

SPECIAL
DEPRESSING TAFF
ISSUE: DOES NOT CONTAIN
COXON, PROVEN OR TREADAWAY



**BYE
BYE
JOHNNY
SPECIAL
MEMORIAL
ISSUE**

No. 4

Jan. 2011

BYE BYE JOHNNY 4

Comes to you from **Graham Charnock**
45 Kimberley Gardens
London N4 1LD

graycharnox@blueyonder.co.uk.

Website: www.cartiledgeworld.co.uk

VOTE CHARNOCK FOR TAFF



Ceci n'est pas une moustache

Editorial — page 3

My Black Pages by Graham Charnock — page 4

Selections from the Diaries of Roy Fan edited by Graham Charnock—page 7

The Care and Upkeep of the Moustache by Graham Charnock—page 12

Bruce Townley Remembers Ralph K. Townley—page 15

Bye Bye Romulus by Rob Jackson—page 17

Memories of my Brother John (1945-2001) by Robert Lichtman—page 19

Cover illustration by D. West

Other illustrations (except the moustache) by Harry Bell

BYE BYE JOHNNY

No. 4 JANUARY 2011

Hello. Time for another fanzine. Something strange happened to me over Christmas and the New Year. For a start I didn't get any socks for Christmas. Now I always give socks for Christmas and expect to get them from people in my family so close to me they know exactly what my tastes are. But no socks. Since I get through socks at a vast rate, due I suspect to my toenails which grow like rabbits teeth. I was forced to go out and buy my own socks. Unfortunately very few shops seem to stock Kangol socks, which are my favourite. I was forced to go online and buy them at a vastly inflated price from somewhere in Taiwan, where they cost \$1.99 for twenty.

The other strange thing that happened over the holiday season was that I got very depressed. I deny this had anything to do with my vast consumption of alcohol during this period, although on reconsideration it might well have been. At least I managed to get online and insult Peter Weston which didn't seem a bad result to me under the circumstances. I should thank him. Peter produces a very boring retro fanzine. It gives me something to aim higher than.

What I'm talking about is The Doom. No that's not Peter's fanzine, although now you mention it... No, The Doom is that non-specific mood that seems to envelop you in universal greyness which even the prospect of a new Keanu Reeves movie can't dissipate. Nothing you seem to do makes any sense, least of all waking up in the morning and going to work. Furthermore you have foolishly enrolled yourself in something called a TAFF race, which immediately seems to unlock a lot of bad feeling among people you had previously thought of as your friends but now seem to be enemies. I think it's the competitive notation of the thing being a race that unlocks this. It's just a ballot. People vote for you or not. If you get the most votes you get the gig. You don't actually *win* anything, not like a Rolls Royce or something actually valuable. In fact you *win* a commitment to go and witness and perhaps perform and make an asshole of yourself in public and report back. Great deal, eh?

Perhaps the Doom went deeper than that. Perhaps I just found myself becoming seasonally maudlin about growing old and going into that stage of losing friends, either through social gaffes but more likely through the common exigencies of everyday mortality rather than actually gaining them.

Doing a memorial issue of this fanzine was never going to be a barrel of laughs, and I apologize for bringing down the general fun level in this radical way. As well as the obituaries I've put in what I think are a couple of fun items. Whether the whole thing will work is I don't know. But onwards, upwards and inwards, eh?

But at least you won't get Peter Weston talking about dead fans in his fanzine. Wait... What...?

— Graham Charnock 15/1/2011



MY BLACK PAGES

By Graham Charnock

THREE OBITUARIES

TWO REAL, ONE IMAGINARY

ROB HOLDSTOCK

My birthday was coming up in 2009. It wasn't an especially significant event but Pat had decided to arrange a birthday meal for me, inviting a select coterie of friends to one of our favourite Indian restaurants on Turnpike Lane. Roy Kettle and Kathleen would be there, as would our friends Stuart and Karen, and Lesley. Pat had invited Rob Holdstock and his partner Sarah Biggs several weeks before and they had confirmed.

The day before my birthday John D. Berry was in town and again a select group of baristas and others met at a pub near Cambridge Circus. After we had got home that evening Pat got a call from Roy to say that Rob had been taken into hospital and was in intensive care but was stable. Of course we were all anxious when we met in the restaurant the next day, but most of us took heart from the news of Rob's *stability* and the fact that none of us really knew the background of the incident, and we toasted absent friends.

Over the next few days things became a lot more worrying. Some of us had had worries about Rob for some time. He had been diagnosed with diabetes quite a while back, but gave us the impression he was keeping up with periodic checks and assessments, although when we met at a picnic outing earlier that year he had questioned me quite worriedly about my own responses to diabetes.

He was becoming increasingly gaunt, and at Pat's 60th Birthday a few months earlier he had had a *passing* moment of faintness which I personally attributed to him having been out on a signing session that day and perhaps having started drinking earlier than he should have. We had also noticed the slightest knock to him, from playing rumbustious games with his nieces and nephews for instance, seemed to result in a livid plate sized bruise which were slow to heal. Rob was typically offhand about these injuries.

I will patch in here a few details gleaned from Sarah and Roy in subsequent conversations. He had had a recent urinary tract infection which he was taking anti-biotics for, but Roy reported he was very bad at completing courses of antibiotic treatment. He was bad at going to doctor's generally since he seemed to think they were mostly concerned with stopping him doing what he enjoyed doing. He also had a lot of back pain, to the degree that Sarah even bought him an orthopaedic chair. Back pain of course can also be attributed to endemic kidney problems.

Prior to Rob being taken into hospital he had been feverish with alternate spells of hot and cold sweats. His blood pressure dropped radically and he had also been hallucinating perhaps as a consequence. Sarah later reported that when he was first admitted she was told his chances of recovery were 3%. These improved as he received treatment, but it wasn't until about a week after admission that they diagnosed the infection as e-coli and by that time he had suffered a total organ failure, and was being kept alive on a ventilator. E-coli is a ubiquitous bacteria, and most of us have a sufficiently healthy immune system which can keep it in check, but it was obvious by now Rob's immune system was fairly shot and total organ failure is a difficult thing to get back from under those circumstances.

We received regular news updates from Sarah via Roy that Rob's condition was either stable or improving, but I don't know how many of us really believed this. At one point, I believe, they reduced the level of medication to try and restore some level of consciousness, and Rob actually squeezed Sarah's hand, but this may of course simply have been a response to pain, rather than anything else. Once would like to think it was otherwise.

It subsequently became clear there was a high level of cirrhosis affecting Rob's liver function, and confirmation that the medical team were finding it hard to get his blood to clot properly. He was bleeding out into his tissues. All this was pretty desperate and hopeless stuff. On the Sunday he died, Pat and I did our usual supermarket shop. I was worried that we had received no news that morning. The weather seemed to have changed and the day was cold gloomy and cloudy with black birds flying all about. When we got back home the news eventually came.

The e-coli was obviously a significant factor in his death, but more worrying for me was the background of cirrhosis which had developed from Rob's alcoholism.

