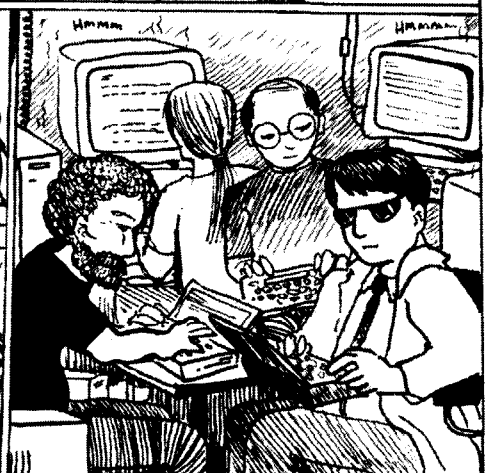
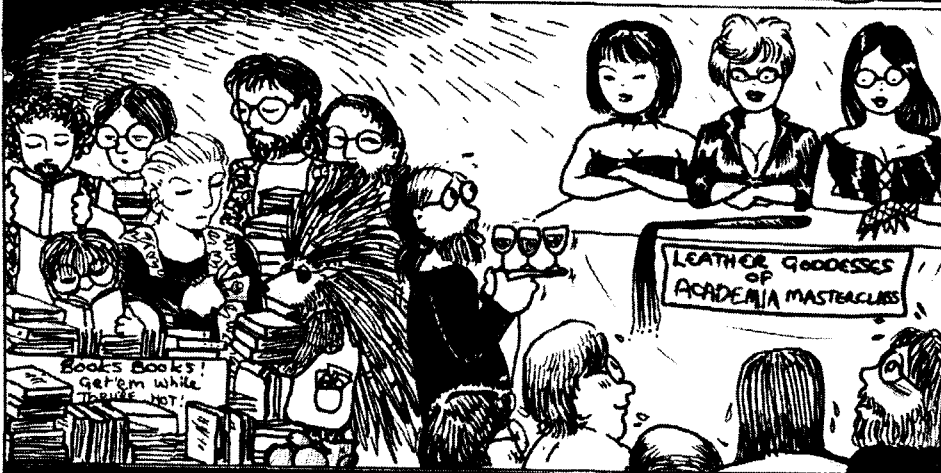


PLOKTA.CON



This is issue 19 of *Plokta*, edited by Steve Davies and Alison Scott (paper version) and Mike Scott (web version and CD-ROM). It is available for letter of comment (one copy is fine, we pass them over to each other), trade (3 copies if possible, please), contribution, to con members, by editorial whim, or to more credible Worldcon bids.

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Photos by Alison Scott (2, 3, 9, 13, 14), Steven Cain (2, 13, 14), Giulia de Cesare (3), Phil Bradley (12) Alison Freebairn (13), Ian Sorensen (13), unknown (7, 13, 14)

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CONTENTS

3 Editorial

The editors explain why this isn't a programme book, we feature another of our Leather Goddesses of Academia, and the chairman speaks.

4 The <plokta.con> programme

You can have a laugh seeing all the things that change between this version of the programme and the one that actually happens at the convention.

5 Wadde Hadde Dudde Da

Steve Davies contemplates German art.

6 Ken MacLeod: an appreciation

Patrick Nielsen Hayden Patrick attempts to sum up just what it is that is so appealing about Ken's writing.

7 Up the Walls of the World

Ken MacLeod

Demonstrating how suitable he is to be the <plokta.con> Guest of Honour, Ken contemplates the delights of constructing flat-pack furniture.

10 Lokta Plokta

Our correspondents tell us *their* amusing stories about buying beds.

13 Photos from the Plokta Vaults Various

Photos that the cabal and friends took at Potlatch, Corflu, 2Kon, and the odd wedding. And boy, was it an odd wedding.

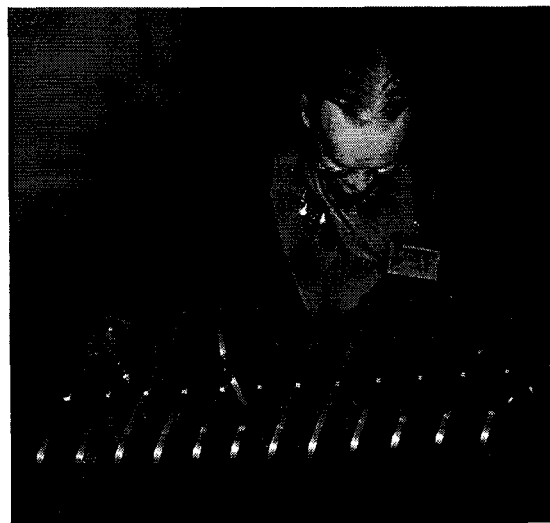
Plokta Advertising Feature

Tired of always being the 98 pound weakling? Get sand kicked in your face at the beach? Want to make an impression on Cleavage Night at <plokta.con>? You need:

Doctor Plokta's Patent Chest Expander



Before: sunken-chested



After: could store a bottle of Laphroaig in there

But don't take our word for it! Read these unsolicited testimonials from satisfied customers!

Miss CB of Croydon writes: "I once had trouble storing my briefing papers, but now I've got room for a whole Cabinet".

