has been yummy.

Contemplation set a new record when the bar stopped selling real ale on Thursday evening. Fans are requested to form a bucket chain between the Crowne Plaza and the Marston's Pedigree in the Olde Custom House in Bridge Street.

Eating out?

Restaurant Reviews

Raffles Oriental, 1-3 Eastgate Row, The Cross. Mediocre food, very lethargic service. £17.50 for all you can eat, and this does include crispy duck. The staff make every attempt to sell additional drinks and the food is very salty, hence your bill is likely to be a bit higher than planned. Go if you're very hungry and not too fussy.

Moules a GoGo produced a reasonable bowl of moules accompanied by the traditional frites and mayonnaise for a mere £6.95 (lunchtime price), though they too were a little slow. The availability of jugs of Belgian beer did make waiting more bearable.

Ruan Orchid, 14 Lower Bridge Street (at the top, on the right as you go downhill) - reasonably good but fairly pricey (we spent £100 for three people including desserts and tip) Thai restaurant. Note that the other Thai on Lower Bridge Street is closed for refurbishment.

Martin Easterbrook and Margaret Austin recommend the **Siam Restaurant** (Thai and Tep-panyaki) at 32 City Road.

Alison and Steven's favourite Chester restaurant from many years ago is **Francs**, 14 Cuppin Street. This venerable and cosy Chester bistro has had a bit of a facelift so no longer has a bicycle on the ceiling. Shame. Set lunches (up to about 6pm) are £6.95 or £8.95 for two courses; a la carte probably about £20 a head for two courses and drinks.

Got kids?

Bottle Dungeon

The Club Lounge on the 3rd floor is available to everybody—but especially intended for families. It's a comfy no-smoking lounge with a telly. Please don't leave kids alone in the room but obviously there's no problem with parents sorting out a suitable rota with their friends. NB: there's no loo in this room so you'll want to water your kids before you go.

Late Drinker?

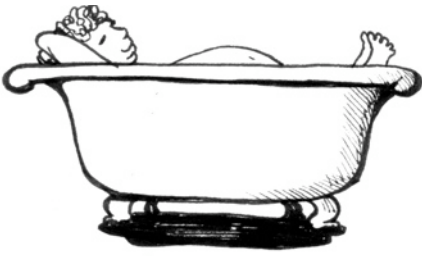
A Better Key Card

Once the cash bar closes, you need a pink key card to buy drinks and charge them to your room. You didn't get this when you checked in. See reception before you're pissed to sort it out and arrange credit.

COMMITTEE INSTALLATION

CHRIS O'SHEA PROGRESS BAR

Currently stuck at 45%,
somewhere on the M6. ETA



THE NAVEL

OH MY GOD IT'S FULL OF FLUFF

COLOPHON

OK, here we are in issue 2 and you seem to have got the hang of sending us stuff. Remember, email things to locs@plokta.com or text or picture message to **XXXXXX XXXXXX**. You can also hand us things on a memory stick or drop bits of paper into the box in the ops room. Key ways that don't work – telling us things without writing them down.

Issue 2; far too late on Friday. Mostly by Alison Scott and Steve Davies, with moral support from Steven, Sue, Jan, Erik, and Square Bear.

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THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS

NUMBER 2

According to the ancient Greeks, Zeus sent out two eagles to fly across the world to meet at its center, the 'navel' of the world. Omphaloses used to denote this point were erected in several areas surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, the most famous of those was at the oracle in Delphi. But what we want to know is: What colour was its belly button lint?

Looking for a Good Time?

Gopher Hunt

Looking for an interesting pastime for the weekend? The ops room is looking for enthusiastic and unskilled volunteers for a range of interesting positions, including security for various rooms, helping out on program items, and all sorts of odd jobs. Gophering is a great way to meet people and have fun. You might even get a GROAT or two which can be exchanged for food and drink in the hotel. Pick your times and work areas by signing up at the Gopher Hole. Look for DC the Gopher Mum; if he's not there, apply at Ops.

Looking for a Good Fit?

Structural Engineering

Generously proportioned fans of the female persuasion will want to know that there's a new Chester branch of Bravissimo, the brilliant bra shop that only sells bras in sensible sizes. It's at 17-19 Watergate Row South and they're bound to have something lacy to fit. No, not you, Erik.

Looking for a Good Cuppa?

TWP Tea Party

Women and unusually convincing cross-dressers are welcome at the TWP tea party, Sunday, 2pm, room 335. A chance to show off your purchases from Bravissimo or other Chester emporia. Please bring your own cups.

Looking for Light Entertainment?

Music Review

Michael Abbott tells us that Ed Alleyne-Johnson of New Model Army and the Purple Electric Violin Concerto was busking in Watergate Street this afternoon. Wikipedia tells us that he's often found busking in Chester city centre. So that would probably be why.

Want to be famous?

Star in Farthing

The people behind Farthing invite you to turn up at the restaurant on Saturday afternoon to have your photo taken. Why? The next cover's going to be a reworking of the Sgt Pepper album cover. The Plokta cabal humbly suggest that this may not in fact be the first time that fans have been photoshopped into this cover; copies of "Dr. Plokta's Lonely Hearts Club Band" have been fetching high prices at fan fund auctions for years. Farthing is welcome to go visit the *Plokta* website for a wide variety of *other* Photoshopping ideas.

