

# **TYNECON III THE CORFLU**

**NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

27<sup>TH</sup>-29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2015



**PROGRESS REPORT NO. 1  
NOVEMBER 2014**



# OUR CHAIRPERSON ADDRESSES THE NATION

I started my fannish career in the 1970s. I hung out with Ratfandom, I went to Eastercons, I published a fanzine – heck, I even helped organise a couple of conventions. And then I threw it all away. I got involved in the world of babies and mortgages, and didn't have time to write or the money to go to conventions. I still saw a couple of fannish friends – our kids went to the same school. But it wasn't the same.

Over the years, I made a few forays into conventions. We went to Conspiracy (Worldcon) in 1987 because it was handily sited near my parents' house, and they would babysit for us. I went to an Eastercon at Heathrow for the day because it was in London. But I felt disconnected.

It took a friend's death to get me back into fandom.

At John Brosnan's funeral I met a lot of old friends, fans I hadn't seen for years and really shouldn't have neglected. And there was a warmth there, and Linda Krawecka. And she tempted me into an internet group, Inthebar. And I was back with a group of creative and like-minded people.

And a lot of them went to Corflu. That's how I first heard about it.

Another death, this time in our family, provided us with the means to take a fabulous trip to San Francisco and Las Vegas and my first Corflu, Corflu Silver. They gave us a warm welcome. And I remember very distinctly sitting in the audience at a panel discussing paper fanzines versus electronic fanzines and feeling that I'd come home, these were my people.

And that's how I feel about Corflu. I was part of the team that organised Corflu Cobalt in Winchester in 2010, and it was lovely to be able to welcome people to the convention and have a great time with them.

I hope you'll be able to join us at Newcastle upon Tyne and make a long weekend of it. We have a creative team putting together an excellent programme for you. The schedule will ensure that you have plenty of time to enjoy the dining experiences of Newcastle, and we'll have a handy restaurant guide to help you do just that. We've got excellent facilities in the hotel, with our own bar right next to the programme hall. And the hotel's not out in the middle of a motorway or stranded near the airport – it's in the heart of the city, and minutes from the station. It's a nice city with lots to see.

So I do hope you'll join us.

If you've got any queries, an email to [Corflu32@gmail.com](mailto:Corflu32@gmail.com) should bring you a speedy response. And you can check our website [www.corflu.org](http://www.corflu.org) for the latest news.

The sharp eyed amongst you will have noticed that I've taken on the job of memberships person. Unfortunately Alan Dorey felt unable to continue in this role. His work and family commitments have to come first, but we are grateful for his work in establishing the role, and wish him all the best for the future. We hope he'll still be able to join us in Newcastle.

And looking at the pieces in this PR, some vital members of our team haven't got a mention. There's Harry Bell who created our logo. John Harvey is responsible for creating and maintaining our webpages. And John Nielsen-Hall is counting the money.

Pat Charnock

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## **GERI SULLIVAN AWARDED CORFLU FIFTY GRANT**

The Corflu Fifty Fan Fund, set up to help bring people to Corflu who might not otherwise be able to attend, has made the award this year to Geri Sullivan, and we are pleased to be able to offer her a complimentary membership to go along with this. Needless to say, we on the committee all look forward to entertaining her, as I'm sure will all our members. Geri has been a prime mover in fandom for many years now, and won best fanzine Hugo for the fanzine SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY No. 12 (co-edited with Randy Byers) which she had taken over from Lee Hoffman. She has also established a reputation for her work with the Ignobel Awards. Geri is already busy planning her trip and is keen for advice on travelling and generally having fun in the UK, not only during Corflu but the Eastercon on the following weekend. Anyone with advice or simply best wishes can contact her on [gfs@toad-hall.com](mailto:gfs@toad-hall.com)

If you want more information on the Corflu Fifty Fund, or feel like joining (a mandatory cash commitment is required), please contact Curt Phillips on [absarka\\_prime@comcast.net](mailto:absarka_prime@comcast.net) or Rob Jackson on [jacksonshambrook@uwclub.net](mailto:jacksonshambrook@uwclub.net)



# NEWCASTLE IN MODERN CULTURE

According to Lindisfarne 'The Fog on the Tyne is All Mine'. The group came from Newcastle and named themselves after a Holy Island off the coast of Northumbria, so I guess they might be allowed to claim ownership of such a weather phenomenon. But, Lindisfarne notwithstanding, Newcastle, of course, has a rich and varied musical and general cultural heritage and it has fallen to me to draw your attention to it, although I will leave it to you dedicated visitors to seek out whatever cultural shrines may still exist.

