

February 2025

*The Chequers Hotel
Newbury, UK*

11–13 April 2025



Less than two months until the nightmares stop!...

Corflu 42

*Progress
Report 4*

Memberships:

As of 16/02/2025, we have 90 members; 71 currently plan to attend, with 15 supporting and 2 virtual members. A list of all members can be found at:

<https://corflu.org>

Membership rates:

Attending membership rates are currently £75/\$95, whilst supporting memberships are £25/\$32 and virtual memberships are £10/\$15.

Day rates for Saturday only are £30 (which, like the other membership rates, gets you access to the online programme and Discord for the whole con).

Payments: Please refer to the website at: <https://corflu.org>

Staff:

David Hodson – Chair

Claire Brialey – Memberships/

Money/General All-round

Good Sense

David, Mark Plummer &

Tommy Ferguson –

Programme

Tommy Ferguson – Resident Tech

Geek

Noel Collyer – At Con Tech

Wrangler

Nigel Rowe – U.S. Agent

Bill Burns – Website

A message from your human overlords...

It's now February and this progress report is late, just like the previous ones...

No one's fault but mine; life is hectic in many, many ways and I'm not going to apologise for that. Suffice to say that everything is pretty much on track. This PR contains details of the Sunday "banquet", last minute hotel news, Fanzine of Honour results, and some early programme news just to whet your appetites...Dave

Programme News...

To add a bit more detail to the outline we provided in PR3, not least to help you plan dinner and other excursions so you don't have to miss anything back at the con, although our opening ceremony will be held at 8 pm on Friday, there will be a couple of programme items on Friday afternoon, starting at 3 pm. The dinner break will be after the second of those, from 5.30 pm (yes, it's early, but you've got 2½ hours).

Programme will kick off at 10.30 on Saturday (with a lunch break between 1 pm and 2.30) and at 10.45 on Sunday. The dinner break on Saturday will be from 6.30 to 9 pm; the Sunday lunch 'banquet' will be at 1 pm on Sunday so that you've had a chance to digest your hotel

breakfast and will be followed by the auction – of which more elsewhere – and then the usual ceremonies and Corflu business, which we expect to wrap up around 4 pm.

We'll shortly be in touch with some more of you about participating in the programme; we're trying to spread around a bit the chance to opine from the top table, partly because everyone deserves the chance to relax as well and also because, like being the Corflu guest of honour, most people attending will have something interesting they'd want to contribute. Which also means there'll be plenty of chance to comment and ask questions from the audience but expect to be moderated like civilised people.

(continued on back page...)

The Corflu and Corflu 50 Auction...

As mentioned, this year's auction – in aid of Corflu generally (if needed) and the Corflu Fifty – will be after Sunday lunch (ideally getting started at 2 pm), in the same room.

Obviously, we want to try to maintain the record set by S&ra Bond and Mark Plummer two years ago in Belfast, where everything on offer attracted a bid and everything was sold in the time available. Can you help us meet the challenge?

Some of the highlights for the auction will come from Tommy Ferguson's

Claire Brialey

former fanzine collection, but we're definitely interested in selling other choice items too.

That said, time is limited, and we know there's a lot of stuff most attendees will already have; we'd like to draw up a catalogue in advance so you'll also know what's available and can plan accordingly what to bid on and/or how to smuggle it back into the house. So, if there's something you'd like to donate (thank you), whether fanzines, or other items you think may pique the interest of fans attending Corflu – art, awards,

Atom Abroad



ARTHUR THOMSON

correspondence, blackmail material – please get in touch ASAP and definitely by the end of March. Contact Mark via mark.fishlifter@gmail.com

The Corflu Banquet...

The traditional Corflu Banquet will take place at 1pm on Sunday afternoon, just prior to the auction, business meeting including the FAAn Awards and any future Corflu bids, Guest of Honour speech, and closing ceremony. The hotel are providing a traditional two-course Sunday roast dinner. The meat dish will be roast beef; there's also a fish course of salmon, and a vegetarian nut roast option. The cost of the meal is included in your attending membership.