Mrs YR tells us "This spring I've got an entire flock of geese living in my cleavage"

Mr MS of Cumbria says "I'm sorry I've gaffiated, but I've been too busy staying at home playing with them."

Editorial

FOR THOSE of you at <plokta.con>, welcome to the convention. This issue of *Plokta* also fulfils the normal requirements of a convention programme book; ie, it has an article by our guest of honour, an article about our guest of honour, descriptions of the programme items, and most of you won't read it until you get home.

I hope you all like your cover mounted CD-ROM. Putting a CD-ROM on the cover of *Plokta* has been a secret goal of ours ever since we started, so we're delighted to have finally managed it. We know it works with Windows and Linux machines, but haven't been able to test it on other platforms. If you can't read it on your system, please let us know and we'll try and get a guru to sort it out for you. If you have no way of reading it at all, we're sorry. Just think of it as a particularly pretty coaster.



Sunday night is Cleavage Night at <plokta.con>. We hope you'll all dress appropriately, and we've made sure to have some cleavage enhancing programming.

We've heard from Lori Meltzer and Morris Keesan that they won't be coming to the con after all; Lori had a baby boy, several weeks early, last week. Rumours that American Airlines have given them a bottle of champagne as a reward for not pulling this stunt while flying to <plokta.con> have been greatly exaggerated. Rumours that this is how Pat McMurray got *his* champers from British Airways have been entirely made up. Congratulations from us all.

"We don't need no steenkin' badge numbers"

Our Guest of Honour, Ken MacLeod, has got into the spirit of things by providing us with an article for this issue of *Plokta*. We're glad to see that Ken is fully in tune with the spirit of fanzine fandom in the

noughties, by choosing to write about flat-pack furniture.



One thing that is always true of conventions is that there's a list of people to thank, and <plokta.con> is no exception. We'd like to thank John Dallman, who spent an entire day duplicating CDs for us (put six in the bank, wait 15 minutes, take them out, put another six in...). Thanks to Ken MacLeod for being such a splendid guest, especially in the light of the cabal's general idiosyncrasy. Thanks to all those who have agreed to be on the programme, and all of you who we've put on the programme without bothering to ask first. Thanks to George for being a much more reasonable chairman than Alison ever was. Finally, thanks to everyone who's come to <plokta.con> to make it a success, and also to our many friends and correspondents around the world who can't be at the con but still help give the fanzine its character.

Apart from the con, we're all celebrating our second Hugo nomination, and Sue has won TAFF (thanks to Tommy and Tobes for a great campaign). Sue is working on the itinerary for her grand tour of the US before and after Chicon—let us know if you want to put her up. We promise that she's house-trained. Well, house-trained-ish.

We had planned to all be present at an American Worldcon for perhaps the only time ever. Unfortunately, Alison's innate sense of timing means that, come Labor Day, there's a pretty good chance she will indeed be in labour. But we intend to have a live feed of the Hugo ceremony set up in the delivery room. Couldn't she just have kept her legs crossed for another month or two?

Elsewhere in the news, prominent SF fan and newt-fancier Ken Livingstone has been elected Mayor of London (not to be confused with the Lord Mayor of London), so we're looking forward to the construction of gleaming monorails, colossal glass towers and magnificent amphibian terraria. Oh, wait a minute, we were in Docklands in 1995. I guess futurism is old-fashioned.

Finally, we observe that Andy Porter has just sold *SF Chronicle* to the forces of capitalism. We would like to make it absolutely clear that the *Plokta* cabal have very strong feelings about the rampant commercialisation of formerly amateur fanzines. If you would like to participate in *Plokta*'s IPO, please email unmarked bills to the *Plokta* Swiss Bank Account.

BOLLOCKS

Leather Goddesses of Academia (3)

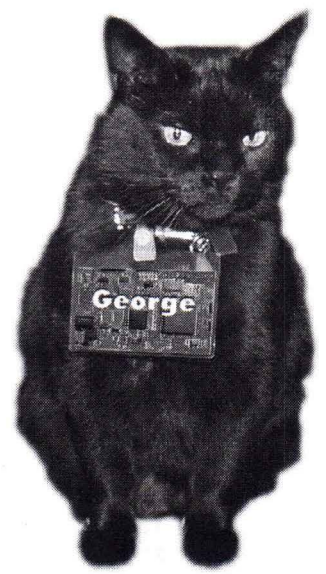
We have sourced unique photos of one of Scotland's leading academic cyberlawyers. Lillian Edwards is currently investigating the seamier side of transatlantic Internet soliciting, and is depicted here pondering her briefs.



Veni Vidi Victor

Next ish: thanks to Steve Green for photos of Dr KL Maund in *rubber* gear. Yeah! Right on! Now remember folks, this is a game you can all play. If you have photos of your favourite PhD sex-kitten lying around, just send them to us (and the photos). The less they're wearing, the more likely we are to publish.

Chairman's Bit



Welcome to <plokta.con>. Where's my smoked salmon? Now somebody get this bloody badge off me.