Hank Marvin of the Shadows was perhaps the first superstar guitarist to rise from the ranks of Tyneside plank-spankers, although I'm sure Bert Weedon had probably played there as well. Hank was one of the few rockers who could afford to buy a red Fender Stratocaster in those days, let alone know where to buy one, so it was inevitable he would achieve stardom.

Later Sting would give up his job as a teacher, hang up his corduroy jacket with leather elbow patches, to show off his bass licks with the Police, and write songs exhorting his nubile students not to stand too close to him (I don't think they had Lynx in those days), and Mark Knopfler would lead Dire Straits to World Domination.

Before the last two aforementioned luminaries however, the local band Geordie foolishly made no attempt to disguise their origins and produced many classics, including the vernacular hit 'Geordie's Lost His Liggie' on their first album. Buttonhole Harry Bell at Corflu and he will happily explain the arcane lyrics to you in perhaps unnecessary detail, as long as you buy him a drink. We may even organize a Liggie event to celebrate this, but I leave that entirely up to our programme organizers. Geordie's lead singer Brian Johnson went on to front AC/DC but we can't blame Newcastle for that.

Before even Geordie made their claim for fame, of course, the Other famous Newcastle pop-group, The Animals, had made themselves known, perhaps mostly for issuing a five minute single of 'The House of the Rising Sun'. Eric Burdon's throaty roar had massaged many of our hearts' cockles and the otherwise talentless Alan Price had had hits with one of Randy Newman's most anodyne songs 'Simon Smith and his Amazing Dancing Bear'. Alan however earned his kudos as a Newcastle musician by hanging on to Bob Dylan's coat-tails when he visited on his first UK tour and trying desperately to ingratiate himself with the singer, whom I

suspected went along with him because he couldn't understand his accent. (Can anybody tell I'm not a big Alan Price fan?)

Harry Bell would never forgive me if I didn't make mention of the global importance of Newcastle Art, and would forgive me far less if I didn't mention he is perhaps amongst the forerunners of those who have made Newcastle art famous, if not a particularly lucrative business to be in. The main Art Edifice, which You Should Visit, is the Baltic, a reconstruction of an old flour mill, and strictly speaking in Gateshead rather than Newcastle. There is usually something different or striking going on there, even if it is only students abseiling down its outside. But I don't know enough about Art with a big \*A\* so I don't intend to go on about it here. There are others more qualified, but he is getting married and going off on honeymoon so obviously has other things on his mind. The Sage, a modern theatre and concert complex, is also in Gateshead, but since Gateshead is only fifty yards away on the other side of the Tyne don't let any geographical complexities put you off. I'd like to say more about the influence of Newcastle (or indeed Gateshead) in the art world, but if you google 'famous Newcastle artists' you won't get very far. The constructor of Gateshead's most celebrated work of art 'The Angel of the North' was in fact born in Yorkshire

Here is a list of notable people associated with Newcastle across the general spectrum of art, science and culture. Take it as you find it and feel free to drop any of their names into conversations you may have at Corflu.

Engineer and father of the modern steam railways George Stephenson; his son, also an engineer, Robert Stephenson, engineer and inventor of the steam turbine.

Modernist poet Basil Bunting.

Days of Our Lives actor James Scott.

Pop star Neil Tennant, Renowned Diva Cheryl Cole, and loosely-called entertainers Ant and Dec, and international footballers Michael Carrick and Alan Shearer.

Peter Higgs the 2013 Nobel Prize for Physics winning scientist and the man who first predicted and theorised the Higgs boson, was born in Newcastle.

John Herdman, coach of the Canadian Women's National soccer team .

John Dunn, inventor of keyed Northumbrian small pipes, the most characteristic musical instrument in the region, lived and worked in the city.