For a start he seemed was a very untypical alcoholic (as if there could ever be a typical one). We all knew he had always liked a drink (mostly wine) but none of us had ever experienced him being out of control or degenerating into the other excesses so stereotypical of a heavy drinker. He was always *mellow*, and I'm sure if Sarah had experienced him drinking in secret or hiding bottles the way *typical* alcoholics do, she would have mentioned it, or at least done something about it. I've had my own bouts with alcohol dependence, and really found it hard to understand for a while why I was still alive and he was dead. Rob just liked to drink, and think his professional lifestyle made it hard for him to escape its inevitable consequences.

I've always held down a 9 to 5 job, and driven to work every day and have never drunk until the evening. My liver has always had a small recovery period built into it by virtue of my lifestyle. Rob, like Brosnan before him, being a professional writer living a more or less solitary professional life had only himself to answer to on a day to day basis. He could drink any time he liked to, and probably did. It's a dangerous life, and had claimed other friends of Rob's besides Brosnan, Angus Wells for one. The lesson was there to be learnt, but we are all adept at ignoring lessons.

I loved Rob and miss him immensely and still don't understand his death.

I'm worried about leaving this account on a depressing note. Rob was the most vital, alive person I have ever known and the most charismatic and the most enjoyable when in his company. He had time for everyone and was never exclusive; He also had a knack of welding you into the tapestry of his friends, so you always thought of them as your own. A wonderful man.

Which of course makes his death all the much harder to bear.

JOHN BROSINAN

One Saturday morning several years ago John phoned me, I suspect because his usual first-base contacts Rob Holdstock and Roy Kettle were out to lunch or whatever and John just came up with my number in his phone book.

He said he was suffering from something he called a panic attack. He had run out of Tamazapan, which was his first line prescribed defence, and the only other thing which could cure it was whisky. He'd borrowed a bottle from his neighbours the night before (nice neighbours) but that had gone. Now, because of the panic attack, he couldn't leave his flat to charge up. Could I come round, he asked. And

bring whisky.

I dropped everything and went right round (I live in North East London, John lives in North West London). I found him in a literally darkened room, on his sofa. I would guess he hadn't moved from it for several days. He hadn't eaten. What calories he'd absorbed had been in the form of whisky, and he'd sweated the waste products out of his pores so he hadn't needed to go to the toilet. He smelt, not objectionably, but of the caramel sweetness of excreted urea in sweat.

Most disturbingly, a little detail, his hands were shaking in classical delerium tremens, as he gave me his credit card and bid me fetch his whisky from the local supermarket. I told this later to Sarah Biggs, and she told me I shouldn't have got the whisky, and probably I shouldn't, but he was dogmatic that it was the only thing that could help him, and since my sheer presence wasn't going to, what else could I do? I brought back the whisky. The effect was miraculous. After a couple of hits, the shaking stopped and he had calmed down and was sort of rational. When he was sure he was under control and had everything he needed to survive at least for the next few nights, he told me abruptly, I needn't hang around and could leave. That was when I realized just how I'd been, in the strict usage of the term, 'used', by someone with a worldview that didn't really include me. I Thank God I wasn't incidental in causing his death that night, or providing him with the means to kill himself, but the fear I might have done so was in the back of my mind and has haunted me to this day.

I think it was the Monday after this, I rang up Roy Kettle, and we arranged meet at John's to see what we could do. John was still on his sofa but confessed he 'ought to see a doctor'. (at this point all he was still fooling us, I think, and all he really wanted was a repeat prescription of Tamazapan). We drove him to the hospital, and Roy stayed with him through casualty. I'd seriously thought that given his condition they'd take him in, but quite rightly they chucked him out, after he'd lied to them about his alcohol intake.

Roy managed to get him fixed up, ultimately, with a referral to some rehabilitation unit, which solved the problem temporarily, on this occasion. But all solutions with John seemed to be temporary, and so, I think it was to continue. He was not short of friends ready to set up 'bail-out' backups, designed to make it easier to fend for himself (such as pre-paid taxi accounts to use in emergency), but in the end he was simply not able to fend for himself. Or decided not to.

Unliike Rob's, John ultimate death from alcoholic pancreatitis was hardly that surprising when it happened. Sad, but all too predictable. Rob had many close friends it was worth staying alive for, but his body let him down. John had many friends too, but none of them close-enough on a day-to-day basis to make living worthwhile for him, I fear

CHRIS PRIEST

I first Chris Priest when I was perhaps 18, 19 20 I forget exactly. We met through fanzines and became correspondents before we met in person (ay a One Tun meeting as it happened). We were both fanzine fans who aspired to be writers. Some of my best memories of friendship, kinship and like-feeling, etc revolve around him from those days. He lived with his parents in Brentwood, Essex. I lived with my parents in Wembley, Middlesex. Chris could drive (he had a Triumph Herald), I couldn't. Immersed in stultifying suburban boredom, as was I, he was as desperate to make contact with a like minded individual of his own generation as I was. So on a good weekend, I'd get on a train to Brentwood to visit him and we'd spend post- adolescent days in his bedroom writing fanzines and dreaming of being bigger kids. So friendships are forged. He could always write better than what I could, so managed to get published by our hero Mike Moorcock much before I could. But then he was a few years older. About this time the twin spectres of Charles Platt and Graham Hall entered the scenario. We were all mutually entangled, but in an intellectual seedy would-be writer sense, rather than sexually, unless I misread a lot of information.

I obviously did, because at one stage I found myself reclining on a bed in Jim Cawthorn's Notting Hill bedsit being fondled by Tom Disch.

But none of this involved Chris Priest. At one stage Chris published a fanzine with a cartoon of Graham Hall, depicting him as a beer bottle with two Janus God faces, mild and bitter. Graham was apparently not offended by this, being capable of taking a joke. Remember this

Chris and I used to hang out with Dick Howett, another Essex boy and phenomenal cartoonist, who had incidentally drawn the Graham Hall cartoon.

Chris worked as part time bar-man in an East End pub called The Dover Castle in Wapping, and our first musical experience of rock music was with a plumber called Ron's band at this venue. Later we would seek out Status Quo, at venues like the Boat House in Kew, and boogie along with them, tossing our long blonde locks in time with the music.

Chris would later meet his first wife Christine through a dating agency. She also incidentally had been someone I had gone to school with. Small world. Apparently John Brunner helped them through the eventual break down of their marriage. Although I did remember going round there once or twice, most notably to watch the moon landing on Chris's tv, obviously I wasn't much help as far as marital relationship were concerned.

Later we bumped into Malcolm Edwards, henceforth know as the SF Uberlord, and together with our relative partners at that time went to the Greek islands in search of hedonism and lizards.

Sometime somewhere Harlan Ellison appeared. He took my story for Last Dangerous Visions, paid me nothing and did nothing with it. He did the same with Chris and a lot of other people. Chris promptly embarked on a particularly venomous crusade against this little Hollywood imp.