Mirror Mirror

Fans accustomed to too much superfluous technology have been staring into the mirrors in the bar expecting to see holograms. If you look at them for long enough you can see a bald eagle.

Vote early, vote often

BSFA Awards

As a reminder, all members of Contemplation are eligible to vote for the BSFA awards. Ballots and ballot boxes can be found at registration and in the dealers' room. Voting deadline is 6pm Saturday for a 9pm ceremony.

[*Ian Snell*]

The Fan Bar doesn't have any windows, but Tony Cullen tells us that there are large posters of all the BSFA award shortlisted artworks instead.

lots of tiny little

Bits of Fluff

If you subscribe to Foundation, your 2007 subscriptions are now (over)due. Renew early and often in the dealer's room.

Nestled in by the walls, the Albion Inn is a lovely traditional English pub with good food and beer. It describes itself as "family hostile".

The Chester Food Festival is on all weekend. There's a marquee with food stalls down at the Crown Courts, outside Chester Castle.

If anyone knows where the Kentucky Fried Chicken is in Chester, please let Steve Rogerson know because he needs an empty KFC box as a prop for Saturday Night's Blake's 7 Wobblevision.

Rubbing our Hands with Glee

Jane Killick has been amusing herself in the ladies loos [not sure we like where this is heading -- Ed] by rubbing her various appendages first with *stimulating*-hand wash, and then with *soothing*-hand lotion. Fun for all the family. [*Jane Killick*]

Looking for a souvenir?

Chester Dalek Art

There's an artist working on the walls by the Eastgate clock who is doing pictures of daleks in Chester. Prices from 10-20 quid. He'll be open Saturday and Monday but closed Sunday. Grab a souvenir before Terry Nation's lawyers find out.

Geography Help

Scottish fans are bemused by the posters for the forthcoming Harry Potter con, to be held "in the country where it all began". As the con is in Edinburgh, they're wondering whether the committee are planning to have the city teleported to England? They assure all Contemplation members that the city was definitely in Scotland when they left there this morning. [*C&M Davidson*]

Still Hungry?

Restaurant Reviews

Fiesta Havana (on Watergate Street. Cuban tapas bar with an excellent selection of tapas. Spanish omelette particularly recommended. Serves cocktails by the jug and by the glass (half-price during happy hour. The strawberry cheesecake cocktail is to die for. Gorgeous ice-cream. Open Sunday.

Summer Palace, 126 Foregate Street, reasonably priced Chinese (under £15 a head), not at all scruffy.

Got wine -- not just a bar, there's a (pricey) restaurant upstairs (£25 for two courses). Good food, great truffles and raspberries, fancy wine list with prices to match, and friendly, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff.

Crypt Cafe -- actually the basement of Debenhams's, but nice coffee and cakes.

Caffe Uno -- we got a review for this but we think it's probably libellous.

Aquavitus (Watergate St) Vaguely Swedish cuisine as interpreted by Italian staff working in a sort of French style. We had their evening set menu, £18 for three courses, all of them delicious including a superb lamb with garlic gazpacho. The lime and poppy seed panna cotta was pretty good too. Closed Sunday.

Fat Cat Review (85 Water Street) Friendly, good beer - usually 3 real ales on poms. Reasonably priced pub menu. Very popular for food and drink with locals - recommended for those who care how much they are spending.

Healthy children's programming

Dire Warning

Cult leaders can be found around the con this weekend. You can easily spot these nutters as they will be wearing long robes, making off-tune percussive beats, and demonstrating an unhealthy interest in the works of Isaac Asimov. Lock up your children.

[*SMS*]

Alternatively...

Sell Your Children into Slavery

The Roman army wants children (join for an hour, see the world, learn to bash a Briton, crush a Celt, pelt a Pict) every day at 14:30 at the entrance of the Dewa Experience (Pierpoint Lane). Do you think we can get them to sign up Jonathan till Monday? [*Jan*]



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THE LIGHTS IN THE SKY ARE FLUFF

COLOPHON

Saturday lunchtime, and we're still surviving.

We need your photos of the con or Chester for the Colour Supplement. Please email them to locs@plokta.com, text or picture message to **XXXXXX XXXXXX** or bring us your memory card or USB key, or, if you're SMS, your external floppy drive, when we're in the bar. All these methods work well for news generally, or you can write things down and give them to us or put them in the box near Ops.

Bad ways to get us news: tell us in the bar when we've been drinking, or at breakfast when we're hung over.

This newsletter supports **Steve Davies for GUFF**. Cos he's one of the editors. And an all round good bloke. None of us are standing for JETS, so you can make up your own minds on that one.

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THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER 42

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy game required the player to collect four kinds of fluff including belly button fluff.

Navel Manoeuvres

The "Glorifying Terrorism" panel has swapped places with the "George Hay spinoff panel. So it is now:

George Hay spinoff—Monday, 13:00, Edward

Glorifying Terrorism—Sunday, 14:00, Charles

There will be further information about participants in these items later on.

Other participant amendments: Battle of the Butlers this evening now includes John Dowd. Vince Docherty is unable to be on the Going Japanese panel.

Healthy Exercise 1

People who have signed up for Tony Keen's Roman Chester walk should meet at the hotel entrance, LG floor, 1pm Sunday. Tony's walk is now full, but Mike Scott will be doing an overflow session at 11am on Monday, sign up at con registration. Tony and Mike went round the walls on Friday synchronising their anecdotes, so the experience should be equally educational.