That's it. We have officially reached the bottom of the barrel. And without even mentioning Bryan Ferry who was born in Washington in Tyne & Wear.



Oh, I forgot, you're interested in SF... well the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, author of dystopian SF novel "We" lived in Newcastle during the First World War if that's of any interest

Graham Charnock

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## THE VERMONT HOTEL

One of the attractions of Newcastle is that it is not flat, it is a city of levels. One can stand on the Gateshead side of the river, look across and see trains passing amongst the rooftops. From the Heritage suite or Ballroom of the Vermont Hotel you will look down at the quayside and four bridges, two low level and two high. Within a few minute's walk from the hotel is the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Castle Keep and Black Gate, and the Church of England St Nicholas's cathedral - parts of which date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

The advantage of the Vermont Hotel is that the main entrance is on the high level, a walk of no more than five minutes from the station for those travelling by rail, or from the Metro with a direct link to the airport. There is also an entrance down on the lower level within easy reach of restaurants, pubs and the quayside. In other words, we have a hotel which dispenses with the need to climb up and down hills.

The Vermont Hotel used to be the offices of Northumberland County Council. The Heritage Suite, the main area we will be using for our programme, was formerly the Council Chamber. It is spacious with a high ceiling and oak panelling. There are tall leaded windows depicting the various industries which are part of the region's history. We will have our own bar alongside the Heritage Suite; this will effectively be our consuite, differing only from the traditional concept in that UK hotel regulations will not permit us to supply free booze or food. Wi-Fi is available throughout the hotel at no extra cost. Inside the main entrance is a lounge with extremely comfortable sofas and chairs which is next to the Redwood Whisky Lounge! A minute's walk across the cobbles is an award winning real ale bar, the Bridge Hotel.

Pat Bell

# BOOKING YOUR ROOM AT THE VERMONT HOTEL

You can book by email, to [reservations@vermonthotel.co.uk](mailto:reservations@vermonthotel.co.uk) , or by phone to +44(0) 191 233 1010. Double or twin rooms are £97 per night, and single rooms are £87 per night. These rates include breakfast and Value Added Tax for the four nights of our special block booking rate, which are: Thursday 26 March; Friday 27 March; Saturday 28 March; and Sunday 29 March. The convention officially starts on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March and ends after a lunchtime Banquet and award ceremony on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, but many people choose to arrive on Thursday evening and/or stay on till Monday morning. Extra nights may be booked should you wish, at the same rates. Parents who wish to book for children should enquire direct with the hotel about sleeping arrangements, as they do have some small extra beds and cots and a few rooms suitable for families; costs for these will need to be agreed individually.

**Do not use the hotel's online reservations system:** this is not programmed to give access to our discounted rates, so you will finish up paying a lot more. For security reasons they will **not** ask for credit or debit card details by email, but they will ask for payment of your booked nights on check-in, as well as take a swipe of your payment card for any incidental expenses you may incur (which of course is standard hotel practice).

When you email or ring the hotel, please ensure you give them the following information:

- Your name. (You must be a member of the convention – we will cross-check names against our membership list)
  - Your contact details – email address and/or phone number
  - The nights you wish to stay
  - The type of room(s) you require (single, double, or twin)
  - Any specific dietary or mobility needs, or other requirements such as child beds, cots
  - Whether you are likely to check-in late on arrival
  - The special Corflu booking code – GA00118, which gives access to our reduced rate
- For any further clarification of hotel booking issues please contact Rob Jackson, Hotel Liaison, by email at [robjackson60@gmail.com](mailto:robjackson60@gmail.com)

# VERMONT HOTEL A PORTFOLIO



Redwood Lounge off lobby



Ballroom, stage at right





Assembly Room (Con Bar) through to Ballroom



Ballroom from balcony, stage at left



## THE CORFLU PROGRAMME

With the convention over five months away as we write, the Corflu programme is still in its infancy, but we'll try to give you a flavour now of what we're planning.

The first thing to say is that much of our programme will be based around the traditional Corflu programme areas of science fiction fanzines, fannish culture and fan history. Some of it might be silly. Being in the North East presents a unique opportunity to draw on the rich fannish history of the area, and we are hoping to celebrate this with Kev Williams' slideshow on the history of '70s Gannet Fandom.