MEMBERS



As of 20 May, we have 106 members (100 adults and 6 children):

Michael Abbott, Brian Ameringen, Simon Amos, aRJay, Austin, Margaret Austin, Amanda Baker, Doug Bell, Alan Bellingham, Tony Berry, Sandra Bond, Bridget & Simon Bradshaw, Claire Brialey, Gordon Brignal, Tanya Brown, Roger Burton-West, Marianne Cain, Steven Cain, Caro, Avedon Carol, Dave Clements, Cat Coast, Eddie Cochrane, Chris Conway, John Dallman, Steve Davies, Guy & Sue Dawson, Giulia De Cesare, Vince Docherty, Martin Easterbrook, Lilian Edwards, Sue Edwards, Janet & Mike Figg, Don Fitch, Vikki Lee France, Susan Francis, Gwen Funnell, Wendy Glover, Victor Gonzalez, Michael Grant, Ann & Steve Green, Rob Hansen, Julian Headlong, Dave Hicks, Anders Holmstrom, Michael Ibbs, Thomas Ibbs, Rhodri James, Steve Jeffery, Kari, Tony Keen, Morris Keesan, Leigh Kennedy, Paul Kincaid, Vicki King, Leif Kjønne, Christina Lake, Dave Langford, Patrick Lawford, Alice & Steve Lawson, Alasdair Mackintosh, Carol & Ken MacLeod, Sue Mason, Rory McLean, Lori Meltzer, Melusine, Nick Mills, Keith Mitchell, Caroline Mullan, Phil Nanson, Emmet O'Brien, Chris O'Shea II, Joan Paterson, Bernie Peek, Mark Plummer, Elizabeth Priest, Simon Priest, Colette Reap, Roger Robinson, Vicki Rosenzweig, Marcus L Rowland, Yvonne Rowse, Naomi Saunders, Alison Scott, Mike Scott, Robert "Nojay" Sneddon, Ken Slater, Ian Sorensen, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Square Bear, Tibs, Paul Treadaway, Lennart Uhlin, Tobes Valois, Huw Walters, Jo Walton, Sasha Walton, Peter Wareham, Anne Wilson and Tom Wornack.



<plokta.con> Programme

THESE ARE the items we think we will be having at <plokta.con>. Please read your *Read Me* for exact details of timings and participants.

Superfluous Technology—the Dark Side

We all hear about the technology that makes our lives better, improves the status quo, and gives you five orgasms before breakfast. But what about the technology that none of us much want, but which is turning up anyway? **Julian Headlong** investigates, assisted by **Ken MacLeod** and **Emmet O'Brien**.

Opening Ceremony

We introduce you to the *Plokta* cabal, formally launch the beer, and encourage you all to buy a drink for **Ken MacLeod**, our Guest of Honour. We don't expect the ceremony to last very long, and it will immediately be followed by

Fanzine Panel: We Love the Smell of Hecto in the Morning

Several noted faneds (including **Lilian Edwards**, **Yvonne Rowse** and **Vicki Rosenzweig**) discuss the current state of play.

Read 'Em and Weep: Bad but overrated books

The panel discuss great classics of SF which they personally think are complete rubbish. **Paul Kincaid** moderates.

Curing the Fan Hugos: are they sick?

Every year the Hugo nominations are announced, and every year fans wring their hands and complain that the best fan writers, artists and fanzines aren't properly represented. How could we change the fan Hugos to ensure that the best candidates appear on the final ballot? Or should we stop worrying and just get on with it? **Victor Gonzalez** moderates, with help from **Steve Green** and **Julian Headlong**.

Style Challenge—would you want your daughter to marry one?

Is it true that fans are the least stylish people on earth? Stylish fans pick on fannish archetypes from the audience and discuss how they could be worked over.

Honey, We Flattened the Universe

Amanda Baker and **Dave Clements** fill us in on recent developments in astronomy.

Harry Potter and the Runaway Success

The fourth Harry Potter novel, due out this summer, has a projected UK print run of one million copies. In hardback. But surely there are many better childrens' books? **Maureen Kincaid Speller** analyses the phenomenon,

helped by **Joan Paterson** and **Sasha Walton**.

UK '05 presentation

The Worldcon bid committee have finally come to a decision about their site. Come and hear them explain why Glasgow (or possibly Brighton) is a better place to hold the 2005 Worldcon than, say, somewhere that *isn't* Britain. And why they are the best team of people to do it. Bring your own rotten fruit.

Guest of Honour Speech: The Secret History

Ken MacLeod relates some of the real-life events that he has distorted and exaggerated to provide grist for his novels.

No-Tech Babble

"Oh, All Right Then", said **Peter Wareham** and **Gwen Funnell** when we asked them whether they could do a silly game for <plokta.con>, and this is it.

Book Collecting for Fun and Profit

We all seem to do it, at least if the teetering piles of books around our homes are anything to go by. But are we really taking the best possible care of our collections? **Brian Ameringen** moderates, along with **Roger Robinson** and **John Dallman**.

Is "Is SF Dead?" Dead: or, Stop Moping and Get on with It

The imminent death of SF as an artform has been predicted regularly since the dawn of time. But every year, more SF books are published and more SF movies are made. So why all the long faces? **Mark Plummer**, **Tibs**, and **Emmet O'Brien** discuss.

How to be a Complete Bitch

Alison Freebairn moderates this masterclass.

Chris Conway

Live music from Leicester resident and fan **Chris Conway**.

UFF Auction

This will be held after the gig, whenever it finishes. Let us fleece you for a variety of good causes. **The Cabal**, accompanied by **Bridget Bradshaw** on the balalaika.