Round about this time I went to sleep for a very long time until about my late forties when I woke up after a deep sleep of depression and started writing again. I didn't know where to look around sell my stuff so I offered it to Chris, who persuaded me he had now become an agent. I wrote a couple of books and his firm response was to tell me that he loved them but they were unsaleable. I accepted this. I have a very poor self image of myself as a writer, and an even lesser one with regards to the worth of my work.

One night, possibly just before I signed on with my doctor for a three years course on Prozac because of depressive symptoms, I got very drunk and sorry for myself and recklessly angry. I could have kicked a crippled dog if it had wander into my sights. So I rang up Chris and abused him, for no real reason. Learn from this, other people. Save your abuse for those who really deserve it, like members of the government, not a friend who is trying to do his best for you despite not having much enthusiasm for the job.

Time passed. The Prozac made me slightly less hair-triggered, if not exactly filled with joy at the prospect of living.

I have many bad traits but perhaps the worst is a propensity to make dead-pan offensive jokes which people then take seriously. I then go through paroxysms of guilt for misreading situations, kicking myself for not keeping my mouth shut and causing offence where really none was ever intended.

The novels Chris was handling for me incorporated a large amount of material based on parodies of various science fiction concepts and formats. I don't know where it came from (although it may well have been from reading an obituary Chris himself had written on John Brunner) but I had the idea of incorporating a cod sf obituary in one of them. But why I chose Chris, I honestly don't know but it wasn't in a deliberate attempt to wind him up. This is the chapter I wrote and sent to him:

OBITUARIES

And so Chris Priest is dead. Or passed away as he always preferred to call it, usually on a Saturday night, or when he was meeting Leroy Kettle in the Goat in Boots. He often told me don't wait until the fat lady sings, put the knife in right away. And so I have. He also told me follow your dream (that's mine not his, because I have absolutely no idea what his dream was, possibly a huge cheeseburger served to him by a whore in tights, but that's only speculation. (*Speculation: A fanzine produced by Peter R. Weston to which Chris contributed regularly, although you won't find that on his website, www.christopher-priest.co.uk)), but not if you've got two twins running rampage about the house. (Sorry about these embedded parantheses. I just can't seem to kick the habit.) That last parenthesis was not embedded of course, I hope you realized that.*

Chris was remarkable because of his obscure talent in making obscure plot ideas accessible to people who didn't wear bifocals but owned orthopaedic chairs, but seldom read books. I think we can all learn something from that.

He was also obsessed with the second world war especially with its effect on the infrastructure of Manchester, which I think is a pretty limited frame of view, to be honest, although any criticism on this point would probably be thought of as harsh, or at least brash.

He wrote several famous novels about people losing or challenging their identity through various processes in the breakdown of memory. Or Vice versa. This was what could be called the bee in his bonnet, although in truth the bee in his bonnet was the refusal of the Labour government to provide subsidies for local councils who wished to stage big Bonfire Night celebrations.

I've asked people who knew him about any scurrilous stories but apart from Rob Holdstock who provided me with 255, few have responded. There is of course the time he disappeared with a barmaid at a Peoria meeting (whatever that is), and of course the incident with the mirror and the French whore, but apart from that his reputation remains unblemished, Okay, a slight beauty spot, and a scar on his chin sustained by a random toilet-seat event. I can only say I shared a bedroom with him in the Fulham Road for a year and he didn't fart once. He farted lots.

Now this is not great literature, I would be the first to admit, and not even a great joke, just silly stuff, but I was totally unprepared for Chris' reaction.

Chris returned all my manuscripts he had in his possession with a bitter letter: 'Cod Obit unfunny etc...'

These lurked in the post office until I collected them, then when I do I wandered around in a daze for the rest of the day wondering what's going on.

I rang him when I got this package (at about 6.00pm, hardly time for me to get drunk, although I do my best) and my motive was simply to ask him 'What's going on?' He hung up on me.

Later I get an email in which he explains his actions were a kind of pre-emptive strike because he feared I was working up toward yet more abusive phone calls There seemed to me to be no actual justification for this assumption in what I had actually written and the interaction I had had with him immediately preceding his blanket rejection.

Things move on, water flows under the bridge, Chris and I go to house-parties with friends and chat amiably when we meet these days, and the last time I met him he bought me a meal. But I remain to this day baffled by his reaction over this particular storm in a tea-cup. Maybe his intimations of mortality at the time were particularly strong, or he felt under threat in other ways, and I inadvertently triggered Krakatoa. Of course the moral is don't mix business with friendship. What Chris did was probably best of both of us in the long-run.

SELECTIONS FROM THE DIARIES OF A FAN

EDITED BY GRAHAM CHARNOCK

The original manuscripts of these diaries came into our hands through the good offices of a third party, known only as Graham Charnock, although that is not his real name. The real name of the originator of these texts is protected from having his real name revealed by possession of a magic amulet known as an OBE.

1st January 1956.

Woke up this morning and the Blues was round my bed. So were the Greens and the Yellows. Must have knocked my medication off the bedside table during the night. Decided to keep a diary for the rest of my life, combining the most mundane occurrences with the occasional startling phenomenon, which might indeed include phenomena incorporating starlings, but are much more likely to be in fact 'startling'. Although strangely, when I left the house this morning to go down the newsagents to pick up my copy of Razzle, a starling dive-bombed me and shat upon me. God, or maybe just starlings, move in mysterious ways. For instance this morning I found I had achieved a spontaneous nocturnal emission, even though I still don't know what a woman looks like without her clothes, and especially where she hides her penis, although I suspect it is between her thighs, the way I sometimes do when I'm pretending to be a woman in front of a mirror. I'm hoping future entries might be a bit more startling than this, as I realize it might be a disappointment for future readers, when it is serialized in the Guardian but it is early days. Received a call from Sainsbury's saying my Gran had managed to park her buggy in a trolley bay, and furthermore lock it up by inserting a pound coin in the wrong slot. I honestly didn't know what they were talking about.

2nd January 1956.

Nothing much to report except a second nocturnal emission. I only know what these are because I have read my Grannie's copy of 'Things Every Christian Boy Should Know About Sex', a pamphlet which she keeps hidden, along with several cigars, in a cigar box on top of her wardrobe. It also mentions things called pimples and acne but as far as I know I have not had these yet. I am slightly concerned that being dive bombed by starling shit may lead to male pattern baldness in later life, but fortunately Google has not been invented yet, except as an aside in a novel by Dashiell Hammett, so I am unable to follow up my anxieties. Played with the Meccano my Auntie gave me for Christmas. Tried to build an aeroplane but the wings kept falling off. Having trouble holding onto my nuts. Maybe my fingers are just too big. Hope this will not hold me back later in life.

3rd January, 1956.

Sod this for a game of old soldiers. Found a copy of a Robert Heinlein novel 'Die Insect Scum Under The Nazi Boot' (although that may have been an alternative title for the Australian market) down the back of my grandfather's settee and decided life was too short to keep a diary, especially when there are apparently many more Robert Heinlein novels to read, dealing either with killing species which are not human, or pursuing lost loves amongst under aged girls. And also Isaac Asimov. So I am putting my diary aside, although I may well take it up in later life, perhaps when there are no more science fiction novels to read, possibly some time quite early in the 1960s. Also might have spoken too soon about the pimples.