Healthy Exercise 2

Families with children who fancy a walk around the walls in like company assemble on Sunday by Crowne Plaza lower ground lobby for 10:30 departure. Full circuit (2 miles approx) not obligatory and intending to return for bid session at 12 regardless. [*Caroline Mullan*]

Healthy Exercise 3

We had a lovely swim with some adults and lots of kids this morning, and we're planning to do the same tomorrow Sunday 2pm.

We'll need one parent *in the pool* per family please other than by specific prior arrangement. Note that apart from the baby pool the pool is a consistent 4ft deep, so if your child is less tall than that you will want to supervise closely or provide them with a snorkel.

[*Alison Scott & Steven Cain*]

Still More Gophers Needed

Ops tells us that they need more gophers. The ones that turned up yesterday were delicious. Burp.

A teaser from our Roving Reporter Bookshop News

Less than ten miles from Chester is one of the UK's largest bookshops—it boasts "over 100,000 books". Needless to say it's not worth visiting—now. [*Brian Ameringen*]

Ginger Spice

Jaine Fenn, the fan formerly known as Jaine Weddell, wishes to apologise to Farah for using the 'B' word. Her hair is not blonde, not even strawberry blonde.

Kari would like it to be known that her breasts are a perfectly sensible size whatever Bravissimo think. Fans wishing to check should... [*That's quite enough of that -- Ed.*]

Ken Slater is Unwell

Ken Slater, well known older fan and beloved dealer of yore, is unwell. Richard and Marion have a card on their table in the dealers' room for well wishers.

[Barbara]

Some of you have been texting us Random Bits of Fluff

The anthology *Glorifying Terrorism* has almost sold out in the Dealers' Room—but there are a few copies left. Pay at the SFF stall and a copy will be with you by Friday, at no extra cost. [Farah]

Farah needs to talk with a keen fan of *Mary Poppins* before she send off a review of a book about her. [Farah]

Jill Bradley is offering free Reflexology sessions on a first come first served basis. She's fully qualified. Find her at a bar near you. [Jill Bradley]

There are severe delays on the Jubilee Line due to a signal failure at Swiss Cottage. [TFL]

Corks Out on Watergate Street is only open today, but it lets you taste the malt whiskeys. Yum.

An out-of-wallet experience

Lessons for Blokes

Do not take your unaccustomed-to-alcohol partner to lunch and have her drink a couple of glasses of beer, then wave her gaily off with the carefree words "Lakeland is having a leather sale".

Hey, we did get their note

Convention Corner

Recombination's PR2 and accommodation form are out, Members can come and pick up theirs from the Recombination desk in the Dealers' Room.

Correction

In an effort to make the copy about Harry Potter fit into the available space, we managed to completely bollox up the story. Whoops. Apparently it did all start in a café in Edinburgh. I get it now. Perhaps.

Fluff from Giulia

Stroll along those beautiful rows and galleries, revel in the lavish wooden carvings, heavy beams, lead light windows. You could be in ancient Lankhmar or Ankh-Morpork. Then dart up a narrow alley to look at the backs of these same evocative buildings. You will find concrete and bricks, plumbing and skips, behold the parallel universe of Chester. Hurry back. Sigh with relief. That end of the alley was just an illusion. But which end? [Giulia]

Apparently, there's a programme...

Con Report 1

The session on "Greek theatre" concentrating on comedy did not seem to have very promising material since, we were told, only one "old comedy" has survived, "we may, or may not, have any middle comedy," and "for a long time we didn't have any new comedy, either". But, in fact, this *was* an entertaining session. I was disappointed that the chorus was denied the chance to sing a bit of a tragedy to the Archers theme tune, but the timing of the interruption by the young child just as the rude picture was shown was perfect.

Security Warning

If you use your credit card at the hotel bar, the receipt will include the full card number, expiry date and name. Dispose of it carefully.

Con Report 2

You'll all have been to the opening ceremony, so no need to tell about the introductions by Chris of Steve, Harry, John, Hayley and last but not least Fran. This will be the last smoking Eastercon, but mind you: only in the designated smoking lounge. The gopher mum (tallish bearded person in black) awaits helpers in the corner next to Farndon (actually where the map has the word Gaming – not where the arrow points). Most interesting: the Newsletter won't be where the arrow points either. Try the bar.

After the dull announcements it was time to have some fun (yeah!) This was an unscheduled programme item with the Black Magician battling the White Queen (or was that red – a person might get confused). The black side took the lead in the starting quiz, but the bright whites soon caught up, and after a bad joke (groan) and a slow finish in the balloon race, black seemed to give it away. In the quest round a red sock seemed difficult to find but tall girls abound and a big handspan must help finance. Musical charades were for the black side again, even after distracting points for cheating (hey, the black side must live up to its name!) Surprisingly the gunfight and armwrestling went to the white side as well as the animal slapstick that beat another bad pun. Final rounds of biblical tableaux were mostly even, but for an album cover the huge crowd of lonely heart clubbers won the day for black. (You might want to come to Teledu Challenge on Saturday evening if you like such an interactive event.) [Jan van't Ent]



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STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF FLUFF

COLOPHON

This issue is being put together after the yummy cabal dinner at La Taverna. Any typos or irreconcilable errors should be put down to the unique nature of this handcrafted wine-fuelled product. La Taverna is jolly nice, if perhaps a little pricey (£40/head) and Giulia got completely squiffy and has gone to bed. Lightweight. If you're still here on Tuesday evening they do a staggeringly cheap Tuesday-only deal: two courses plus a bottle of house wine per head for £15.