A Good Read

Shamelessly nicked from Radio 4; three panellists (**Jo Walton**, **Austin Benson** and **Mike Scott**) each choose a book (*The Sky Road*, by **Ken MacLeod**, *Revelation Space* by **Alastair Reynolds**, and *Mythago Wood* by **Robert Holdstock**), and discuss them.

Superfluous Kari and Phil

Remember Kari's article about the pretty bendy boys in Hong Kong cinema? In an attempt to redress the balance, **Kari** and **Phil Nanson** explore the pretty bendy girls, with AV support.

A Fan in the Oven: How to make new SF fans using materials you probably have lying around the house

At least 5% of the membership of the con is expecting a child imminently. **Alison Scott (6 months)**, and **Caroline Mullan (duck for cover; we think she's going to deeble)** discuss pregnancy and childbirth the fannish way. **Dr Joan Paterson** stands by in case of medical emergencies, and **Lori Meltzer** has already had one, so won't be joining us.

Runaround

Oh, yes, you remember this from the dim and distant days of ITV in the seventies. The <plokta.con> mass participation quiz. This is your chance to answer questions, win bizarre prizes, and generally have fun. **Chris O'Shea** is Mike Reid. Now there's a scary thought.

Electronic Fanzines: We love the smell of JPEGs in the morning

What exactly *is* an electronic fanzine? Has there ever been a good one? With the first online journal convention imminent, is this the fanwriting form of the web? Can print fanzines translate sensibly to the web? **Dr Plokta** repurposes, with help from **Sandra Bond**, **Vicki Rosenzweig** and **Victor Gonzalez**.

Ken MacLeod Reading

Ken reads from his new novel, *Cosmonaut Keep*, to be published in November.

Partly Baked Ideas

John Dallman discusses those flights of superfluous technology that never quite got off the ground. Coming soon to an Innovations catalogue near you.

Question Time (or, for Radio 4 Junkies, Any Questions)

Your chance to put one of a range of burning fannish issues to a panel of international experts. **Alice Lawson** keeps the peace. Please submit your questions in advance to one of the cabal.

Quick on the Draw

How is it done? **Steve Jeffery**, **Dave Hicks** and **Sue Mason** demonstrate their ability to draw anything the audience can conceive of, while **Alison Scott** provides colour commentary.

Strange things in your Cleavage

Yes, Sunday night is Cleavage Night at <plokta.con>. And this panel celebrates the notable cleavages of **Sue Dawson**, **Claire Brialey**, **Yvonne Rowse** and **Naomi Saunders**. They will discuss the wide-ranging uses to which one's bosom may be put. Quack quack.

"Sunday night is Cleavage Night at <plokta.con>"

A Hansom Cab to Hinckley

Wondering about the whereabouts of next year's Eastercon? The Paragon committee lead an away team to the uncharted planet of Hinckley. Wear your red shirt and set phasers on stun.

Good but Underrated Writers

Some people just don't get the recognition they deserve. **Anne Wilson** discusses some authors who ought to be more widely read, supported by **Caroline Mullan**, **Austin Benson** and **Ken MacLeod**.

Thng's Masterclass Live

Sadly, **Thng** can't be with us this weekend due to having contracted a severe case of New Jersey. However, his partner in crime, **Dave Langford**, provides us with a juicy selection of those things writers put into their books and later wished they hadn't. This is a repeat of his item from Aussiecon 3, for those of you who went down under.

Closing Ceremony

Well, that was that. Come along and help us close down the convention.

Wadde Hadde Dudde Da?

IT WAS Alison's idea. Why is it that so many of our stories start off like that? Anyway, Her Ladyship wanted to watch the Eurovision Song Contest, so we downloaded the rules to the Eurovision drinking game from the web, stuck a litre of sake in the microwave, and switched on.

Perchance you have not previously encountered the Eurovision Song Contest, bastion of European harmony? Each country gets to perform a song, all countries vote (with mass telephone voting for those places the phone has reached), and the winner bursts into tears.

Decent songs *have* been known to win. Once, in 1974. Decent groups *have* been known to enter. Once, in 1974. Otherwise, the best you can hope for is

the sort of band that wouldn't be out of place on one of Bruce Pelz's cruise liners.

Worse, the country that wins has to host next year's contest at vast expense. This year, Sweden drew the short straw, and so entered a weird band of Lapp/Amerind shamans to ensure it wouldn't happen again.

Anyway, it was the usual mixture of poor singers, boring songs and really, really weird dancing from people in ridiculous costumes. Plus a few interesting bits. A manic Latvian who appeared to be stoned out of his mind on speed. Macedonian Spice Girls. Three pneumatic mixed-race ladies performing that authentic Austrian Motown sound. And the Germans. What can I say about the Germans? Bouncy, exuberant, wearing gold lamé Stetsons (the men) or miniskirts (the women). Their song, "Wadde Hadde Dudde Da?" translates out as something like "What are you wearing under that?" or "Have you got any knickers on?" They were really fun. Usually, the Germans enter boring, worthy songs about World Peace or something. This year the Russians and the Irish beat them to it.

