



TommyWorld

Where Fandom  
Gets Personal.

The Fifty- Ninth issue of a sort-of letter substitute, kinda thing. Maybe weekly, maybe not. Available from:

*30 Ava Park, Belfast, BT7 3BX, Northern Ireland*

[tw@tommyworld.net](mailto:tw@tommyworld.net)

<http://www.tommyworld.net>.

Available via the World Wide Web, or as an email attachment. I recommend the Portable Document Format (pdf) or, if you insist, a word or Rich Text Format (rtf) can also be emailed. Get in touch and we'll sort something out. You are going to [TorCon III](#), aren't you? Dated, already, 21/09/02.

---

## COMMENTS ON REVIEW OF BW #17

**By Kim Huett**

I am astounded to learn that you actually liked Banana Wings #17. My impression from your review was one of damning with faint praise. I am even more surprised that you didn't expect this interpretation.

Having now reread your piece I have to say it still comes across as very negative to me. Part of the problem being that far too many comments can be easily interpreted as simply being disparaging.

Sometimes this is a matter of you not providing context. Consider the first paragraph for example, the review isn't even started and there you are writing 'Thankfully, a quick skim through the contents shows barely a mention of Australia.' Now perhaps this is an attempt to inject a light-hearted note into the review but without a little more setting up to make it clear I can't be sure. To me it reads more like a bluntly negative comment about the writing of trip reports or mentioning Australia.

More often you are very aggressive in your complaints about various pieces without giving much in the way of positive feedback. It's worth pointing out that how we express ourselves in our own minds can appear far stronger in tone when put into print. There is always the temptation to state your case strongly to make your feelings clear. This can be overwhelming when read by another. In this case I was the other and the bulk of your piece gave me the impression you thought most of the articles you mentioned weren't worth publishing. Clearly there were things you wanted to argue with in BW #17 but in your eagerness to do so you dwelt overly long on the negative and created a false impression. It's not hard for me to think you hate Banana Wings and whatever part of fandom it's involved with when I keep encountering phrases such as, 'how most of them I do not want to meet, talk to or spend any social time with at all', 'being in the same room as them and being forced to over hear their inane conversations', 'Mark goes and

spoils it all by saying something stupid'. Combine that with a tendency to not explain what you did like in equally strong terms and is it any wonder that I don't see your review as the positive thing you think it is.

Even when you do try to be positive such as with Dave Langford's article so eager are you to complain about him winning multiple awards that it's easy to lose track of the fact that ultimately you do try to praise him.

This leads onto my third point which is to suggest your ideas are not clearly organised. If you think Dave Langford's article for example is a good effort then it would make sense to make that point clear first. That way the reader knows where you stand so that they can put your following comments in context. Start of complaining about him winning too many Hugos and it won't matter if you go on to say you quite like this article because it's too late, you've already put a negative tone on the whole paragraph.

I don't know, perhaps it's just me who has trouble following your logic. Clearly I don't see what you want me to see. Since I can only speak for myself however I'll have to return a verdict of incoherent on this review. I hope you've had better luck with everybody else.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kim addresses a lot of what is wrong with my review but particularly that it is not organised. The pieces I did like, the pieces I didn't like and the reasons for both are not put out clearly enough for the reader. He also makes clear the lack of context. A lot of what I wrote would be fine if you heard it. There would be some non-verbal signals and body language that would make it clear what I was attempting to get across. None of this is evident in the review. Finally I do come across as more aggressive than I intended. This took multiple re-readings and some time to sink in.

Well what can I say? I'm just going to hold my hands up and say fair cop.

It is personally biased. I haven't liked previous issues of BW and have let that flavour my language in this review. It does come across as very negative and when I really like a certain piece it is damned with faint praise. Certainly a lot of what is published in BW doesn't grab my fancy. I'm not saying that what I think of the zine has changed or that I no longer hold the same views. However, re-reading my review several times now, is in fact a fairly shoddy piece of work.

Why is this?

I honestly don't know. Mark and Claire are really nice people, although I haven't had the opportunity to talk to them much, when I do I'm impressed. I am constantly being brought to task, like Kim has done here, for attacking them or off-handily slighting

them. Why this is the case when every single other person I've talked to has a favourable impression to portray about both of them I'm still working on. Apart from their own personalities they have a huge enthusiasm, energy and dedication to Science Fiction as a genre and fandom in particular which deserves nothing but praise and admiration.

Now I'm not over compensating here just because Kim has stood up and said: "Here hang on a minute, that's not right!" although it obviously looks like it. What I'm trying to do is make clear, in an unambiguous way, that extremely poor writing skills aside I do like some of the articles in BW 17 and I don't like some of the others. This is not about Mark and Claire. Issues I have about some of the people mentioned in the zine and fandom's social life in general should be contained in another article - and not repeated where it is obviously going to taint the review of BW.

So thank you Kim for the wake up call and apologies to Mark and Claire for an inept and ill-written review.

This is being distributed to a whole bunch of friends on the net, if you received this and would NOT like to be on the mailing list please accept my apologies for this intrusion and let me know so that you will not be bothered by further ramblings. If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing drop me a line.