6th April 1960

Bought my first pair of long trousers today. They have a zipper! Thank god. No more fumbling with those ridiculously small fly buttons. If only I had been blessed with slightly more delicate fingers that problem wouldn't have haunted me up until now. And they are not made of serge, so the end of my cock is relatively unharmed when it spills through the gap in my y-fronts, and not so prone to spring into life as if it had a mind of its own. Why does that happen?

7th April 1960

New trousers haven't really helped the cock problem. Sometimes I wonder why I am cursed with a cock that is so big it can't be adequately contained by my y-fronts. Some of my magazines advertise methods of penis enlargement, but I can find nothing for penis reduction. It seems so unfair.

10th September 1960

Mam told me Sam Moscowitz had come round our house looking for me, so I immediately went and hid in the cellar. Why should our local rag and bone merchant come looking for me, unless he had learnt I had secretly been feeding his horse liquorice?

5th October 1962

Went round my friend's house and he had a record called 'Love Me Do' by a group called the Beatles, which he played for me on his Dansette. He was raving about it, but frankly I can't see the appeal. They will be at best one-hit wonders I feel. I like to think my background in reading science fiction gives me an advantage in this sort of predictive ability. The sound of his Dansette was pretty terrible and he said how one day we might be able to play music on system which didn't even need a needle to make contact with the record. What a tosser. I will recommend some Isaac Asimov novels to him which should give him some idea of what the future will *really* be like. I personally believe there will be Spandex jackets, one for everyone. I could certainly do with some Spandex underwear myself.

7th June, 1968.

Found my old diary and since today is my first day at Sheffield University, where there will obviously be little time for reading science fiction novels, I have decided to give it another try. I have by now learnt that women don't have penises at all so I will already be one march up on possibly seventy-five percent of my fellow undergraduates.

14th September 1968.

My first attempt to build a bridge out of Maccano ended in disaster, possibly because I had used a cheap Taiwanese version marketed by Paul McCartney, who apparently is a Beatle, but not one of those Robert Heinlein would like to kill. I have learnt my lesson since my Gran woke up on Christmas day and put on an insect mask on as a joke and I tried to beat her to death with a cricket bat. Sorry Gran. Hope all that is water under the bridge. It didn't help that I kept dropping my nuts, they are either too small or my fingers are too big. I hope this will not hold me back later in life.

5th May 1970

Visited a careers advisor today. He took one look at my fingers and suggested a career in the civil

service. With fingers like that, he said, I wouldn't be surprised if you rise rapidly through the echelons and eventually get to wag them at Euro MPs in Brussels. Don't know if I will take his advice. It's either that or filling dykes in Holland, he told me. That sounded quite attractive until he explained what sort of dykes he was talking about.

8th October 1976.

Today I discovered the erotic science-fiction of Philip Jose Farmer and realized that not only do women not have penises, but in fact have holes into which men can put their penises. Still don't really understand why they should want to do this. Also unfortunately some women seem to want to bite off penises. Still don't really understand why they should want to do this. Also read a novel by Charles Platt called THE GAS which seemed to have slightly more realistic view on sex. I will probably write and tell him how much I admired his novel.

9th October 1976

Accepted for employment by a bank! Obviously from now on my diary will be full of daily entries chronicling how complete and satisfying my life now is. Went out to celebrate at the Goat In Boots and all my friends bought me round after round of drinks. Threw up in John Hall's hat. Result!

28th December 1985.

A tragic day. Watched a Bill Murray movie called Larger Than Life about him and an elephant, after which life seemed futile. Went to the bathroom, intent on slashing my wrists, but dropped the razor blade. Damn my big fingers. Whilst scrabbling about for it, during the course of which I dislodged a pile of fluffy towels, my father came in, found it, and proceeded to shave with it, whilst ignoring me, possibly thinking I was masturbating. Tried to explain to him what had happened, but he was having none of it and tried to slash his own wrists with his safety razor, which obviously didn't work, since it was by definition a safety razor. His apparent inability to commit suicide further eroded his self-esteem, to the extent that he rushed outside and lay down in the road waiting for a fast heavy vehicle to run over him. I joined him for a short while, but since it was two o'clock in the morning and the road outside our house was in fact not a road but an unadopted cart-track full of pot-holes it soon became apparent that this was not likely to happen. I tempted him back indoors with a soothing cup of Cocoa, but no sooner had he sat down and stopped trembling, than the sound of a vast out-of-control articulated lorry hurtling past outside reached our ears. Life can be so cruel.

6th January, 1986.

Went to visit my father in the Frank Bruno Memorial Home for Quivering Wrecks, and whilst, thanks to a new wonder drug, he has largely stopped quivering, he still does not really enjoy life since they have taken away his complete collection of Worlds of Tomorrow science fiction magazines (original American editions) on the grounds that the illustrations contained therein are homo-erotic.

8th April 1986.

Wrote my first attempt at a short story about an attempt to colonize a vast circumsized prepuce. Mailed it to Ted White at Amazing Stories.

10th June 1986.

Ted White replied to my submission saying it showed promise but unfortunately someone had already written a novel called Ringworld about a fungal infection.

10th August 1986

I have discovered something called fandom. First of all, responding to an advertisement in something called Speculation, I ordered some books from a reclusive hermit called Ron Bennett. After six weeks I had heard nothing and was beginning to worry. But then I received a communication from Rob Holdstock. Apparently my books had been sent to him, and his books had been sent to me, although I denied this of course, because I had already read them and sold them on. Nevertheless Mr Holdstock offered or threatened to bring them over and so he did. We went out to a local pub and he frankly embarrassed me by shouting at the pole dancers. I have so much to learn about social interaction, but feel I may have made a friend who may be still with me after three years (a record for me).

5th May 1987

Gran Died today. Have attended my first convention in Oxford. Boy, I am on a high. I didn't know I could have so much fun which didn't involve Sex or Meccano. Met up with lots of old friends like Rob Holdstock (well my only friend really). But also fell in with a wild-haired Welshman called Greg, who seemed to like my particular brand of dry wit and the way I paid for his drinks. He has suggested we published a fanzine together, providing I write most of it. Sounds like a good deal to me. I feel I am on the verge of something which may secure me a place in history. Did notice the toilets in the hotel in Oxford certainly seemed in need of a good cleaner.

7th January, 1988

It seems I am married. My wife has had children. I blame my fourth and fifth nocturnal emissions. It is all too much for me. Felt suicidal and went back home to try and find the razor blade involved in the incident of the 21st December 1985 only to find my father had already lodged it in a safety deposit box, in Coutts in Sloane Street, along with numerous bankers bonds, promissory notes signed by Tsar Nicholas 15th, and gilt-edged securities issued by the Third Reich, and old love letters from Rita Hayworth (unfortunately to Howard Hughes). By the time I found it I was too tired to use it. Went to sleep and dreamt of Frank Bruno. Oh God, why hast thou forsaken me.