By this point in the evening, the increasing consumption of sake had rendered things increasingly blurred. However, I seem to recall that there were some votes. After all the countries have done their thing, they vote, giving 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 or 12 votes. Originally, there used to be a jury for each country which would present the votes. Then the Brits introduced telephone voting and now most of them do it.

Unfortunately, this has had almost no effect on the notorious nationalist alignment in the voting. Basically, the French never vote for the British, the Greeks and Turks never vote for each other, the Danes always give Iceland 12 points and vice versa, all the Scandinavians always vote for each other... you get the idea.

We phoned up the number and voted for the Germans. Everyone else voted as expected. The plethora of new little countries around the Baltic resulted in a massive vote for the crap Latvian on speed, but victory went to an anodyne lovesong from Denmark. All the identikit luvvies in 24 different countries congratulated each other on their presentation and boring jokes. Another year over and it's the Danes' budget that gets trashed next year.

—Steve Davies

BOLLOCKS

Tampopo

Some bastard broke into my car during Eastercon.

Okay, on a scale of one to ten, as car crime goes it rated about a ½. They punched a couple of holes in the passenger side door, which cost me £15 to fix, but it pissed me off and was the capper on a less than sparking weekend.

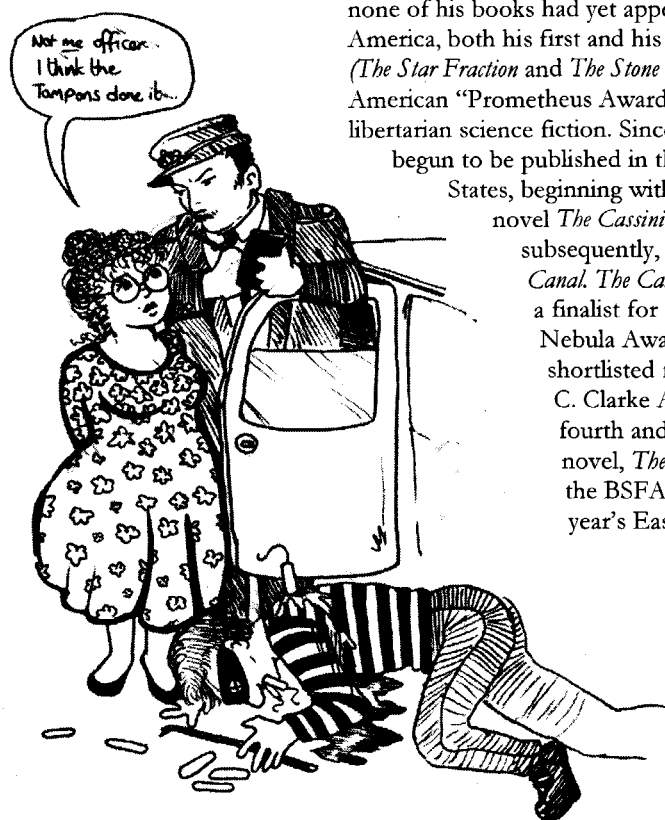
I didn't bother reporting it to the police, I'm sure Glasgow's finest have more important things to worry about—while getting lost on the way to the car park I had been following a panda car with a lone copper inside. Three times during its slow meander through the vicious one way system, locals took a few seconds out of their busy lives to go up to the car and spit at it. Lovely.

I can however, comfort myself with the fact that all the thieves got away with was 30p from the ashtray and two half eaten packets of Tic-tacs.

And they found the whip I'd lost down the back of one of the seats and one or two dozen tampons. I didn't realise that one little car could have so many emergency tampons stashed away in its deep recesses. Perhaps it was a breeding colony they disturbed?

Next time I take the train.

—Sue Mason



Ken MacLeod: An Appreciation

"Science fiction's freshest new writer... MacLeod is a fiercely intelligent, prodigiously well-read author who manages to fill his books with big issues without weighing them down." —*Salon.com*

"Engaged, ingenious, and wittily partisan, Ken MacLeod is a one-man revolution." —*Asimov's SF*

KEN MACLEOD graduated with a BSc in Zoology from Glasgow University in 1979. Following research in biomechanics at Brunel University he completed his M.Phil thesis. He previously worked as a computer analyst, but is now a full-time writer. He lives in South Queensferry, near Edinburgh, with his wife and children.

"Deliciously ironic, brilliantly imagined, MacLeod's witty and intelligent yarn packs a tremendous wallop. More, please!" —*Kirkus Reviews on The Cassini Division*

"Ken MacLeod brings dramatic life to some of the core issues of technology and humanity." —Vernor Vinge

His four science fiction novels have created an international stir, both for their inventiveness and storytelling vigor and for their fresh and original political speculations. Formerly active in the British socialist left, MacLeod is also fascinated by and sympathetic to American free-market libertarianism, and in fact his novels concern human futures derived from both socialist and libertarian ideas. Despite the fact that none of his books had yet appeared in America, both his first and his second novels (*The Star Fraction* and *The Stone Canal*) won the American "Prometheus Award" for libertarian science fiction. Since then, he has begun to be published in the United States, beginning with his third novel *The Cassini Division* and, subsequently, *The Stone Canal*. *The Cassini Division* is a finalist for this year's Nebula Award and was shortlisted for the Arthur C. Clarke Award; his fourth and most recent novel, *The Sky Road*, won the BSFA Award at this year's Eastercon.