Despite being impressed with the overwhelming choice of programming at Loncon 3, please be reassured that the programme team have decided to stick with the single track, relaxed nature that characterises all successful Corflus. This will include programmed breaks for lunch and a longer meal break in the evening to allow for exploration of Newcastle's restaurant scene.

We're planning to start the programme at 2 pm on Friday. That should give most people time to travel to Newcastle and hopefully get a drink before things get started at the hotel. For those arriving earlier, we're hoping to arrange a walk around the city as one way to keep people busy on Friday morning. Programme will continue during Friday afternoon and resume after dinner.

The majority of our programming, though, will be on Saturday. We're already anticipating running the auction in the evening, which will allow people who want to participate in the convention via the internet from the USA a chance to bid on items at a reasonable hour. And it will allow people attending the convention in person time to lose their better judgement and bid on items too.

Sunday will be given over mostly to the traditional Corflu meal (an early lunch this time), Fanzine Activity Achievement (FAAn) Awards presentations and speech from the convention's

Guest of Honour - who will have been randomly chosen from the hat on Friday (rest assured you can opt out). Before the lunch takes place we're planning to schedule in an opportunity for group photos. For those staying later on Sunday, we might dream up some entertainment for the afternoon too – and even after the formalities are over we intend to continue socialising on Sunday evening.

---Doug Bell, Christina Lake, Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer

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## THE FAAN AWARDS

FAAn Awards... mmm, yes... lovely stuff... carry on... zzz...

WHA'! This Will Not Do, thunders Editor Graham. Write more! Much more! He pounds the table. (US and Canadian readers can substitute dollars for pounds.)

Ooh heck, alright then, just a mo', don't hit me. Let me think...

Okay, okay. The FAAn Awards. There will be some. Definitely. But I will not at this time reveal anything regarding what physical form they will take. This is partly to sustain the required level of narrative tension, but mainly because we haven't decided yet.

Oh, this is going well now. What I *can* safely reveal, without undue risk of Plunging All Fandom Into War, is that the categories will be much the same as they have been in recent years. Unless we decide to juggle them all around at the last minute. However there may be a small change to the voting format, designed to address the knotty Genzine/Perzine boundary definition problem. Or there may not. But if there is, be reassured that it will make things even easier for The Voter — that's you, folks. (Narrative tension be buggered, I just haven't got around to discussing my idea with t'Committee yet. But there's plenty of time. This Corflu thingy's over a year away. Isn't it? It was the last time I woke up.)

One thing that's even more definite than any of the above (unless it isn't) is that the awards will once again be presented by the Dream Team, namely my goodself, ably (it says here) assisted by my glamorous, er, assistant, "Uncle" John Hall. "Unc" has once again threatened to wear a dress for the occasion, and might even do it this time. If he does, but only if, then I shall wear my Suit, and also a Tie (but probably not the one with the naked ladies on it. so I might have to buy another one) and maybe even a Shirt as well. With dreams like this, who needs nightmares, eh?

Right, that's it then. I trust you will agree that this bulletin has been even more information-rich than Prime Minister's Questions. One more thing — whenever the con actually is, it's never too early to start gathering your thoughts in readiness for voting; why not start now, by having a look through the fanzines you've received in 2014, by whatever means. and then check the always-invaluable [eFanzines.com](http://eFanzines.com) for what you might have missed. The voting form will be available early in a New Year, with luck the next one, at which time The Voters — that's still you, folks — should know what they have to do. And I do mean "have". The alternative to doing what you have to do is too awful to contemplate. Believe me — I have, on your behalf, contemplated it, just for the minimum possible time, through interlaced fingers and while wearing protective underwear — thanks, Claire - and staying well within what I believed to be the Safe Zone. (Though I could be wrong. Gnerk.) Please don't risk that awful fate, just for the want of a vovovovote. Zzipp!

--- Mike Meara

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## THE VIRTUAL CON-SUITE

Recent conventions have shown that, given good public area wi-fi access, and the availability of modern hand-held devices, live video streaming can work very well, without a massive investment in resources. Providing good entertainment in this way for those of our members (or anyone else out there in the community) who can't attend in person, will certainly be a priority of ours. Details and urls will be available, of course, closer to the event itself, but in the meantime keep watching the skies (or at least the radio waves).