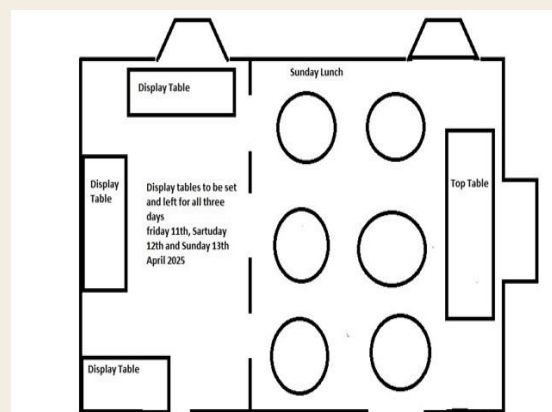
Dessert will be fresh fruit salad with a raspberry sorbet.

The hotel need numbers for each main course by the last day of March (Monday 31), so please tell us via email at corflu42@corflu.org by Sunday

March 30 (this should show us who actually pays attention to these things...Dave).

We will email out a reminder to anyone who hasn't responded by the previous Friday (March 28).

Along with your menu choice, please let us know if you have any allergies so that we can alert the hotel. If you're not attending the banquet, please tell us so that we don't keep hassling you.



Provisional layout of banquet tables for Sunday's meal.

Electronic Travel Authorisation for the UK reminder...

Just a reminder that as of 8 January 2025, travellers from non-European countries including the USA, Australia, and Canada are required to apply for permission to enter the UK through a new scheme known as Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA); details as per last issue.



Fanzine of Honour: Get Reading!...

Claire Brialey

Thanks to everyone who voted for our Fanzine of Honour, odd though it was that some people who nominated titles didn't quite get round to the next stage. (Don't similarly miss your chance to vote in the FAAn awards; maybe even consider not leaving it until the deadline of 29 March.)



A reminder: the idea is that members of Corflu 42 collectively pick a fanzine to honour at the con – so we can (re)read it in advance, discuss it in a specific programme item, and consider more generally how and why it's still relevant and interesting for fanzine fans and SF fandom now.

Thirteen fanzines were nominated (you can see the list in PR3 and in the [#fanzine-of-honour](#) channel in Discord) and it took four rounds of voting for a winner to emerge. And that winner is... Energumen.

Yes, the same fanzine that emerged from the popular vote after the panel at Corflu Pangloss. Edited by Mike Glicksohn and Susan Wood between 1970 and 1981, it seems Energumen is the truly popular choice of Corflu members. That said, Mota (ed. Terry Hughes) ran it a very close second this time, with Attitude (ed. Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells) flying the flag for UK fanzines more distantly in third place.

I encourage everyone to keep talking about all the fanzines nominated, perhaps especially including those honourable mentions, up to and at the con.

For now, though, this is your opportunity to brush up on Energumen ahead of the programme item on Friday afternoon. There are 16 issues, which you can find at <https://fanac.org/fanzines/Energumen/index.html> (plus the flyers and supplements scanned by Taral Wayne for his original archive page at efanzines.com). I'll be in touch shortly with a few people to lead the initial programme discussion, but we'd like to do this in a way that enables as much participation as possible. So get reading!

Free Fanzine Table Reminder...

A quick reminder that James Bacon will be bringing copious numbers of fanzines, including the bulk of Tommy Ferguson's fanzine collection mentioned above, for redistribution to interested parties. James is also collecting material for similar tables at Reconnect, the 76th Annual Easter Convention in Belfast over Easter weekend. Contact James for details at jamesbacon74@gmail.com or see the details in Progress Report 2.



Travel to and from Newbury from London and local airports...

Direct trains run to Newbury from Reading, London Paddington, and Plymouth (via Exeter). Check <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk> for times, connections and prices.