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Navel Manoeuvres

The SCA event on Monday morning at 10:00 is cancelled.

Announcements

Don't forget to bid in the art show. It opens on Sunday at 9am (dealers) or 10am (others).

BSFA Awards

Best Artwork: Angelbot, Fangorn (Cover of *Time Pieces*, ed. Ian Whates)

Best Short Fiction: "The Djinn's Wife", Ian McDonald (Asimov's Science Fiction, June)

Best Novel: *End of the World Blues*, Jon Courtenay Grimwood (Gollancz)

The awards were presented in under eight minutes—it's been known to take longer than that to draw a single ticket in the Novacon raffle.

Did we already mention that you should vote for Steve for GUFF?

FanFundery

At the League of Fan Funds table in the Dealers' Room you can:

- vote to send one of many lovely candidates to Japan
- vote to send ~~one of four~~ lovely candidates **Steve Davies** to Australia
- buy cheap books and T-shirts
- get free fanzines including the GUFF fanzine *Maguffin*
- support the fan funds

Following a £10 bid to keep him hairy, ½r granted a temporary stay of execution to his whiskers.

Shaving will resume later unless people pay more not to. Contact ½r or the LFF to protect or prevent hairiness. [Claire Brialey]

There are other Easter conventions Minicon News

There's still free-flowing bheer and cider in the Minicon consuite. Free as in beer. Free condoms, too. Minicon's very own Dr. Whoopie (Neil Rest) reminds all near and far to "play safe."

GoH Charles de Lint [*who really ought to be an honorary Navel GoH—Ed.*] and his wife Mary Ann Harris arrived a bit late due to dramatic US weather. At Opening Ceremonies, Charles told of United "rebooting the plane" Thursday. Too bad the jet's equivalent of Control-Alt-Delete didn't work. [Get a Mac—Ed.]

Saturday morning, GoH Charles Vess is showing the *Stardust* movie trailer along with stills and tales from the set.

THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER 3

Another navel divination method, "omphalomancy", gave only one specific item of information. It predicted how many children a woman would give birth to, by counting the number of knots (bumps in the fleshy plaiting) in her umbilical cord when she was born.

Thanks to David and Shannon Perry's Most Excellent Music Party, I was around for the Krahn-Gahlon 4am pulse check Friday night. Gahlon might not have been able to stay up for the count himself—when I last saw Laurel Krahn shortly after 4, she hadn't yet found him.

Alastair Reynolds will be Pro GoH at Minicon 43 in 2008; other guests are still TBA. [*Geri Sullivan*]

Bribe us with flapjack and we'll advertise *your* con too

Convention Plugs

Satellite 1—Campanile Hotel, Glasgow, Saturday October 6th 2007. GoH Ken Macleod [*Yay! Ken!—Ed.*]

Confounding Tales—Normandy Hotel, Glasgow, 25th-27th May 2007.

Discworld Convention 2008—Hilton Metropole Hotel, Birmingham, 22nd to 25th August 2008. Guest of Honour: Terry Pratchett. Discount rates available from con registration or Chris O'Shea.

Panel Reviews

Climate Change: Fans and Carbon Footprints: Socially responsible panel in which fans told each other to switch off computer screens, shop locally, insulate their houses and not to fly to far off corners of the world just to ~~guzzle beer~~ attend cons, punctuated by complaints that some right bastard had switched off the air conditioning in the room.

What Makes a Good Book Review?: Serious panel in which lots of serious things were said, held in the half of the Kings which gets all the air conditioning, aka, The Freezer.

Hay Lecture: Held in the conjoined Kings I and II rooms, and therefore with ideal temperature, highly entertaining lecture with tricks and visual illusions and a bonsai kitten to start it off.

These Are Not the Tits You're Looking For: This ended on the sober note that the con committee has a moral and legal responsibility to see to it that fans are not killed and eaten by other fans. Con committee looked a little worried at the prospect. [*Anna Feruglio Dal Dan*]

Victorian Super Science: Ranged from Copernick to Edwardian, tried to define super science first (anything that seemed like magic, or maybe a gadget that only one person understands) and talked about what Victorians thought about it themselves (mostly nothing to be taken seriously). They went on to discuss exciting stories, not so much social science fiction as Darwinism, types of aliens for these readers, and lots more.

Did Victorian super science influence modern SF? Dave mentioned *Doctor Who* that refers back to it, Marcus thought it largely forgotten, maybe because many people rebelled against it, and SMS seemed to agree, mentioning it made a difference that Victorians could get their hands into their science, while nowadays we cannot (try to repair a phonograph versus an MP3 player).

Braintrix (George Hay Lecture): Wonderfully interesting lecture by Dr Guillaume Thierry on how the brain tricks us into believing there is a world out there that we control. E.g.: language starts by creating sounds in our throat, these reach the brain via the ear,

and then somehow we make sense of it. We just create meaning; what we're living is just an illusion.