"His prose is tight and slick, his characters live, and the story pulls you in and kicks you along, and leaves you with all kinds of stuff to chew over when it's done. I've been recommending him to everyone." —Steven Brust

Wrote *Scotland on Sunday*: "MacLeod's three books tell the story of a long war between the humans and the 'fast folk', hyperdeveloped artificial intelligences that threaten to wipe us out. That's fairly traditional sci-fi fare, though it does raise some tough questions about what constitutes life and consciousness. But the novels are as much an exploration of politics, in a way that's rare in science fiction. Above all, they seek to stimulate, rather than preach." This quality of unpreachiness is at the heart of what makes MacLeod's variety of political SF come to life. All science fiction is didactic; it's impossible to "build a future" without choosing among assumptions that are inherently political. For this reason, SF that sets out to be more "political" than usual often ends up addressing the reader with the subtlety of a tire-iron. MacLeod avoids this by not reserving all the good lines for characters who agree with Ken MacLeod. The author obviously has passionate beliefs (many of which are set forth in an autobiographical brochure entitled "Libertarianism, the Loony Left, and the Final Secret of the Illuminati"), but what his novels portray is an entire world of complex, contending, and overlapping beliefs, many orthogonal to one another, each of which has enough substance to make us believe that humans could actually be motivated thereby.

"The best British SF published in the last few months is not only highly intelligent, it is also deeply human, even humane, often hilariously, outrageously funny, and stealthily plotted... If there is a last great Brit SF novel of the millennium, this is it." —*The Guardian on The Sky Road*

The List, a Scottish magazine, asked him to answer their standard set of interview questions. Under "Five words to describe yourself," he wrote "Intense, lazy, curious, skeptical, political." Under "catchphrase" he wrote "Actually, it's a bit more complicated than that." Under "What do you do to wind down?" he wrote "Drink, smoke, have a quiet read." Under "What do you do to get high?" he wrote "Drink, smoke, have a loud conversation." One imagines Ken MacLeod will be an excellent fit for <plokta.con>. I only wish I were at the con myself!

"Ken MacLeod's novels are fast, funny and sophisticated. There can never be enough books like these; he is writing revolutionary science fiction. A nova has appeared in our sky." —Kim Stanley Robinson

—Patrick Nielsen Hayden

Up the Walls of the World

We asked Ken to write us something for Plokta. "What sort of thing would you like?" he asked. "Oh, a nice IKEA anecdote or similar" we suggested.

THE THING lurks in the corner behind the television, above the stereo, its eighteen blind eyes stopped up with Polyfilla. It has no mouth, and it still screams. It has a history, and a pre-history.

Its pre-history is somewhere in that dim, Cimmerian period when you still had to *tell* people about the Internet. Way back then, we bought a stereo player for vinyl and cassette. We put it all in the corner, and it sounded just as good as any of our existing boom-boxes, until the evening, months later, when I dug out the Black and Decker and mounted the speakers in the upper corners of the wall. I stuck on a tape and sat down and it was stereo magic. It seemed like Bono was standing somewhere on the curtain-rail playing like a leprechaun.

After that we got a shelving-unit to put the stereo player on, and it had little shelves for cassettes, and an empty shelf underneath.

Carol came home one day with a CD player, and a CD. I told her we already had a CD. We slid the slim device onto the empty shelf under the stereo, Carol slid the new CD in, and there was Bjork, singing like a valkyrie.

"I rashly promised to write a piece on the horror of shelving, for Plokta."

Time passed, the oceans drank Atlantis etc, and, like the sons of Aryas in that italicky bit at the beginning of every Conan novel, the CDs ...rose. They rose around the player in tottering stacks.

They were piled up around it, and on it, and poked out of every itsy shelf that came with the black shelving-unit. You couldn't get at the controls with without shifting stacks of CDs. You couldn't get at the telly without shifting stacks of videos. It was like they were books or something.

'That corner needs shelves,' Carol would say. After a few months I agreed. We went off to B&Q and bought shelves suitable for paperbacks and CDs. I'm sure it said that somewhere.

I dug out the Black and Decker and drilled a couple of dozen holes, as enthusiastic as a

Polish coal-miner who's just been given a redundancy notice from someone he once went on strike for.

Gloriously the shelves went up. Two of them took all our videos of films, and the rest took all our CDs. But they didn't feel quite right. I took to touching them, surreptitiously with a finger, like a tongue on a dodgy filling. One evening, I did that once too often. A shelf came down and took all the others with it.

Every CD came out of its case. Every case had plaster dust on it. Every cute glass lamp and ornament Carol had bought at IKEA had been shattered.

This time I went to B&Q alone, and bought a lot of long, heavy-duty plaster screws and Rawlplugs the size of mole-crickets. I put the shelves up again and went off to Novacon, where I rashly promised to write a piece on the horror of shelving, for Plokta.

On my return from Novacon, Carol waved at the corner. On the shelves were two new lamps and a couple of vases from IKEA. I felt this was like the famous Python waffer-thin mint, but I said nothing. The glass in the vases wasn't waffer-thin. It was more like Mars-Bar thick.

One morning I woke to a sound like the house having a slipped disc, and I knew exactly what I would find.

When I finish this book I'm going to get some kind of free-standing shelving units to put in that corner, and the silent screaming will stop.