The train station is about 15 minutes' walk from the hotel (the Premier Inn and Travelodge are a similar distance, and only a few minutes from the Chequers). There's a taxi rank at the station entrance; if you require an accessible taxi, please approach a member of station staff. There is a bus (the X34) that goes most of the way, but you might need another bus to connect to it from the station.

To drive, Newbury is quite close to the M4 motorway and also accessible from the M3 – but the London-based members of the committee aren't primarily drivers, so you might well have your own preferences and probably better knowledge than us if you want to drive to the hotel.

The hotel's driving directions are: Exit M4 (J13) and take the A34 to Newbury. Keep in the left-hand lane and take the A339 to Newbury. Go straight over the roundabout at Vodafone HQ. At the next roundabout, turn right to the town centre. Go over one mini roundabout; at the next mini roundabout you will see the clock tower. Turn right and the hotel is situated on the right. The car park is through the coaching arch.

Final thoughts...

PR5 will mainly be an exercise in whetting your appetite for the programme and the con itself, about a week before we see one another in Newbury. Any last-minute updates will be in there but keep an eye before then on the Corflu website at: <https://corflu.org> and don't forget the discord at: <https://discord.com>



Programme News...

(continued from page 1)

Some of you will now be very keen to find out how to opt out of being selected as guest of honour (which could, as is customary, be any attending member who isn't exempt), and you can do this in three ways:

- have been guest of honour at a previous Corflu
- tell us before the programme starts on Friday at the con (thanks to those who've already done so)
- dazzle Dave Hodson with a musical fact he didn't know if you'd forgotten to tell us and your name is randomly chosen.

Dave adds: After seeing the magnificent and totally impartial job that Jen Farey did with the Guest of Honour draw at Corflu 41 in Las Vegas, I intend to ask her to supervise this year's draw. All bribes and any dazzling should be directed towards Jen.

Beer Update...

The hotel bar are currently sourcing several craft beers for attendees to enjoy. We have asked them for a pale ale, an Indian pale ale, and a dark beer (either a porter, a stout, or a dark ale).

These will be on top of a good selection of lagers, ciders, and bitters for the less refined palate (eg: mine – Dave).

AWE 75...

An exhibition at the West Berkshire Museum
by Rob Jackson.

11 minutes' walk from the Corflu 42 hotel, there's a timely exhibition about the UK Atomic Weapons Research Establishment's 75 years so far. Dave Langford's humorous novel *The Leaky Establishment* was set in an uncannily similar agency, and gets a mention in the exhibits.

Free to enter, the exhibition runs till the end of 2025, and is open Wed-Sun 10 am-4 pm (although admittance stops at 3.30pm on the dot).

Hotel Booking Update...

There are now only eight rooms unbooked at the Chequers Hotel, about half of which are larger family or other suite rooms. There are also a double and three twin rooms. These will be released to the general public on March 8 if not booked by Corflu 42 members, so, if you still need to book a room for the convention, please do so before March 8.

Travel to and from Newbury from London and local airports... (continued)

Parking in the hotel car park is free for residents, cars need to be registered at the front desk.

If you are driving, this could become particularly relevant if you want to go on the WotW walk on Friday morning and can give any other similarly minded con members a lift!

If you're coming direct to the hotel from Heathrow or Gatwick airports, train options include the Elizabeth line to Hayes & Harlington where you can change for a train to Newbury, or the Heathrow Express to change at Paddington, which costs around twice as much. From Gatwick you'd need to change twice on any route and it's a journey of at least two hours. The train planner above will show the options.

You might therefore want to consider a pre-booked car from the airport, if comfort and convenience are more of a priority than economy; several taxi firms based in Newbury quote around £90 for a Heathrow trip, although Gatwick costs more. Don't contemplate taking a cab from the airport which you've not pre-arranged since the journey will be on the meter and won't feel like good value.

Late news via the wonderful Caroline Mullan: there's one of those periodic M25 closures (around J10, also affecting the A3) over 11-14 April.