## **IT'S ALL ABOUT FANZINES REALLY**

*Flashback! Wavy lines! Woo-woo-woo --*

Suddenly it's 4th May 2014, and I'm in the Corflu con suite at Richmond. Aileen Forman is handing out little cakes. Ken Forman is handing out copies of NINE LINES EACH. I take one with each hand, and devour them both.

"You know, Ken," I say, "there's a sense in which NINE LINES EACH is the quintessential fandom of our day."

Ken looks perplexed, as he not infrequently does.

"I'm gonna write up the reasons why, if I can get them straight in my head --"

*Flashforward! Zap! Ku-pow!*

It's August 2014. Worldcon. A cauldron of unholy fans sing all about my ears. I'm talking to Fan Hugo Award nominee, Foz Meadows. I'm trying to explain to her that I liked her panel, that I found her interesting, that I want to go away and read her stuff, that she's coming from a place that's not as far removed as everyone seems to be saying from the place where fanzines have always come from.

I'm trying, and failing. I'm not making myself clear. She's looking polite but blank. I know I'm not getting through, and the more I try, the more I realise I'm failing, that I'm erecting a wall instead of knocking one down. After a couple of minutes I slink away from sheer unworthiness.

*Flashback! Ker-dakka-dakka-dakka! Ploof woo woo muffn plith a woogle!*

2013. (Grey mist surrounds the exact day and month.) "Write me something for Chunga?" invites Randy Byers. "About the place of fanzine reviews in today's fanzines?"



"Is there one?" I respond. He tells me that isn't long enough for a feature article. Eventually I manage to churn out a few thousand words, asking the same basic question at a very much greater length. I press the "Send" button, feeling like a fraud. He and his co-editors print it, but they get the title wrong. Whether this is cosmic justice or not I still can't decide.

*Flashforward! Wheeeee! Ahead of me rockets blaze through the sky!*

October 2014. "Write me an overview of fanzines in 2014," commands Graham Charnock, whose word is law, as old and as true as the sky.

I think back to what I said to Ken, and Foz, and to the Chunga readership, and to the me who existed in 1987 and kept reading about how many science fiction writers got their start in fanzines, and how that seemed a real peachy keen idea, and how I had a few stories I'd written and (correctly) judged not worth professional submission. 1987 suddenly seems a long time ago. Here's irony for you; there are hundreds, nay thousands, more people writing amateur science fiction now than there probably were in 1987. But there sure as hell aren't any of them publishing fanzines full of it.

This is because in 2014 there are more apt places to do so. The Internet has many mansions. The Internet *a change tout cela*.

The Internet has killed letter writing, is killing newspapers, is changing the whole spectrum of communication between human beings. It ought, by all rights, to be killing fanzines.

It isn't.

Fanzines may be fighting a rearguard action, but like cockroaches in a New York slanshack, they're surprisingly hard to get rid of. The very existence of Corflu is initial proof of this; here we have an annual convention that a hundred or more people are prepared to travel to on a regular basis, often across national borders or continents. That must prove something.

"I hope Nine Lines Each isn't going to be set up as a bad example," Ken Forman said to me at Corflu. Calm down, Ken; it isn't.

What Nine Lines Each is an example of -- nay, the epitome of -- is the fanzine as art; the fanzine as something that you can hold in your hand and appreciate, rather than something which exists merely to communicate.

Because let us face it; the fanzine as pure communication device is dead in the water. There is no way that fanzines, or anything committed by means of the postal service, can hope to measure up to the Internet either in speed or in reliability. File 770 metamorphosed from fanzine to web page years ago. Ansible now has three dozen subscribers receiving it on paper,

and thousand times that – literally – who read it electronically. The newszine is no more; it has ceased, pretty much, to be.

Fanzines need to play to their strengths. And they do. Chunga, as already mentioned, always looks good on paper; some people dislike its layout, but there's no denying that actual *thought* goes into the layout, with its columns and running footers and drop caps and what-have-you. That's art.