8th January 1988

Accepted for employment by the Civil Service! Obviously from now on my diary will be full of daily entries chronicling how complete and satisfying my life now is. Went out to celebrate at the Goat In Boots and all my friends bought me round after round of drinks. Threw up in John Hall's hat. Result! Woke up next morning with a peculiar sense of déjà vu.

3rd February, 1999.

I think I will have to write the rest of my diary in code, because if my civil service employees caught wind of my literary activities, things might not bode well for me. So in future the letters of every word will be shifted one place up the alphabet. Plbz?

4th February 1999

Gvdl uijt gps b hbnf pg tpmejfst. Straitened times (my wife needs a new hernia truss) mean I have had to take a part time job, cleaning out the toilets at Kings Cross Station. It's quite enjoyable if you can forget about the shit and the piss, and you do get to meet the occasional celebrity. I had a famous science fiction writer in the other day for a shit, a wank (or a Sri Lanka as he jovially called it) and a spot of sodomy with a young black boy. Claimed to have invented the principle of the geo-stationary satellite, but I suppose some people would say anything with a cock down their throat.

14th January 2004

After a long and distinguished career in the civil service I decided to retire. Went to the palace today to receive my OBE. The Queen was very gracious even when I farted. An equerry took me aside and said, 'how dare you fart before her majesty?' 'I'm sorry,' I said, 'I didn't know it was her turn.' On my way home I took my OBE out of its silk-lined box to examine it, but fumbled and dropped it down a nearby drain. Oh, well, easy come easy go.

10th March 2004

Went to Graham Charnock's annual barbeque which he wilfully continues to hold in January each year, deluded by the idea he really lives in Australia. Fortunately none of my family was killed in a bizzare incident involving someone doing a forward roll into a tent. But it made me consider taking out extra insurance.

14th October 2005

Went to Wembley. Don't know why. Came back again, and spent several weeks in therapy, that is from 15th October to the 28th. It was during my trepanation that my doctor, Serge Gainsborough, first introduced me to the literary concept of Asphosgynastion, which of course is the false use of the terms, 'actually' and 'really', and possibly 'for sure' in a contradictory but non-ironic sense, and of course having the top of my skull cut off.

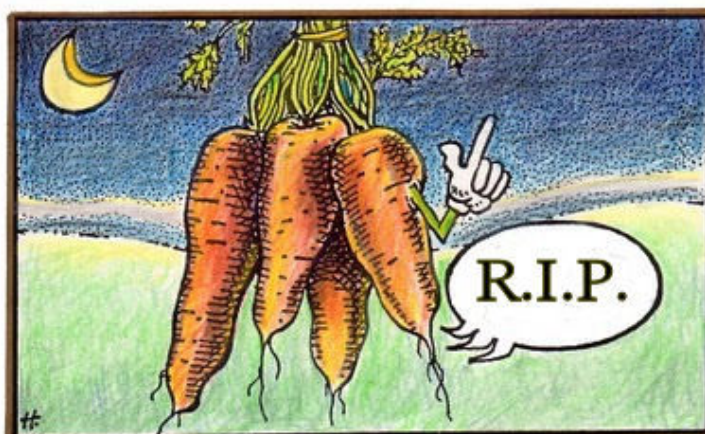
19th November 2006

Graham Charnock's 60th last night. They pretended to be surprised when they saw me, claiming I hadn't been invited. Decided not to give Graham the box of Quality Street I had bought. After a pleasant meal in a Thai restaurant we joined in the karaoke except that I dropped the microphone when it was my turn. Damn clumsy fingers. Got slightly drunk and tried to pick up a long-haired long-legged vision of loveliness in a short skirt, only to learn it was Joseph Nicholas.

23rd October 2007.

Have had enough of this diary thing. It seems a waste of time, since no one will ever read it. Might try to write an article for Chunga or Banana Wings or god forbid, Inca, instead.

— A Fan.



THE CARE AND UPKEEP OF THE MOUSTACHE

By Graham Charnock



I remember one day my Uncle Cecil Wodham-Smith invited me into the study of her bijou flat in Upper High Wycombe, which she shared with millionaire socialite Nancy Stringfellow and a strange man called Andrew Stephenson who was much taken to wearing lumberjack shirts. I was always confused by my Uncle's gender, not least because although she was called Cecil and affected men's clothes, she would often call upon me to provide sexual favors which were frankly startling for a fourteen year Harrow educated boy well-used to anal penetration but who found the frankly soggy and moist things that women got up to, which to my mind involved a lot of rubbing for no real result, rather disgusting.

After I had massaged her and rubbed her down with ambergris and several other varieties of cetacean derived oils (for she had somehow mistaken me for a visiting masseur and specialist in threatened species), she sat me on her knee and explained to me the secret lore of the moustache. Apparently she'd taken a degree in it at the Reading Institute of Technology. Or it may have been Media Studies.

A man should be proud of his moustache, she said, and a woman even prouder. Moustaches were not put upon this Earth to be toyed with or trifled with by unbelievers. They are sacred holy things. Salvador Dali, possibly the most holy man on this planet, had a very famous one after all, as did Jesus (the second most holy man) and indeed all of his apostles except Paul who could not grow one for genetic reasons. (See his Letters to the Galatians where he complains bitterly about this shortcoming, and also the fact that he can't buy stamps to actually send his letters).

The first step towards successful moustache husbandry (she explained) is to grow one. Of course they can be bought off the shelf, at joke or party supply shops, but this is hardly likely to give you the level of satisfaction that rearing a home-grown one can give you.

Some people apparently have difficulty in growing moustaches, which is usually due to a testosterone imbalance. If you find it takes several months for you to get even a vaguely shadowy beard growth, this may well apply to you. Don't be afraid to seek help in the realm of ersatz or fantasy moustaches, even though this may also involve you in long dialogues with your psychoanalyst. Book ahead.

Bespoke moustaches or implants may be your best option in these circumstances. Go to a reputable dealer or clinic and hope for the best, for it will almost certainly be worse than the very best; although possibly a little short of catastrophic depending on how much you have paid. And you may end up looking like Hitler.

Now, assuming you have managed to grow a moustache, what do you do with it?

The first thing obviously once you have a rough fuzz of fur on your upper lip is to choose which model you want to style it upon. Caution: avoid looking in a mirror at this stage. It can be fatal. Go to picture libraries or else Google moustache, obviously on the 'image' option.

When you see the moustache that is right for you, you will know instantly and an electric tingle will pass up your spine and into your medulla oblongata, especially if you've been using poppers. If you have been using poppers you should specifically avoid anything involving Village People,

Now you have a moustache. You might not recognize it as such, it may appear to be no more than a precariously balanced wrinkled shrew, but it is yours.

There are two options at this stage. You may attempt to deal with it yourself with a pair of scissors or expensive Nicky Clarke trimmer your wife has bought you for Christmas, or you go to someone who actually knows what they are doing. Needless to say we recommend the latter.

