



THE DRINK TANK ISSUE 165
TIME, GENTLEMEN

The next few issues will be kinda weird. I'm not going to be finished with laying out the TAFF Report for a couple of weeks, so I need to do some light writing. What I'm putting in this issue is a single Chapter with photos from the British Museum and there's some Steve Green too. I'll be working on lay-out, I'll be doing a polished version of Journey Planet, I'll be cleaning up the TAFF report and I'll be doing a few other things. It'll be slightly busy.

There is a lot of stuff to say about my TAFF trip and I'll be telling more about that in my report. You can read various parts of it in zines like Askance, Vegas Fandom Weekly, Argentus, and Claims Department or you can donate to TAFF and that'll get you access to the report which will be on-line only. Oh, you can print it, but it's only on the web. It should be a good thing, if you try to read it.

I'll be happily recovering and then when I'm recovered, I'll be doing stuff. As always. It's coming up on a busy period for me, and what do you know, I'll be making my way into things with all the big fun.

And now...the start of things!



CHAPTER 16: SATURDAY- IN A BIG COUNTRY, DREAMS STAY WITH YOU...

I got up around 7:30 after a good, but short, sleep. It was one of those five hours but at least they counted. I dreamt fast and furious, which is a fun one about Linda and me running through a convention avoiding creditors who were coming to collect.

Dreams like that are kinda rare for me, but they are interesting. I woke up and started to get myself packed. There was a scale in the room, so I weighed my bags and realized that with a couple of drops, I could certainly make weight for the flight. I had 23kg for the big bag (it looked like I was about 20) and the carry-on was limited to 6kg (it looked like 5kg, but I will be giving Claire and Mark back the London A-to-Z which weighs at least a kilo. Ann had offered to wash some of my things, so I got enough clothes out to make it through the rest of my trip. I admit it, I was starting to smell a little funky because I had to recycle a few pieces of clothing a few times. Luckily, I brought enough underwear with me. After my shower, I finished packing and with the way I packed it, I thought I would be fine for only having to access the front pocket of my suitcase. It was a good thought, until I realized that I had to get my CPAP for the next night and then the camera for tonight's fun. That meant two trips into the bag and that meant that no matter what, I'd have to deal with repacking it. Any other thought really represented a form of hubris, didn't it?

We watched another episode of Torchwood and that was very cool. It was an origins

episode and while not as emotionally impactful as the earlier Gwen-centred episode, it was still quite a bit of fun. There was a lot of talk of Torchwood being crap, and compared to the best of Dr. Who, I would agree, but the show itself, on its own merits, isn't half-bad. I loved the way they presented Torchwood as a historically homosexual safe-haven. At least that's the way they presented it starting with Victorian Torchwood. We followed that with Time Team, an archeology show that was fun. It was a good way to end my time in Solihull as I was out the door and off to the train by 11, catching the 11:05 off to London Marylebon.

The area between Birmingham and London was just as lovely, even bathed in the light that poked through the heavy, rain-spitting clouds. There were old churches which were a part of tiny hamlets and towns and villages. There were cities that reminded me of the ones that you'd see on the train between New York and Boston. There were sheep and cows and horses and chickens again. This time, I paid slightly more attention to the trees. Yeah, the fields are green and awesome, but the trees are old, sometimes gnarled and even a touch wicked. There were some oaks that looked like they'd been around long enough to be worried about being turned into the heavy doors to those ancient churches that whipped by. There was one church, or at least what looked like a church, that had this frontispiece gazebo that was quite lovely and Roman-inspired. I wish I could have gotten out and taken a look. I don't think that I'll get a chance to come back this way, but there's something that I'd certainly want to look at if I got half the chance.

What was I doing? I was typing up my report and being constantly distracted by the girl across the way who was obviously enjoying staring into the curls and ripples of my beard. She kept jabbering away to her friend and that let on that she was Australian. I didn't talk to her, mostly because when I was done listening to the little telltales that she was Aussie and then catching her on her beard examinations, I started to type again.

We got into London a minute ahead of schedule and I was off to the races to make it to the end of the Picadilly Line to drop off my bag at the hotel, then head onto Heathrow again, hop the Picadilly and take that to the Victoria and then walk off at Seven Sisters and head to the Tottenham Leisure Centre.

You see, I picked up a flier when I was at Forbidden Planet about becoming a London Roller Girl. I figured I'd give it to Gen as a present, but I only looked at one side. I was supposed to go to Peter Sullivan's, but it ended

up that my flight was moved up (more on that later) and I had to stay closer to Heathrow. When I started reading the book, I had put the flier into the book. I looked it over and realized that there was a Roller Derby match in London on Saturday the 29th! I figured it would be great to see Roller Derby live for the first time while I was in London. This was a magical piece of timing that happened and I couldn't pass it up.