This was amply illustrated by left/right eye anaglyphs, the perception of sound aided by vision in the McGurk effect, the influence of attention and wonderful light & shade tricks (Google "akiyoshi" for more). [*Jan van't Ent*]

Fat Fangirls Alert

Evans has a sale on. [*Sue Mason, whose credit card is lighter now.*]

Restaurant Review

Shanghai is quite a long walk (about a mile—after you get to Hoole Road it takes a long time to get to number 4), but a very good Chinese. Lots of seafood and sizzling dishes, and vegetarians may like the Swede in Honey and Lemon. I did, and I'm a meateater. [*Michael Abbott*]

Random Bits of Fluff

Argument rages in the bar on the subject of which animal Tobes has killed and stuck to his upper lip. Teledu? Wombat? Human? Eric S Raymond?

Overheard in the Bar

"The reason I go to BSFA meetings is because it's the only place you can get a ginger beer shandy these days... Not only that but they have two types of ginger beer."

"I'm not Dutch, I don't put mayonnaise on anything"

"Oh my God. I'd forgotten all these places I can put my hands."

"Being sci-fi fans we have two squamouses and an eldritch."

Karaoke Disco Review

Aaaargh! My ears, my ears!



THE NAVEL

THE TECHNICOLOR FLUFF MACHINE

COLOPHON

We're sure there's a good reason why we decided to do a special colour supplement issue while hungover and bleary-eyed on Sunday morning, but it seems to have temporarily escaped us. Happy Easter to all of our readers. Please can the Easter Bunny bring us a basket of analgesics; we're not sure we can face chocolate at present.

Remember, email things to locs@plokta.com or text or picture message to **XXXXX XXXXXX**. You can also hand us things on a memory stick or drop bits of paper into the box in the ops room. Key ways that don't work—telling us things without writing them down.

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THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER 4

Why is belly-button fluff blue? It has been observed that belly-button fluff tends to be of a blueish tint. Sometimes it looks a little grey, sometimes purple, but generally it's a pale blue colour. Most fluff is composed of clothing fibres, and most clothing has elements of blue or white. The dyes in black clothing, for example, are often not actually black but a very dark blue.

Navel Manoeuvres

No new programme changes, but here's a reminder of previously printed ones that are still valid.

George Hay spinoff now

Monday, 13:00, Edward

Glorifying Terrorism now

Sunday, 14:00, Charles

The SCA event on Monday

morning at 10:00 is cancelled.

Tony's walk around the

Walls is now full, but Mike Scott

will be doing an overflow session

at 11am on Monday. Sign up at

con registration.

Credits for *Inveigle* by David Wake

Dita: Claire Goodall

Luke: Colin Fine

Martin: Mark Slater

Alice: Kate Solomon

Molly: Dawn Abigail

Stewart: Peter Westhead

Beth: Julie Rigby

Jacob: James Steel

Chorus: Philip Fine, Tony Keen,

Alice Lawson, Pat McMurray,

Caroline Mullan, Chris O'Shea,

Richard Stephenson

Stage manager: Kathy Westhead

Stage crew: Derrick Walford

Directed by: David Wake

Executive Producer: Peter

Harrow

Random Bits of Fluff

Mundanes have penetrated our cunning disguise of con t-shirts, multi-pocketed waistcoats, badges etc. While seven of us were seeking a place to eat on

Saturday night, a random passer-by shouted at us "Doctor Who's finished then?" *[DC]*

Liam Proven has lost his sexuality, possibly down the back of the sofa. If anyone finds it, please return it to Liam. *[An anonymous Celtic historian]*

Are you now or have you ever been a card-carrying member of the BSFA?

BSFA Members

Renew your subscription at the Cold Tonnage table in the Dealers' Room—or check when your subscription renewal is due. If you are not a BSFA member, you can join there. *[Peter Wilkinson]*

Retraction

Claire Brialey quite reasonably asks us to point out that she wrote her fan fundery article in neutral tone on the matter of GUFF, despite the fact that she personally nominated and supports Ang, and EVIAL CABALISTS changed the text in a way that might have indicated that she favours Steve's candidacy. We are delighted to make clear that it was in fact your newsletter editors saying STEVE FOR GUFF STEVE FOR GUFF STEVE FOR GUFF RAH RAH RAH!

AIEEEE! My Eyes!

Our collective SANITY took a major hit when we discovered that Jess Bennett has been crocheting cthulhoid willy warmers for DougS.

We don't need no steenkin' badgers



—Alison Scott

Graffito seen in Chester



—Liz Baty

Peter Weston and Tobes arm-wrestling for the future of fandom



—Steve Davies

Ian McDonald accepting his BSFA Award



—Jan van't Ent

The Plokta Cabal's engines of reproduction



—Alison Scott

Karaoke Songs of Praise—my ears, my ears!



—Alison Scott

Victorian Super-Science



—Jaap Boekestein

THE SUPERNUMERARY NAVEL

WHERE'S THE AWARD FOR BEST FLUFF THEN?