Trumpers in Curzon Street is the obvious place. They respect an honest moustache and will not deride it. If they laugh at you it will be discreetly, and they will also offer to sell you Palm Oil and something for the weekend. Do not be ashamed if this turns out to be a ticket for Jazz In The Park. Ask for Barry. He doesn't work there but it will open up a whole new area of surreal dialogue.

Alternatively go to Trampers in Brick Lane, an Islamic establishment which not only deals with moustaches but full Mullah beards. Wherever you end up always insist that your moustache is washed in soft water.



BRUCE TOWNLEY

REMEMBERS RALPH K. TOWNLEY

My father died on September 23, 2010, just after midnight. The cause was, according to the death certificate issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia, "buccal mucosa squamous cell carcinoma". This means that he died from a tumor on the inside of his cheek. I still find it a little hard to believe that he died this way but that's how Dad went. They tried everything, surgery, chemo and radiation therapy, the works. None of it seemed to do much good and a good deal of it caused him a great deal of discomfort if not awful physical pain. But, up until the end, he refused to take painkillers or be moved from the place where he'd made his home, an apartment in the assisted living facility in the retirement community where he'd lived for over a decade in Williamsburg, Virginia. There was a nice view of a pretty garden out his bedroom window. This is where he spent his last days, confined to an adjustable, hospital-style bed.

My father was of a generation of men that didn't see the need to burden others with their "feelings". Not an overbearing man, he disliked confrontation and, in fact, preferred discussion over argument. I grew to dread these discussions. He didn't yell (not his style) but after years and years of being stuck in meetings in a big corporation he'd learned how to wear folks down verbally.

As I say, he wasn't aggressive but he certainly liked things a specific way. His way, if possible. He liked the fact that my Mom had dinner ready for him when he got home from the office, typically at 6PM. He liked having the Sunday New York Times available so he could do the double acrostic word puzzle there each week. He usually did this in ink, in usually less than 30 minutes. He liked playing solitaire with actual, physical cards. I can still remember the sound of him slapping down those cards. And, then when they became available, playing the game on his personal computer. When I visited him one time he showed me the Excel spreadsheet on which he tracked the games he'd won (and I suppose, his losses though he didn't talk about those). He also kept spreadsheets to track his weight loss and a stock tracking scheme he'd dreamed up on his own, apparently for the sheer, unalloyed joy of noting down numbers in an orderly fashion on various pages through eldritch connections which were then acted on by obscure formula in baffling (to me, his son, who went to art school) ways. The scary thing was, the thing seemed to work its mathematical voodoo, after a fashion. That is, he made money with the thing.

My father read the Street and Smith magazines DOC SAVAGE and then AS-FOUNDING when he was a boy. He was fortunate in that the high school he went to had, as a sort of volunteer helper I guess, E. E. "Doc" Smith, author of the space-opera Lensman series. Smith worked as a quality control

chemist at a nearby bakery and, as the lore has it, developed the first practical method of sticking powdered sugar onto doughnuts...There was a chemistry club at Dad's school. I'm not sure how much chemistry actually took place during club activities but Smith would take the kids on hikes in the countryside surrounding Jackson, Michigan on weekends. They'd then settle down for lunch and Smith would explain the plot of the next super-scientific tale he was working on. My dad grew up loving science fiction. And so did I. It was a matter of both nature and nurture. The stuff was always around the house, usually in the form of ANALOG which Dad picked up and still read. It was also, apparently, in my genes.

One time when I was visiting my folks in Seaford, Virginia, a bunch of us were seated around the table in the kitchen eating lunch. My aunt and uncle who then lived in nearby Hampton were also there. My dad was discussing his favorite comic strips with my Uncle Vern who, as I recall, didn't have any strong feelings on the subject but didn't particularly like being left out of things. The comics were important to RKT though. He'd always had good taste in selecting the ones he followed. He was impressed, for example, when he saw me with one of those Warren magazine collections of Will Eisner's *The Spirit*. He'd loved reading that when he was a teenager. He was also very fond of Crockett Johnson's *Barnaby*, which was about a small boy who had a leprechaun as a friend. These are both comics that cartoonists themselves respected and admired.

Dad was going on about how he didn't "get" Scott Adams' strip, *Dilbert*. It's about a socially challenged but rather intelligent engineer. After Dad had harangued us for a while I turned to him and told him, "Dad, you *are* *Dilbert*!" He knew he was being gotten at and I think was making a mental note to write the ungrateful boy out of the will.

Something similar happened when he encountered the first STAR TREK show some decades after it was first shown on TV. A staffer at the historical site where he volunteered after he'd retired had given him a whole box full of VHS tapes of the show that he was steadily working his way through. During this process one of my sisters and I visited him in Williamsburg. He would enthusiastically describe his favorite episodes. I knew from experience that this could take several hours before he ran out of steam. Being a man who didn't talk very much, and actively disliked small talk, he was only dimly aware of when enough was enough. He'd launched into yet another deliberate, scene-by-scene detailing of another when I finally blurted out, "Oh yeah, I remember *that* one, *that's* the one where Kirk, Spock and Bones all go down to the planet!" I'd only seen these shows often enough in reruns so their plot summaries were embedded in my mitochondrial DNA. Dad gave me that look that he knew he was being gotten at but he wasn't exactly sure how or why. Jeri, familiar with this shtick of mine (they did a *lot* of planet-going-down-to on ol' STAR TREK), wiped the smirk off my face with the terse instruction: "Bruce! Don't tease Dad!" Well, anyway it got him to change the subject.

My dad would occasionally, when I was a kid, undertake a project. As I say, he was a careful man, a man born, seemingly, to be an electrical engineer. He decided he was interested in Chinese cuisine at one point. He'd already developed his skills with chop-sticks by snacking on those tiny, slippery Spanish peanuts directly from the can, snatching them up with chopsticks while watching golf on TV on Saturday (a sport which he never played personally that I know of but liked watching because it also allowed him to nap if he felt like it). In time he used his not inconsiderable woodworking skills to construct a box to hold his fancy scarlet, mother-of-pearl inlaid chopsticks. He even carved Chinese characters onto the box. Apparently they meant *something* because the wait staff at various Northern Virginia Chinese restaurants always seemed impressed when he drew this thing out of his pocket. He then decided that he'd like to try cooking Chinese. Bought a wok. Got a chopper which he then made a leather cover for, stamping it CHOP-CHOP. Leatherworking was another of his pursuits, you see. He was a pretty good cook, in fact. He made this stuffed cucumber dish that I still remember fondly.

RKT worked on a cyclotron when he was a student in the physics program at the University of Michigan in the 1940s. He was recruited by an admiral, according to his story, during World War II. One of the inducements that this fellow offered was the fact that the food was so much better in the Navy. RKT then went to radar school and spent the rest of his hitch installing and calibrating radar sets and other such equipment on ships in Norfolk, Virginia. When he lost his hair, one could see a couple of nicks in his scalp. These came from his Navy days when he'd forget to duck when going through a low hatchway and he'd cut himself up there.