—Ken MacLeod

BOLLOCKS

Separated at Birth

Margaret Austin writes:

"I wonder if other readers have noticed the uncanny resemblance of Earring Magic Ken, as featured on page 5 of the April issue, to Spike from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*? Could they perchance be related?"



Homoerotic plastic doll



Homoerotic plastic vampire

Old.biddies.com

Giulia joined a local group of beaders to find out more about beadwork and to swap techniques with other enthusiasts. She's the youngest in the group by several decades.

Last week, she wandered into the meeting to see a group of grey haired old dears sitting around the table talking animatedly as they worked on their bracelets, necklaces and earrings. But what were they talking about? Trading recipes, perhaps? Bragging about the grandchildren? Discussing the vital statistics of the Diet Coke hunk?

Nope, none of the above. Turns out they were busily comparing ISPs.



Hasta la vista, B&Q

Lokta Plokta

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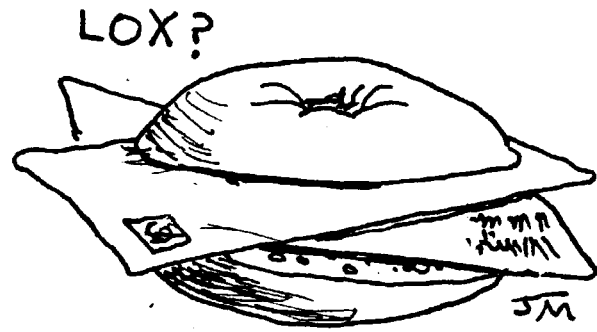
[...referring to the Saturday
Evening Plokta cover...]

It was a very thought-
provoking cover.

Here are some of the
thoughts it provoked, quasi-
quotes because I didn't write
it down at the time and I
haven't checked this back. My
answers are easily deduced:

“Why is it called the *Saturday Evening Plokta*? It isn't Saturday. Well why is the *Saturday Evening Post* called that? Why Saturday? Is it still going? Can you get it? Have you ever got it? Have Alison-and-Sтивен-and-Marianne ever got it? Well why did they call it that then? Well I don't think it's funny, so why do they? I don't think I'd think it was funny when I'm grown up. I don't think I'd have thought it was funny when I was only three. Did you see the picture of Marianne on the cover? Is

Thingy pretending to be a doctor? Is Mike pretending to be a doctor then? Why is Mike pretending to be a doctor? They don't usually have that on the cover, do they? What do they usually have on the cover? Mike Abbott doing what? Can I have the Pat McMurray paper dolls? I'll be careful with them. Can I borrow the scissors? Have you finished reading that *Plokta*? When are you going to put it away then? Oh, when is the con? Am I going? Where's Leicester? Can we look in the atlas then? That's in Britain! Is it an Eastercon? Oh, of course not. Oops. Where is Eastercon? Where's Minneapolis? Well, it's bigger than Leicester. Hey, can we read the *Saturday Evening Post* in Minicon? I still don't understand about the Saturday Evening bit. Why Saturday? Why Evening? Well why don't you know? I think it should all have been explained a bit better.”



Kate Schaefer
4012 Interlake Avenue N,
Seattle WA 98103-8150, USA
kate@oz.net

I want to know where
Marianne got her lizard
lollipop, and can I get one
like it anywhere around here?

Kate Schaefer (again)

I attempted for quite some
time to read this issue of
Plokta with the staples on the
left, which worked, but
seemed subtly wrong. I then
read it with the staples on the
right, which also worked, and
also seemed subtly wrong, but
in a different way. Is all that
Japanese, correct, or merely
decorative?

Ann Green
33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull,
B92 7LQ
ghost.words@virgin.net

Have requisite photos of Dr
K L Maund (x3) *almost* wearing
some nifty rubber gear. Must
be good as surrounded by
drooling lesbians.

Steve Green
33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull,
B92 7LQ

Intrigued to note Giulia and
Steve have settled for a bed
which “would not have
looked out of place on the
original Starship Enterprise”.
Okay, so these served Jim
Kirk's 22nd century bachelor
pad well enough (plenty of
inertia-dampeners, I guess),
but surely they should have
upgraded to the 23rd century
models, which are the only
things to tempt the anal-
retentive stuffed shirts out of
their bleeding Star Fleet
uniforms. Ghod only knows
what extras *their* beds come
with...