Full BSFA Award Results

78 ballots in total

Best Novel

70 votes cast

8 votes no initial preference

5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st	
49	20	16	14	14	End of the World Blues
	19	16	15	15	Nova Swing
	19	16	14	14	Lost Witchfinder
		15	13	13	Darkland
			11	11	Icarus
				3	No Award

Best Short Fiction

63 votes cast

15 no initial preference

6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st	
30	25	25	23	21	21	The Djinn's Wife
20	15	15	15	15	15	The Highway Men
	15	12	12	10	10	Signal to Noise
		9	9	9	9	The Point of Roses
			4	4	4	The House Beyond Your Sky

Best Artwork

63 votes cast

15 no initial preference

4th	3rd	2nd	1st	
27	18	18	17	Angelbot
23	15	15	15	Droid
	10	10	9	The Return to Abulation
	10	10	9	Ring of the Gods
		8	7	No Award
			6	Made in Sheffield



THE NAVEL

IF IT'S NOT IN THE NAVEL, IT'S NOT FLUFF

COLOPHON

As always, email things to locs@plokta.com or text or picture message to **XXXXXX XXXXXX**. You can also drop bits of paper into the box in the ops room.

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THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER 5

Legend claims that Tortellini were inspired by the goddess Venus' navel. An Italian mediæval legend tells how Venus and Zeus, weary one night after their involvement in a battle between Bologna and Modena, arrive at a tavern in a small town on the outskirts of Bologna. After eating a hearty dinner and becoming slightly drunk, they decide to share a bedroom. The innkeeper, captivated after watching them, creeps to their room and peeks through the keyhole of the bedroom door. However, all he can see through the keyhole is the navel of Venus. This vision leaves him spellbound—so much so that he immediately rushes to the kitchen and creates a pasta inspired by Venus' navel...and so were born Tortellini. (<http://www.barillaus.com/faq.aspx>)

Navel Manoeuvres

By popular demand the *Out of the Unknown* episode 'Level Seven' will be repeated on Monday in Christleton at 1pm [*Mark Slater*]

Following interest in Library Thing at the library cataloguing panel, Fran Dowd will demonstrate LibraryThing.com in the bar on Monday after the closing ceremony.

More Healthy Exercise

We're taking the kids swimming again, at 9:30 am Monday. Families (including a swimming parent) are very welcome Apologies to Claire Goodall and David Wake, both of whom had to dodge multiple randomly small swimming objects today. [*Alison Scott*]

Hair Raising

Current score for ½r: £17 21 for loss of facial hair, £40 15 against, leaving us with noticeably more money for LFF, and noticeably more visibility for ½r's face. Contributions, both for and against hirsuteness, are still welcome.

Eastercon News

Inevitably, the LX bid for the Eastercon won by many votes to 3. The 2009 Eastercon will now be held in Bradford at the Cedar Court Hotel (and numerous others). Guests of Honour are Tim Powers, Jon Courtney Grimwood and Dirk Maggs. FGoH Bill & Mary Burns [*Good guests!—Eds*]. Website: www.lx2009.com Rates at a low £35 (£25 unwaged,

£25 under 25, £15 under 17, £5 under 12, free under 5 or if you attended an Eastercon before 1964) for the rest of this con.

Things You Never Wanted to Know About Navels

Bridget Bradshaw informs us that when she was at university she met a bloke who could put a yoyo in his navel. A YoYo biscuit. It's not so much the doing that bothers us as the contemplating.

Random Bits of Fluff

Liam Proven's sexuality is safely held in escrow awaiting probate. [*An anonymous glorifier of terrorism*]

Could David Farmer please contact the League of Fan Funds about his JETS vote. Come to the LFF table in the Dealers' Room. [*Claire Brialey*]

John Meaney is visiting the con for the day! Buy him a beer!

Vote for JETS—many of the candidates are at the convention.

The Art Show took about £1600—quite low for an Eastercon.

Lumps of Dead Animal

We've been appreciating the hotel's way with searing lumps of dead animal this weekend. The carvery was great value for £6.95, with roast beef the way both Marianne likes it (cooked way past the point of edibility) and the way Alison likes it (lean the cow against the radiator).

The lunchtime buns with hunks of dead animal were also very yummy, as was the chef.

Convention Plugs

Year of the Teledu would like to thank everyone who has written limericks, solved cryptograms and thought about Big Issues. Gold Stars to all those who came to the Teledu challenge. It is only coincidental that the challenge was won by the young lady who took off most of her clothes.

For more Teledu fun, discussions and big ideas, come to Year of the Teledu, July 20th-22nd in Leicester. Membership is limited so join while you still can. [*YOTD*]

Redemption 09, 20-22 February 2009. Even though Redemption is still looking for a hotel, it is selling memberships for £40 and this goes up to £45 on 20 April and possibly higher when they know how much the new venue will cost. Rumours are that Chester and Chipping Norton are among the front runners in the hotel quest. [*Steve Rogerson*]

More Minicon News

Saturday night's parties included DreamHaven Books 30th Anniversary party, a Peeps party, the LiveJournal party (still going when I wandered by shortly past 3am), and several other entertaining affairs, but my Party of the Night Award has to go to Amalgamated Spleen, Inc. I cheerfully signed my spleen organ donor card and obtained their "Harvest Me Now" badge ribbon, but it was the combination of convivial company and theme execution that took home the prize. In addition to their usual signage, our friends at ASI served up five unique wines un-

der their Flenser label: Albino Wino, Cordwater, Stealth Bovine, Sluice Juice, and my personal fave, Pardonnay. As the label on the back of the bottle explained, "We *hate* Chardonnay. Absolutely detest the stuff. So we figured we could ferment a diseased pancreas and end up with something a damn sight better than Chardonnay. Turns out we were wrong." [*Geri Sullivan*]

Survival of the Fittest

Caroline Mullan went to the Blue Planet Aquarium and learnt about a shark that has two entire sets of genitalia. Cool. Even better, it incubates eggs in each womb and hatches them live in utero. In each side, the strongest baby sharklet eats all its siblings. Yummy. And when they finally get into the ocean, the stronger remaining baby eats the other.