My father loved many kinds of music, from Italian opera to Gene Autry to Slim Gaillard. Once, when I'd finally gotten around to learning how to drive, I asked to borrow his car, a red '67 Volkswagen Bug, one of the last models with those plumber's nightmare bumpers. He asked me where I was going and I explained that I wanted to go see the Blues Brothers movie. I figured that he might not know who John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd were so I said that it was about some blues guys from Chicago and it had Cab Calloway in it. He replied, "Oh, Cab Calloway – I *love* Cab Calloway! Can I come too?" Grateful for the time we'd spend together I said, "Sure, Dad." I think he enjoyed the flick quite a bit. And for the right reasons.

While going through his goods after he died one of the items I took back with me to San Francisco was this CD of tunes played on the steam-driven calliope on a Mississippi riverboat that he'd taken a cruise on with my Mom. It's kind of mawkish but it's also a real "Dad" thing. Sometimes I tear up a bit looking at the cover.

When I was in college I heard this radio program that had this guy in a flat, Midwestern voice tell stories about this small, probably imaginary, town in one of those big, boxy states that one flies over when travelling from coast to coast. It also had old-timey music and funny skits. I thought to myself, "Jeez, Dad will *love* this program – I gotta tell him about it the next time I

see him.” I did so. He then said, “Well, that’s nice son but I told *you* about Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion* about six or eight years ago. He was nice about it but I felt kind of sheepish.

When my dad was a very young boy his nickname was “Skipper” because he skipped everywhere. Since he grew up to be a very large man indeed (I’ve taken baths in the bathtub that he used when he was a kid – I could lie in the thing full length and still have an inch or so above my head and below my feet – I am descended from a race of giants) this somewhat strains credulity. Later, his nickname switched to “Arkie” on account of the first two initials, R and K. of his actual name. I never called him that but it suited him better.

When the chaplain of the retirement community asked me what I was grateful for, having had him as my father, I blurted out the flip comment, “Uh, his sperm”. I’m sure this earned me no points with her. I didn’t speak at his memorial but my sister, Jeri, did. She quoted some poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay as well as this bit she wrote about him on Facebook: “The world’s sweetest engineering physicist has left the planet. I miss him more than words can say. But I guess now he knows for sure how science and religion can and do work together -- hearing it directly from the source.” I didn’t speak at the service because, basically, I have a horror of public speaking. And it was more religious than either I or even my father would have preferred, I think. I wouldn’t eulogize Ralph K. Townley as a brave sailor or notable athlete. He wasn’t those things. But he provided well for his family, was always there for us, didn’t drink very much, was in no way abusive. A kind, intelligent, careful, well-liked man.

My father was a hero.



ROB JACKSON

BYE BYE ROMULUS

About 18 months ago the Jackson family suffered a loss – not human, but significant.

Romulus, our eldest dog (a 13 and a half year old black standard poodle), had been gradually losing weight for about the last year. We had been trying to feed him up. However there must have been something about his overall health, and more than just the fact that his back legs were increasingly poorly controlled so that at times he hardly knew where they were. He was also increasingly tired and slow on walks, which our vet put down to his heart and circulation not being as strong as they were.

One Sunday in early August 2009 Coral went off for her week's Summer School, run by the Association for Weavers, Spinners and Dyers. This summer school only happens every two years; she last had a week away just before we held the first InTheBar house party at our place in 2007, so weeks away for Coral are pretty rare events. So on the Sunday evening and Monday morning after she left I took over the walkies duty. He didn't seem much different from his usual self on both of these; a bit slow, but still keen to sniff the messages from other dogs if given half a chance. Sunday night the hormones were a bit active and he was quite seriously trying to hump his doggy duvet, so anyone watching him would have said "There's life in the old dog yet!"

However when he came back from the Monday morning walk he was slower than usual to start eating his breakfast, then went quietly to the cupboard under the stairs to lie down. Nothing unusual so far.

Then he was sick on the duvet in there, so we shooed him out into the back garden, as we do with any of our dogs who is sick – if it happens once, there is usually more where that came from. There surely was; it took three goes, each with more of his breakfast. One of them contained the squeaker from an old squeaky toy from a period a year or so back when he would love to rip up soft toys with squeakers. Coral would try to take the squeakers out so he wouldn't swallow them, but didn't always beat him to it. Eventually we had to give up giving him these toys, but the squeakers lived on in his stomach.

We wondered if this might have been the problem – a partial gut blockage (intestinal obstruction). However, once this thing was up, he didn't stop being sick. He kept drinking lots of water, and throwing this up. He also became increasingly listless and lethargic, lying on the lawn with his chin right down on the ground. He wouldn't move when called, and at one point I virtually had to lift him up when we thought he was getting cold outdoors.

Though at first we had thought it was either a gut infection or a blockage, and would blow over, we took his temperature – it was raised – and decided to call the emergency vet. When they heard how ill he was they asked us to bring him to their 24-hour hospital in Portsmouth.

Our 18-year-old daughter Venetia went with me in the car to handle him, and coped absolutely brilliantly. We arrived there at 10 pm, and by 10.45 they had decided to admit him to put a drip up because he was dehydrated, as well as run a battery of tests.

By 11.45 they rang back with the news that his serum amylase was so high their machine refused to test it unless it was diluted, which meant acute pancreatitis. This is a disease which can be

fatal even in young, fit dogs. They said it might have come on due to a sudden obstruction in the pancreatic duct – they dropped a hint it might be cancer, which I had a hunch was probably cancer of the pancreas.

This would sadly fit with one other fact; he weighed only 30 kg, when his normal used to be 36 kg. This was a massive weight loss for a dog who wasn't particularly overweight.

Despite us taking him in late in the evening, they asked us to be back between 7 and 7.30 am the next morning. As I had started on a mad rush to decorate our bedroom while Coral was away, I had 7 dust sheets and many hundreds of items to shift around the bedroom and off the bed so I could get to sleep – then I set the alarm for 6 am and switched the light out at 12.45 am. So when I woke up early anyway, it meant I only had 4.5 hours' sleep that night.

They suggested we take him to our own vet as soon as her office opened at 8.30 on the Tuesday. Venetia and I did so, though it was distressing that we had to lift him physically back into the car as he was too weak. Our 25-year-old son Hugo actually cancelled his first day at a new workplace to meet us at the vet's (he was working as a sort of NHS temp at the time, to earn money for his other stuff, including wedding plans). By 8.45 we were in with our vet, a lovely Scottish lady called Mrs Darling.

Before the start of her day's classes at the summer school, we were able to ring Coral about the treatment options. The choices were: keep him on a drip, with increasingly strong painkillers and antibiotics to see if he recovered; operate to see if there was any obstruction (when even 3 years ago, Mrs Darling had said an operation for something else, then, might have killed him by overstraining his heart); or accept that he'd had a good life and not put him through any more, especially as treatment, as well as the illness, would be painful and intrusive. (Don't forget how acutely painful pancreatitis is, as well as how fast it can develop. The pain was probably the main reason he wouldn't move.)