Sadly, timing was also the angry bitch lover of the day.

I got into the station at around 1:00pm or so. I knew it would take me about 2 hours to get to the hotel, so I had

given myself plenty of time to make the trip. I got on the Bakerloo train that was just right there. It was a good thing to be there right then, but I missed a portion of the announcements which gave info on closures. I didn't hear it again until I was in Heathrow. I got to the Picadilly train quickly and that meant I had to wait. And wait. And wait.

It was nearly 15 minutes before a train for Heathrow finally came. I was feeling a bit panicked for time. I got into Heathrow about 2:40. I got the bus, the 111 and I know I had taken it to the Radisson before, but this time it went nowhere near where I was going. I managed to get off at the place that was closest to the hotel, but it was still three or four blocks away. I didn't know what direction, so I had to go and ask the guy in the Hotel Hoppa bus. I was hoping I could get a ride.

"Sorry man, I'm going the other direction and then out of service"

Strike one.



I followed that with going into the Holiday Inn, the closest hotel.

"Which way to the Radisson?" I asked "Well, it's a few blocks towards the airport." she said.

Now, here's the thing, I'm a terrible traveler. I love traveling, but I'm terrible at it. I should apologize to Linda for dragging her along with me while I went through with this sham of travel. Once I'm out of my comfort zone, I'm in a terrible way. I never get the right choice. I have no sense of direction. I make mistake after mistake after mistake. I never get used to it. Even after two weeks I felt no more comfortable in non-fannish England than I did the minute I walked off the plane. It's a terrible thing and I doubt I'll ever get better. So much sorrow, I guess.

I made the wrong choice and ended up further from the hotel. It also started raining. I made it towards the hotel after seeing the Marriott which I knew was next door to the Radis-

son from the distance. I turned and made it back. I got to the hotel and checked in at 3-something. They checked me in and then I headed to the room and dropped off the bag, emptied some things and headed out again, being passed by three different buses (at least one of which was supposed to stop there) I got onto the bus and made it to the Tube station.

And there I waited for another ten minutes.

The show started at 5, with doors opening at 4. I could still make it and it wouldn't be much of a problem. Except that the entire Victoria line was shut for up-

grades. That was not a good thing as there was no other train that would take me to Seven Sisters, where I'd have to walk to the Tottenham Leisure Centre. The problem was the nearest thing that I could get to was a mile and a half from the Seven Sisters top and then there was the walk of 1/3 of a mile to the place.

And it was raining.

When I go to the Acton City stop, I was looking through my bag and noticed that my cell phone was gone. I was terribly upset by that because once I got home I'd not be able to call anyone because I wouldn't have any way of calling, nor their numbers. I started reading James Bacon's TAFF report (WorldConNomiCon) to keep my head on straight. After that, it got a little late. It was pushing 4:30 and I was nowhere near the Finsbury Park station which was the closest one, and while I looked at the route I'd be traveling, it was likely a 20 minute walk. In the rain. And I was at least 40 minutes away from arriving at the Finsbury Park station. That was awful. Then the train stopped. They were sitting on a red light.

At 4:45, and still not beyond Hammer-smith, I had to call it in my brain. When I got to Earl's Court, I got out and I walked around. I wasn't going to get to see Roller Derby. I was bummed. I walked around and got some Burger King. It's an interesting thing to see that the Whopper is exactly like the one we get in the US, while the Chicken Sandwich is far better in the US. The fries were a little better in the UK. Go figure.

I headed back to the hotel and got on the Tube. More delays. I got to the station and hopped on a bus. That was a mistake. It was the



285, which I know stopped at the stop I usually got off with Linda. This time it did not. I ended up going to the Haddon Cross Tube Station, which meant I got out and took the Picadilly line into town again. That meant that I was retracing the route. And I had to wait another 8 minutes for the next train. Then I got to the bus and I caught the same one that I had caught earlier that didn't make it to the stop I needed. I

would get off where I did earlier and then head the way I had been earlier.

Except this time, it went where I thought it would go and I got off at the stop I wanted the last time. That was terrible. I walked into the hotel and then I ended up slipping on the marble in the hotel lobby. In front of the Indian wedding party that was celebrating there. It was very sad. I went to my room, got out the laptop and started typing while watching the Psychics on the Weakest Link. It was kinda fun, but I was fuming underneath. I am hereby never getting excited about anything...well, that's a stretch.