Nine Lines Each, as its title suggests, contains nine lines apiece from three editors. That isn't enough to communicate much. So it gets by on being pithy and clever and using brevity as its selling point. That's art.

Banana Wings is art, and Trap Door is art. They're put together with care. They aren't just a string of words thrown together with no thought as to how they look once they're on the page. (Fanzines used to be like that. Remember when fanzines used to be like that? Well, some of them.) Fanzines are not, of course, prozines; but the same principles apply to making them look good and read well. This applies even to publications whose primary outlet is online, but which are composed and presented as a traditional fanzine; Mike Meara isn't keen on people reviewing A Meara For Observers, but the most recent issue is nothing short of an extravaganza in both style, presentation, and format.

I'll even go out on a limb here and say that Vibrator is a work of art too.

So when you head up to Newcastle next March, don't think of yourself as being on the way to a sleazy, boozy weekend of mere carousing and merriment. (Although that may be involved.) Think of it as being on the way to a festival of the arts, where lively debate may be expected upon the place of our particular art in the modern milieu.

Or if you'd rather, just think of it as a boozy weekend with friends. Because the great thing about Corflu is that it's all these things at once.

Sandra Bond



### **How to join Corflu 32**

Attending membership (inclusive of Special Closing Ceremony Sunday lunch): £50 or US\$85

Supporting membership: £15 or US\$25

Please note that rates may increase at the end of 2014.

**Membership Enquiries:** corflu32@gmail.com

**Postal address for memberships:** Corflu c/o Pat Charnock, 45 Kimberley Gardens, London, N4

**US Agent:** Robert Lichtman, 11037 Broadway Terrace,  
Oakland, CA 94611-1948, USA

### **Ways to pay now:**

*Sterling cheques:* payable to John Nielsen Hall.

*US dollar checks:* payable to Robert Lichtman.

*PayPal:* from the UK or anywhere else outside the US, send your payment to  
johnsila32@gmail.com ;

from within the US to ghcbnf@yahoo.com

(select "family or friends" and add "for Corflu" in the memo section).

*Membership records will be held on a computer but shared with no other agency.*

Please send your name, address and email contact.

# MEMBERS

**As of 31.10.14**

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Ted White (A)        | 26 Mary Ellen Moore (A)    |
| 2 Pat Virzi (A)        | 27 Kevin Williams (A)      |
| 3 Nigel Rowe (A)       | 28 Farah Mendlesohn (A)    |
| 4 Ron Salomon (A)      | 29 Jim Mowatt (A)          |
| 5 Gary Hunnewell (S)   | 30 Carrie Mowatt (A)       |
| 6 Nic Farey (S)        | 31 Robert Lichtman (S)     |
| 7 Frank Lunney (S)     | 32 Eve Harvey (A)          |
| 8 Rich Coad (A)        | 33 John Harvey (A)         |
| 9 Ron Gemmell (A)      | 34 David Langford (A)      |
| 10 Pat Charnock (A)    | 35 Tony Berry (A)          |
| 11 Graham Charnock (A) | 36 Curt Phillips (S)       |
| 12 Alan Dorey (A)      | 37 Joseph Nicholas (A)     |
| 13 Gary Mattingly (A)  | 38 Judith Hanna (A)        |
| 14 Rob Jackson (A)     | 39 Audrey Nielsen-Hall (A) |
| 15 Doug Bell (A)       | 40 John Nielsen-Hall (A)   |
| 16 Christina Lake (A)  | 41 Miss Fairchild (A)      |
| 17 Claire Brialey (A)  | 42 Jerry Kaufman (S)       |
| 18 Mark Plummer (A)    | 43 Geri Sullivan (A)       |
| 19 Steve Stiles (A)    | 44 Peter Sullivan (A)      |
| 20 Elaine Stiles (A)   | 45 Julia Daley             |
| 21 Jim Linwood (A)     | 46 Douglas Spencer (A)     |
| 22 Marion Linwood (A)  | 47 Dave Cockfield (A)      |
| 23 Paul Skelton (A)    | 48 Martin Easterbrook (A)  |
| 24 Cas Skelton (A)     | 49 David Redd (S)          |
| 25 Murray Moore (A)    |                            |

(A = Attending)

(S = Supporting)

