



The Eighty First issue of a sort-of letter substitute, fanzine kinda thing. Maybe weekly, maybe not. Available from:

125 Haypark Av, Belfast, BT7 3FG, 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 or posted. Get in touch and we'll sort something out. Please do email and respond – I will be printing locs. Another burst of fannish energy from Tommy, proof read by Eugene Doherty. Dated, already, 07/08/2020.

## Corflu Heatwave Talk – Part 1<sup>i</sup>

Welcome - and a bit rambly.

So, this is billed as a History of NI Fandom - in reality this is all about me - my favourite topic. Oh, I may touch on some of this stuff you see here but really, I talk about what any good writer does the stuff I know the most about. And that's mostly about me.

So why am I here? Texas, why on Earth indeed... Well it is thanks to the Corflu 50 fund<sup>ii</sup> and I wanted to talk a bit about that fannish stuff before I go on...

### *A modest Proposal*

I've noticed in delving back into fanzines again that the perennial greying of fandom is still a topic. How do we get these young kids involved – away from their TikTok app to Sladek's Tik-Tok story. How does the LiveJournal to Facebook to Instagram generation get hooked into what is more traditionally a 'long form' format? Fanzine fandom has always been very self-selecting but as I look around me, I get the sense that I'm the youngest, or one of the youngest people at this con. {Edit: second youngest...} So how do we bring them into fanzine fandom?

Well here's a radical solution – we don't. We want people here for the right reasons, people we know who will contribute to our history, who know a bit about our history and we know a bit about them. In actual fact - I'm the person you need back into fannish fandom, me and people like me. Told you it was all going to be about me! But hear me out...

There's a bunch of fanzine fans who've drifted away over the years – for various reasons. Those can be good personal reasons, bad fannish reasons or just plain average indifferent reasons. I'll deal with my reasons -as any good fan would – in a fanzine article in the future. We all know



Tommy in full flow to 'loads' of people  
Picture: Gary Mattingly

that outside these hallowed halls – life moves on, even for us folks. But time has passed for a lot of people and there is an opportunity to start reaching out again.

Facebook is awful for a lot of reasons but good as a method of research. I've got back in touch with Pete Crump from back in the day, Kev McVeigh is active on social media and there's a host of others – have you heard Lilian and Christina's podcast? <sup>iii</sup> All of these people were and indeed some still are active in fanzine fandom and would be fantastic additions to our tribe again. But how to entice them back?

We could throw a WorldCon and a EuroCon in their general location, that's what worked for me, but that seems a bit aggressive. We could promise them all sorts of goodies, freebies and enticements but most of these people are long in the tooth and could see straight through that gambit. Besides which, we don't have anything like that. There are some who left fandom with a bad taste in their mouth and are unlikely to ever return – fair enough. But maybe there are some old-time fans out there who are just looking for a reason to jump back in. They may have just retired; their kids may have just left home or God forbid they may have been made redundant and have some time on their hands. Alternatively, maybe they've read some good Sci-Fi lately and remember what it was all about and think they should get involved again. I'm looking at you now Eugene Doherty! Whatever the reason, whether for or against, we'll never know unless - well here's the modest proposal:

'Let's ask people to start writing zines or contributing to them again.'

I know, right? What could they possibly say - except no? It's worth a shot.

At work this is where I'd finish off with a 'call to action'. Everyone stands up and commits to taking an action, which we will all then personally agree on – write ourselves a note which will be posted back to us in two months – or add it into our personal development plan to be tracked and used as a big stick to hassle you at end of year reviews... Yeah, been down that road. Alternatively, I would down play it and suggest if just one person on my mailing list, contacts one other person and simply asks them then imagine the potential impact we might have? But no, I'm not going into that guilt tripping persuasion tactic either.

So, what is the point of this modest proposal if nothing actually happens? There is absolutely no point! However I will ask someone to write something for my next zine – or a guest spot here – and see where it gets me. And you? Take it or leave it. It is after all just a goddamned hobby.

Part 2 of this 'speech' next time and then a lettercol issue.



**Tommy writes his speech, hours before delivering!**

<sup>i</sup> Edited to make sense, but originally delivered at Corflu Heatwave, March 2020

<sup>ii</sup> <https://corflu.org/history/c50.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://open.spotify.com/show/2NGqCGVKiLhiVDcatJO28K?si=icXZDajNTD6QVmitfzxS9A>