Continuing through my Torchwood theme, I ended up watching something hosted by Graham Norton where they were trying to choose a new Nancy for Oliver on the West End. It had John Borrowman on the panel... along with Andrew Lloyd Webber, some chick I didn't know and Barry Humphries (aka Dame Edna). It was a fun show. One of the girls was a Welsh soap actress who was the daughter of El Bandito, the English wrestler. They showed a photo of her being held by the late, great Giant Haystacks. I was amazed at the weird timing stuff that was happening.

I ended up falling asleep around 10pm, which was actually 11pm since I had set my clocks forward already in advance of the arrival of British Summer Time. That meant that I had twice lost an hour of sleep to the plans of those damn farmers!

**WANNA READ THE REST...
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I've got a lot to say about my TAFF trip. A whole lot. I tried thinking of the proper way to put it and it never quite came across. I'm sure it's obvious just how grateful I am to have been given this chance to meet some great people and have such a wonderful time in the UK. I'm sure that it's also obvious that even if I had never won, there are a ton of people who deserve thanking for making fandom so wonderful in my eyes. I'm not going to write it here, but I will say that I owe a long letter to everyone out there who made not only TAFF possible, but everything else I've enjoyed along the way.

Oh yeah, we're up for another Hugo this year.

I'll be working on the Handicapping the Hugos issue for next month. I've got a lot of reading to do (luckily, I'm 1/2 through the novels and 1/3 of the way

through the short fiction) and I'll have a big thing going in a couple of months that should be good.

Once again, I foresee the Drink Tank running fifth out of five and my loss to Langford or Scalzi will be from the back of the field, but I'm OK with that. I know what would



happen if I ever won and for me, a nomination is as good as a win because it's far better than I deserve and I damn well know it.

I want to say that one thing that ain't happenin' is my slowing down. Yeah, I'll be skipping a few things over the next couple of months, but I'll be doing The Drink Tank and so

on for the foreseeable future. It should be fun.

So, I'll let Steve do his thing on the next page and will remind my gentle readers to send LoCs and stuff to garcia@computerhistory.org. I would love to have some Eastercon/NorWesCon reports too, so send 'em if you got 'em! Garcia Out!

IMPRESSIONS OF AN EASTERCON BY PETER SULLIVAN

They say you never forget your first time. Your first time starting a fanzine article with a gratuitous double-entendre, that is. I've written elsewhere about the fannish squee of realising that all these other fanzine fans were actually real people. After wandering around getting my bearings, the first person I actually spoke to was a Moderately Famous Author, who wanted to know where the swimming pool had gone. I was fully briefed on this subject, having been following the discussions on the Orbital 2008 mailing list. The conversation drifted onto Freud, and I was getting almost as out of my depth as I would have been if there had still been a swimming pool around. Thankfully, I was rescued by Other Moderately Famous Author, and the conversation moved straight on to good, fruity gossip about Very Famous Authors Indeed. Now I'm working on the basis that everything said was sub rosa, but take it from me, it was good and fruity and they were Very Famous Authors Indeed – even I was able to identify them from first names alone.

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When FIAWOL just isn't enough. Given that it was my first convention, and that I was meant to be moderating a fannish panel the next day, I thought I'd better find out what it was all about, and headed to the "A Way of Life or Just a Hobby?" panel, with Rob Jackson, Catherine Pickersgill, Tony Keen, Jess Bennett and Ang Rosin. I found Catherine's occasional explosions of

"Bollocks!" especially effective, given her cut-glass, hockey captain accent. There didn't seem much support generally on the panel for either Fandom Is A Way of Life or Fandom Is Just a Goddam Hobby. Rob Jackson suggested Fandom Is a Source of Friendship. In the end, there was more general support for Fandom Is Who I Am, which, to my ears, sounds even more immersive than A Way of Life. However, the panel was good-humoured, and I noticed that Claire Brialey, who was hiding in the shadows at the back, seemed to be laughing entirely too much.

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The Fanzine in an Hour workshop proved to be fun. I contributed a couple of squibs, but other people were doing much longer pieces, and we even had some fan art from GoH Neil Gaiman which James Bacon had dug up from his dim and distant past and got permission to use. The total page count was 36 pages, which must be a record for an hourly publication. The fruits

of our labours can be found at eFanzines.

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The late Saturday fannish panel was At Least I Can Get a Fanzine Article Out of That... with panellists Gray Charnock, Flick, Ian Sorenson, Yvonne Rowse and James Bacon. This turned into an open

invitation for swapping embarrassing stories, either about oneself or other fans, which was duly taken, with a strong scatological streak. However, the second half of the panel took a more analytic turn, raising the issue of what you actually could write about in fanzines, in either their paper or electronic versions. Anything released on the internet has the potential to stay around forever and embarrass you at some time in the future. But even paper isn't totally safe – you may know who receives the original print run of your fanzine, but can never guarantee that it won't turn up on a fanzine table at a future Eastercon.