Sadly but unanimously, with Coral on the phone, we chose the latter option. Hugo had a hunch that we might be saying bye-bye, so he brought with him from home a couple of slices of red peppers (Romulus rather liked these). Hugo put these by Romulus's nose as he lay on his side on the floor; he didn't eat them, but, as well as lots of strokes (and tears) from Venetia, Hugo and myself, the scent of peppers was there for him as the injection went into his veins.....

When we came back to the other two dogs at home, there were some whines from our 5-year-old retriever/collie cross Taiko when he realised Romulus wasn't with us, and I said "Sorry – no Romulus!", and a bit later Merlin (a dark brown standard poodle, aged 11) was a bit quiet for a while and off his food; but after a while Merlin realised he was now the boss doggie, and then their behaviour was surprisingly normal. But then Merlin and Taiko are very close to each other anyway.

Purely by coincidence, some local friends who breed dogs had a litter of "Sprockers" (Springer/Cocker spaniel crosses) pretty much ready to be found homes, and they let us have one – another male, like all our other dogs. Kiba is now over a year and a half old, a bit hyperactive and daft at times, and hasn't yet grown out of the hole-digging phase. He has lovely tan markings and a very affectionate nature, and is now incredibly close to Taiko, who is a calming influence on him; but he can't replace Romulus.

Bye-bye Romulus. You were a wonderful dog – as well as being good at gently letting people know what you wanted (that very direct stare was quite hypnotic, and impossible to ignore) you were very astute, loving, and kind. Your ashes are still in a decorative cardboard urn, getting slightly in the way in the kitchen. That’s what you used to do in life, anyway

-- Rob Jackson; August 2009, revised for publication January 2011.



Romulus, Taiko and Merlin

MEMORIES OF MY BROTHER JOHN (1945 - 2001)

by Robert Lichtman

My younger brother John—a life-long smoker—died early in 2001 after a long battle with lung cancer. I wanted to go down to San Diego for the funeral and memorial service, but this was just a couple weeks after I’d broken my right ankle and undergone surgery—and so it wasn’t in the cards that I should travel. Instead, I wrote a piece about him and one of my sons who was living down there at the time read it at the memorial service. Afterwards, he told me it was well-received. This is what I wrote:

Of the two of us, John was the punk. I was the intellectual, the most likely to succeed. At least, that’s how our parents saw us. Like all kids, John and I were good at teasing one another. As the oldest, I had a brief advantage until John developed his verbal skills. Then we were on a level playing field. We pounded on each other now and then, too. If we got too rambunctious either teasing or fighting, Mom and Dad, especially Dad, would freak out. We liked that, so we kept it up. We had an early and strong bond over their ideas of parenting.

By the time we hit high school, most of our teasing was behind us and we had developed distinctly different styles. I was quiet and read a lot. John didn't read much, liked to hang out with a fast crowd, and kept our parents plenty worried. The farthest out he got (that I knew about) was the time he and one of his friends "borrowed" a car, went for a joy-ride, and got caught. I remember our father totally blowing up when he got the call from the police, while I, in my quiet, studious way, admired John for it. I don't remember if I ever told him so, but I would like to tell him now.

John and I left the parental nest within months of each other. I graduated from UCLA and got out of Southern California immediately. John got married, and then he and his first wife, Diane, had a baby. That was Nancy. Soon John was doing what he'd always told me he never wanted to do: working in a machine shop, same as Dad. We gradually fell out of touch. Mom kept me up to speed on what John was doing: having another baby, Michael; opening a tropical fish store called "Something Fishy" that didn't work out; buying a house in Carson that Dad didn't approve of.

When I moved back to California in 1980, we began seeing each other a little more often, but we had very little contact between visits. We both chalked this up to having busy lives. But what had become a sporadic and sometimes tenuous connection changed dramatically for us in 1995, when our parents were no longer competent to take care of themselves. John took the responsibility of moving them down to San Diego and providing them with full-time care until the last possible moment. We saw each other more often then, maintained better contact between visits, and rediscovered our brotherly affection. John did an amazing job of taking care of our parents, all the more amazing considering the remnants of not-so-happy childhood memories we both shared. His competence and kindness were impressive and touching; I had many regrets about all the years we had let slip by.

About a year before John's diagnosis, Carol and I visited him and Karin in San Diego, Carol meeting Karin and John for the first time. We enjoyed every minute. Being together as two couples somehow expanded our relationship with each other to a new and richer level.

Younger brothers aren't supposed to die first, and John vowed to fight the good fight to try to keep it from happening. I think he did a hell of a good job, but the odds were definitely stacked against him. A couple of evenings before he left us I had a final conversation with him, one that ended in expressions of mutual love and respect. I miss him like crazy, and wish I could be with you all today delivering this memorial eulogy myself.

—Robert Lichtman (2001/2011)

SPECIAL TAFF OFFER!

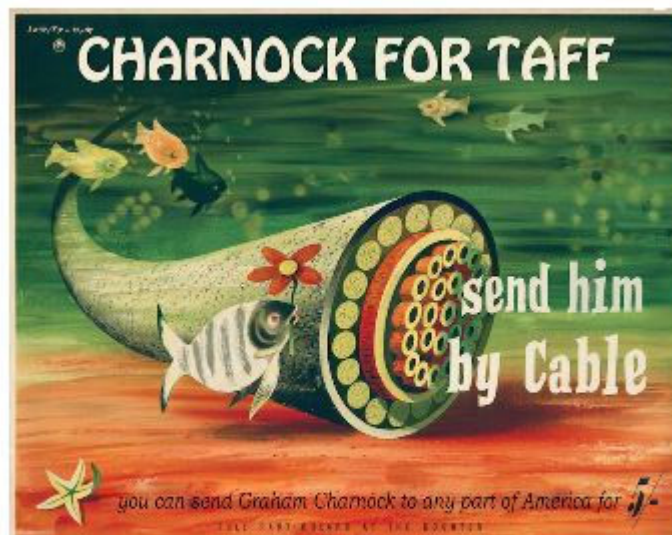
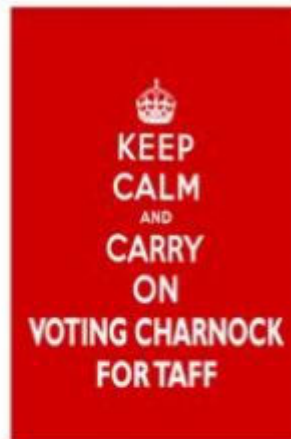
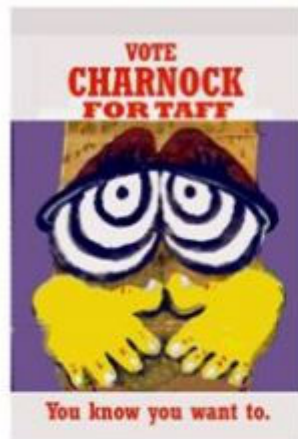
Set of 4 laminated badges plus A3 campaign poster

From Graham Charnock, 45 Kimberley Gardens, London N4 1LD (graycharnox@blueyonder.co.uk)

£3.00/\$5.00 Cheques made payable to TAFF.

PayPal to: stevegreen@livejournal.com

COLLECT THE SET!



Poster courtesy Bill Burns