The cabal is now considering how this can be adapted for Orbital children's programming.

Around the City Walls

People who missed the guided tour shouldn't shy away from trying to walk the walls alone (although strolling with some company is better). [*Or sign up for Mike Scott's tour tomorrow—Ed.*] Go down Watergate Street, admire the arch and climb up. Either way will do, but try going south, past The Roodee (Chester Racecourse), crossing Grosvenor Road, passing The Castle (with the impressive Flag Tower) and then along the River Dee. Military history can be found at the Cheshire Regiment museum just up St. Mary's Hill. Then continue over the Bridgegate. Instead of walking the high wall

here, you can also admire it from below and walk up through the Roman Gardens, following the wall to the north. Climb the wall again before the Newgate, and continue up to Thimbleby Tower. That has a view of the partly excavated Roman amphitheatre. Walking North brings you to the wonderful Eastgate Clock, with a nice view of busy Eastgate Street. Walk north past the Cathedral until you reach the north wall along the Shropshire Union Canal. Past the Northgate you get to St. Martin's Gate over the busy ring-road. Admire the Northgate locks, where you might see some canal boats being passed through (there's an impressive height difference to overcome, which gets done remarkably quickly). Look quickly at the railway intersection near the Water Tower before you turn south again and step down at the Watergate. [*Jan van't Ent*]

Daytime Paper Doll Masquerade Results

Kids

Best hand-drawn: Tilly "Cinderella"

Best colouring: Meriol "Blue mini-dress"

Best alien: Danae "Alien"

Future of fannish fashion: Charlotte "Diamonds"

Adults

Best recreation: Michelle "Rose Tyler"

Best use of a brass bra: John O'Donnell "Heroine"

Subtlety in the face of fandom: Tanya Brown "Purple Dress"

Blatant self-promotion: Teledu

Best in show: Deirdre Counihan "Alanna from 'The Panther'"



THE NAVEL

THE COLOUR OUT OF FLUFF

COLOPHON

This is probably the last one, and we're losing our email and text message channels, but you can still drop bits of paper into the box near the ops room, just in case we do a drunken dead dog issue.

The Navel was edited by Alison Scott, Steve Davies and Mike Scott, assisted by Flick, Giulia de Cesare, Steven Cain, Sue Mason, Jan van't Ent and Erik Olson. Thanks to Sue Mason and Dave Hicks for navel illos, and to all our contributors. And special thanks to the con committee for stepping into the breach at such short notice and in such good style.

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THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS

NUMBER 6

Venus navel (nombril de Venus) is the French name for the plant pennywort.

LFF Loot

LFF raised £1,040 at Contemplation:

- £760 from the auction
- £100 for shaving (1/2r £55, Tobees £25, Liam £17.50)
- £130 from sales of t-shirts and books
- £20 from Alison eating Hershey "chocolate"
- £30 from other donations

These figures do not include voting fees for JETS and GUFF, or TAFF direct sales. Thanks to all. *[Claire Brialey]*

Monster Easter Egg Hunt Winners

1. Kathy Taylor
2. Mad Elf
3. Pauline Morgan

All winners contact Peter Harrow for prizes. Selection on a first come first served basis. *[Peter Harrow]*

Dragon Sale

Real Dragons sold in the art auction for £47. All proceeds go to Chester Zoo for preserving endangered species. Thanks to Kevin Buley and Chester Zoo for yesterday's item on komodo dragons. *[Peter Harrow]*

Convention Listings

Chris O'Shea and Wilf James are upgrading their con listing sites. They now plan to offer extended convention and local group information. If you are planning a convention or you run an SF

group, please contact Chris or Wilf.

Chris is: conventions@con.org, www.smof.com/conlist.htm

Wilf is wilf.james@ntlworld.com, homepage.ntlworld.com/wilf.james/i_conlist.htm

Convention Plugs

The Satellite 1 t-shirts can be ordered from the con desk in the Dealers' Room for £18 inc. UK postage. *[Satellite 1]*

Lost Property

A copy of *The Man with Absolute Motion* by Silas Water, voted turkey of the con, can be retrieved from Ops by its owner. If he wants it back.

Adult Paper Doll Masquerade Results

- **Sigmund Freud Award for Jury Breaking:** Chris Tregenza, Teledu Nightmares
- **Most Doom-Laden Giant Willy of Doom:** Andrew Patterson, His & Hers
- **Best Gift-Wrap:** Serena Culfeather, Mutant Zebra Woman
- **Best in Show:** Jess Bennett, Lady Badger

Going Home

The best train route to London today:

- Chester to Wolverhampton
- Replacement bus (or £30 taxi) to Birmingham New Street
- Birmingham New Street to Marylebone *[Farah Mendlesohn]*

Best paper doll in show (by Deirdre Counihan)



—Mike Scott

Hall costume



—Omega

Best adult paper doll (by Jess Bennett)



—Stephen Cooper

It's all too much for Paul



—Alison Scott

Balloons over Chester



—Steve Davies

Your newsletter team hard at work



—Erik Olson

Badger, badger, badger, badger...