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Imminent Death of Fandom Predicted – Film in the Forsyth Room. I didn't get enough sleep on Saturday night, and not for any fun reasons at all. By early Sunday afternoon, I was really beginning to feel it, and was looking for a quiet place to shut my eyes for some "not really



asleep but slightly less than awake.” Of course, I had already checked out of my hotel room. So I wandered around the the convention to find the best place to chill out for a bit. There was one clear winner – the almost-deserted Real Ale Bar. Fen, I am ashamed of you.

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Panel OMG. The peak of the weekend for me came at the very end – the “Who are you calling obsolete?” panel on Sunday evening. This had me down as the moderator, although in practice I probably moderated the panel about as much as the Dawlish Sea Wall would have moderated a tsunami. By the time we had completed the self-introductions, we were already 13 minutes into the panel. (To be fair, we did start a smidge late – mainly because John Coxon had been put on back-to-back panels, with the previous one the other side of the hotel, and then I’d had to conduct an urgent search for my hearing aid.)

I then outlined the basic theme of the panel. “Who are you calling obsolete?” was intended as a young person’s fanzine panel - although “young” in this case was definitely a relative term, for me (40) and Chris (early 30s) at least. In effect, we on the panel were facing an implied challenge from the more senior members of fandom in the audience – why fanzines in the 21st century? Why weren’t us panellists off poking each other on Facebook, or whatever it was young people did these days? At a time when even lifelong fanzine fans are retreating to semi-private mailing lists, who still does fanzines anyway?



The answer, of course, was my erstwhile co-panellists. Chris Garcia certainly needs no introduction to readers of The Drink Tank, so he isn’t getting one here. Flick has produced several issues of Shiny, each with a personally hand-stitched cover, as well as being part of the Plokta cabal. Abi Brown also has several fanzines to her credit, and was on official leave from the convention newsletter office, where she had been editrixing all weekend. John Coxon is another recruit to mainstream fandom from ZZ9, the Hitchikers’ Guide to the Galaxy Fan Club, having pubbed his first ish of Procrastinations on efanzines.com at the tender age of 17.

The middle of the panel passed pretty much in a blur. I remember several times having to try to stop Abi and John talking over each

other. Whenever the panellists flagged, which was rare, I just took another question from the audience, which was always enough to give them a fresh wind. So I didn’t need to say much myself – I was working on the basis that the moderator should just focus on moderating, and only act as a “fifth panellist” if needed to keep things going. That was definitely not the case here!

Just about my only contribution was to observe that, like rock and roll, each generation re-invented fanzines in their own image - “We’re not some fanzine version of the SCA, dressing up as Peter Weston on our spare weekends.” (I believe this may have already inspired a potential masquerade entry for next year. Fear my powers of suggestion.)

Peter Weston and Prolapse were quite a topic of discussion, with both Chris and I speaking up for it – Chris compared it to the American fannish history fanzine Mimosa. What made this especially bizarre was that, by now, panellists were beginning to arrive for the Fannish History panel following on after – and Peter Weston walked in just as we were finishing talking about his fanzine.

An even later arrival was Bill Burns, coming in just as I was about to wind the panel up. John Coxon led a standing ovation from the panel for the man whose efanzines.com website has been instrumental in bringing through many young fanzine editors. (You know, youngsters like Arnie Katz, David Burton and John Purcell.) Which made an entirely

appropriate and up-beat conclusion to a very high-energy panel.

Anyway, the general consensus at the end of the panel was that there was no consensus on whether or not fanzines were obsolete – the reply being either a resounding “No!” or “Yes, but who cares? They’re still worth doing.” Overall, the panellists seemed to enjoy the panel rather more than some of the audience, but since the audience seemed to enjoy it too, that didn’t make it a bad panel. I’m just sorry that my flight schedule meant that I had to shoot off pretty much straight after the panel – missing both the Fannish History panel that followed us, and/or any chance to deconstruct our own panel in the real ale bar.



There’s so much more to be said about Eastercon and My Trip, but that’ll have to wait. I’m about 1/2 of the way through the laying out of the Report and I’m hoping for next week to finish it. In the next week or so I’ll be putting out a lot of stuff in a lot of different directions. I’m pretty sure folks will start thinking I’m insane, but trust me, it’ll all make sense when it all comes out.

I’d like to thank Max and Linda for the photos in this issue, as well as Peter Sullivan. That thingee that’s crawling up the bottle is a bug-thingee torn out of a single piece of paper by Tamar...whatshername. She’s a lot of fun and has massive ADD. I think that’s what makes her fun.

OK, I’m signing off with my first issue in almost a month with the classic quote: I’m entirely too sober to deal with anything but Surreality right now.