



TommyWorld

Where Fandom
Gets Personal.

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

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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, 20/10/02.

The Science Fiction deficit

'Yeah James, it's mostly the same everywhere, even in the states, guys who never do anything anyhow, are just worried that their local mini-con or whatever wont be run, which means they wont be the kings of the county, or even worse, they might have to run their little con themselves, lazy whiners.' Although my own backyard, well the fans are the greatest' Vice Chair, Worldcon 1997.

So there I am looking for smells, and there wasn't a pair of pants to be seen.

OK, a quick intro, I am looking at why there is negativism among UK fans about Worldcon, trying to suggest ways to combat the negativism, to smash the begrudgers to bits.

Worldcon, when I think of it, I usually think of condoms. Thousand and thousands of condoms. As I trudged, wrecked and not really sober across the expanse that was the SECC, my mind was in total wonderment, it was enormous, the geeks were wondering whether you could fit a B-52 in, I was wondering if we could attach bits of wood to mopeds and karts and pretend to be x-wings and tie fighters. I thought it was so cool.

Immediately I was accosted by the sight of men unloading boxes of condoms, onto tables, loads of them, tables that is, fully loaded with condoms. I had to ask. 'We're the gay science fiction fans', my immediate thought; 'oh fuck'. Anyhow Andy, a really decent bloke, now a child of Delaney, filled me in, err... on the situation. Can I have some, I hopefully asked, you never know your luck, and he gave me one, err... some I mean.

They were useful, I ended up taking loads home, and but a few months later, my younger brother, Trigger, was running frantically around the house like a looney, the parents were on holidays, he was Fourteen, and he had been hanging out with the sweetest French chicklet I have ever seen, really elegant, pert, tight, French, blonde. 'Hey bro, you wouldn't have any, er, you know, er condoms, like', ah-ah, good man, I thought, I immediately went to my room, 'there you go', 'where did you get these?' why are you asking me questions, you ejit, go, go, go. An explanation, well that would have been good.

Anyway, according to my underground sources, at Worldcon in Glasgow the condoms came in handy, in ladies toilets, in quiet parts of bars, in the filk (DtF'ers) room while there was a fireworks display with the lights out, yes, very useful indeed. So Worldcon is fun, but with this colossus rolling forward, does it leave other events and organizations mashed it its wake. A claim made, is that due to the amount of effort it takes, other conventions never get to happen, and for a while afterward the burnout factor means there are less people to do the normal stuff.

I cannot agree with this exactly as I have been to a lot of conventions since 1995. I do think though that the situation could be put in a different light. Why not use Worldcon to promote all other sf goings on, in the UK and Europe. Why not be biased about the situation, in favour of the main SF groups and conventions, since we all agree that there is a huge amount of effort going into the Worldcon, surely the beneficiaries should be fan organizations and conventions. For instance, why not take say, The BSFA, The BFS, Eastercon, Novacon, Benelux Con, Euro con, and so on, lets say the Top Ten groups and conventions across the UK and Europe. Get Mark Plummer and Claire Brialy to choose, they did a god job on the guest front. Then offer these guys free dealers tables. That's right I said free dealers tables, up to four each, say.

Shit man I sat in the fucking fan area, it was a lonely and fucking desolate place compared to most of the rest of the hall, an ignored corner, I even hoisted a tricolour to get attention, the dealers area was heaving, it was secure, there was more going on, it was the same hall, just the other side of some partitions.

Then offer the Top Ten free full page adverts in the convention booklet, what difference does it make, will it really be an extra cost. Its only ten pages, if there is commitment, it is easily done. For the rest, and by that I mean fan groups or conventions in The UK and Europe outside the Top Ten, there should be great deals on tables, and they should also be located in the dealer's room. Groups like zz9 took a dealers table instead of a fan table as they were 'selling' stuff, but I don't understand that, are they going home with profits, no, all the money goes back into fandom, if that happens, why are they treated like dealers, they are fans, the tables should be in a good situ and cheap. It shouldn't have to be one or the other, like second-class citizens.

These fan groups should then get a good deal on advertising, but there is a better way to cover that, a way that might be a bit more personal and interesting for people. I imagine that there are many projects going on but one that I would like to suggest would be a Doomsday book of European SF. This would be a listing, of all groups, meetings, conventions, organizations, websites, and fanzines, which are going on and will be going on in the following year or so. Listed by Country then by city and perhaps crossed referenced by category, and of course everyone who enters the con would get one, with the rest of his or her pack. I imagine I would read a section about Dublin, would you about your city, just out of curiosity.

I know these are bold statements and idea's, I know there will probably be a discount and the such for fans, but to show that this is not just vanity, that there is more to fandom than just Worldcon, there needs to be a visible commitment to the betterment of the rest of the active community.

Then what will those smelly dis'ers say, how can Worldcon do damage to the rest of fandom when its promoting so much, and being so biased in favour of the fan community. The colossus is no longer mashing it is spreading the fertilizer.

The rest is up to that community, with a leg up like that, well, its up to the mindset of the individual groups, me, I see a lot of potential new members.

James' final part of his in depth and studious analysis of Worldcon will be with you shortly folks, in the meantime, he has said if any paper faneds want to reprint these thoughts on Worldcon, just get in touch with him via this office.

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.