THE NAVEL

SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FLUFF

COLOPHON

This really is the last one; the con is over and our mighty colour duplicators have gone. So we're in the bar and in monochrome. Think of it as a tribute to Teledu. We remain the *Plokta* cabal and you can read our fanzine at <http://www.plokta.com>

In what has become a Grand Plokta Tradition, we celebrated the end of the convention by sending Abi Brown to the bar to buy us all champagne with our accumulated Groats. She even brought back some change.



THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER 7

The total liquid capacity of the navels of the *Plokta* cabal is equivalent to one large flask of warm sake.

Secret early results

Awards

Doc Weir: Sue Edwards

Best Hall Costume: Jess Bennett

Phlosque: presented by SMS for the piece of artwork that best embodies the evanescent essence of phlosque, went to Anne Sudworth. The winning work was that really lovely picture of a fairy with a tree and the moon, which stands out head and shoulders above her other work (but SMS can't remember what it's called).

Special Navel Competition

Identify our Model

Why not wander around the Dead Dog trying to spot which fan contributed the lovely innie depicted on our masthead? There will be a small prize for the first correct answer.

Special SMS Clause

Future Newsletter Editors Take Note

Take care to include a disclaimer along the lines of "We will not run anything we can't understand, can't edit or is longer than the whole newsletter".

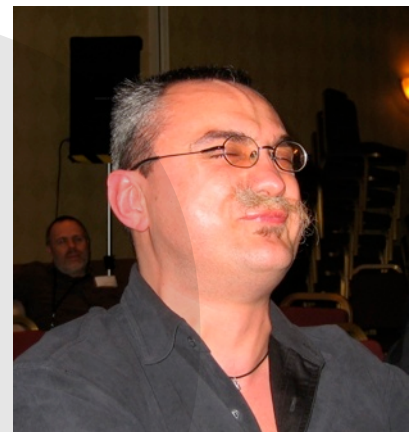
Latest Facial Hair Fashions

Sexy cosmetic secrets of the stars

Highlights of the auction included much shaving. 1/2r's face is now sparkingly clean-shaven, and we learnt that the dodgy rectangle of loose hairs carefully concealed under Liam's lower lip

is called an Imperiale. We thought it was normally known as a Plonqueur. We also discovered that Liam's top tip for enhancing inadequate facial hair is to blacken it up with mascara. Oddly no money was offered to preserve this display for micropogonologists of the future. Women with experience of having their eyebrows plucked suggested that the fastest way of dealing with it would be tweezers, or perhaps waxing (with a postage stamp).

However, this was nothing compared with Tobes' moustache which many fans claimed to have seen previously on the *Cats that look like Hitler* website.



Pin the mutton chop on the Liam

Would that be gin or gin?

Convention Solvent!

Rumour has it we have met the food and drink spend. Thanks to the hotel for selling exceptional dead animal in a bun in many flavours and for generally being fab.

Inveigle

David Wake surprised us all with last night's play. It started from a somewhat experimental psychological grief experience (okay, a wake) played out in the middle of the audience, with the schizophrenic voices one kept hearing offset against the chaotic interactions of the friends and colleagues at the funeral. Then gradually it developed into the voices taking over, which slowly became clear when the players started interacting with what had seemed like Molly's voices at first. Feeling sorry for Dita's loss developed into anxiety for something whispered into one's ear - finally working out into something like an alien hive mind. Even this was a rather fragile thing though, with less power than you'd originally fear... or wasn't it, Eira? [*Jan van't Ent*]

Obligatory Cute Kids

In search of the castle of the frozen dairy promise

We took the kids round the city walls. We didn't quite keep track of them all the time, but we counted them all out and and we counted them all back. We just aren't sure they're quite the same ones. When we returned to the con, all the grownups were exhausted and all the kids were still hyper. That worked well then.

Loose bits of Fluff

"Best Eastercon since Confabulation" [*John Dallman*]

"We did the tour around the city wall in two days."
[*Most of us managed it in 90 minutes—Eds*]

If you haven't yet voted for JETS or GUFF you can give your ballots to Claire Brialey or Alison Scott tonight, or get them in the post in the next few days.

"We could fit one more bit of fluff into the Navel if it was only two lines long"

Assaulting Our Senses

We've received a review of the obscene filking workshop, as follows [*cont. p 94—Ed*]

We Get Letters

Have enjoyed Navel-gazing in far-off Seattle. You guys are really funny! (Not like those phony funny guys.) Also: Johan Anglemark for GUFF! [*Randy Byers*]

Novacon 37's rates rise from £35 to £38 on 1 May. PR#1 (at <http://www.novacon37.org.uk>) includes the first in a series of articles by Peter Weston and Mark Plummer charting the history of British sf conventions. [*Steve Green*]

Rebecca Alice Stewart, sister to Hester, was born at home at 5.30 on Thursday. 9lbs 1oz. Judith's tired but well. [*Alex Stewart*]

Newsletter Team Hard at Work #2

Hurrah for Graits!

Yes we know this from experience. Don't ask.

Navel Advice Guide

When drinking spirits from people's navels at debauched parties, don't use Stroh.

Time to go home

Closing Ceremony



Don't They Look Relieved? Many thanks to Fran, Chris and the committee