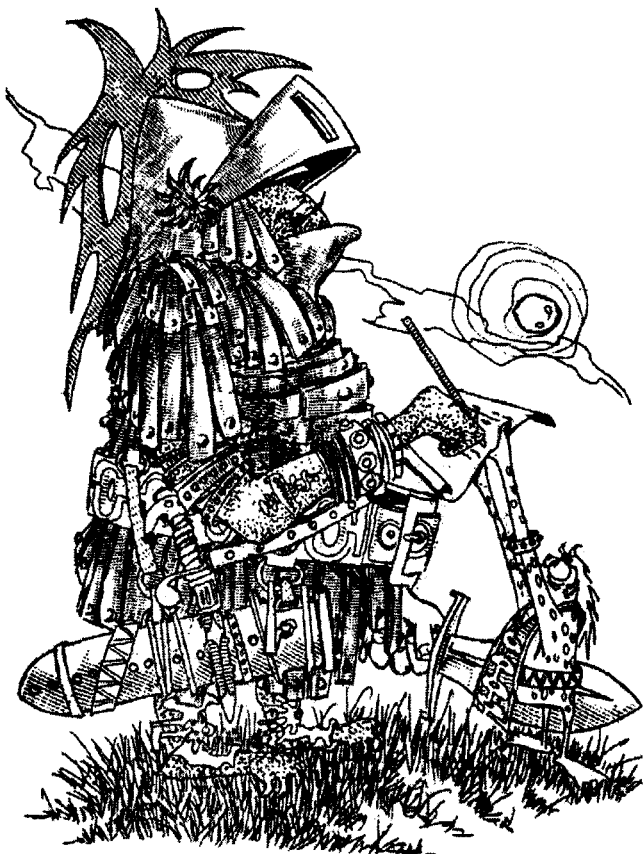
**Eric Lindsay, PO Box 640,
Airlie Beach, Queensland
4802, Australia
eric@wrevenge.com.au**

I fear that all the Japanese
banners you folks are wearing
read “I am a failed kamikazi
pilot”, or “Eat more whales”,
or various similar sentiments
of a like nature.

Kari
19 Uphall Road, Cambridge,
CB1 3HX
ambariel@krak.demon.co.uk

Thank you very much for the
novelty pack of Chinese
characters you so kindly sent
me on the front of the new
issue of *Plokta*. It is very kind
of you. I was beginning to
worry that I would not have a
total superfluity of things in
said characters to try and
transcribe in my life. On
receipt of your fanzine I
reached at once for my
battered copies of the Pocket
*Oxford Chinese English English
Chinese Dictionary*, *Gam's
Chinese Radical Dictionary*,
*Matthews Chinese-English
Dictionary*, *Cowles' Pocket
Dictionary of Cantonese*, and *Yip's
Essential Chinese Grammar* and
experienced that familiar rush.

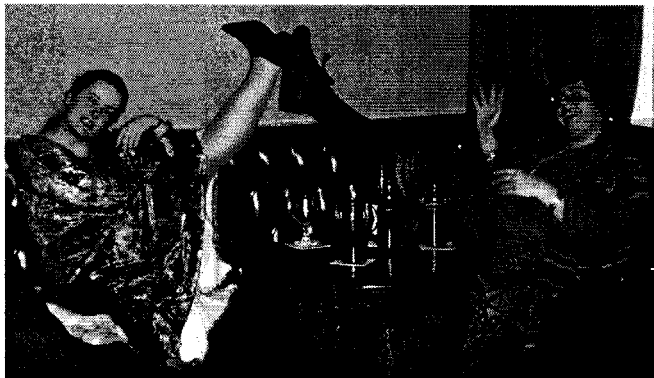
So far I have transcribed: the
subtitles of the first 14
episodes of Taiwanese
historical drama show *Jiang
Shan Mei Ren (Kingdom and
Beauty)*; several bean bags;
parts of the Chinatowns of
London, San Francisco and
New York; parts of several
restaurant menus; the label of
a bottle of Shaoxing wine; the
names of a number of ferries
operating between Hong
Kong island and Kowloon;
the backs of two collectable
Yes! cards featuring
wholesome-yet-sexy
Cantonese boy-band Feng



Huo Hai; the lyrics to the chorus of 'Feng Huo Hai' by, well, Feng Huo Hai; parts of several Cantonese magazine articles about popular martial arts star Yuen Biao; parts of a Japanese magazine article using Chinese characters alongside Japanese script about said popular martial arts star, and; Dave Weddell.

I hope to be able to get to your useful selection of Chinese characters used to transliterate Japanese sometime in the year 2002, after I have finished the remaining 40 episodes of *Jiang Shan Mei Ren*, the full lyrics of Feng Huo Hai, the rest of London Chinatown, and those sections of the Cantonese magazine articles which use characters unique to the writing of Cantonese.

You bastards!



Is there a gynaecologist in the house?

Colin Greenland
98 Sturton Street, Cambridge,
CB1 2QA
colin@plenty.cix.co.uk
Subject: *atkolP*

Fanzine backwards confusing the for thanks. I'm afraid I ignored the signification of the staples and started at the back. After p14 I was all set to write and tell you that literally *nubile* means 'marriageable', despite the entire remoteness of matrimony from the minds of most people who use the word these days. When I finally reached p2 I found you'd got there before me.

My respect for Anne McCaffrey soared (well, it did, relatively) when she told me

how she responded when a member of her fan club asked her permission to found in reality the church she describes in her Dragon books. The Church of the Original Egg? Something like that. Anyway, AM directed the club to expel him and refund his membership forthwith. Proving she had one marble left, I think.

I don't know, tho. If the proliferation of idiot churches helps erode the religious impulse, I suppose I should be all for it. In my own deeply irreligious impulse, I'm beset on all sides. Susanna's dad was a missionary, her mother sings in choirs, my parents have taken to *singing* grace before meals, and my brother's the vicar of Braithwell. Somebody Up There is taking the piss.

Ploktemon, eh? Our friend Toby says that *Pokemon* may be supposed to stand for 'Pocket Monsters', but actually stands for 'Pocket Money'.

Pamela Boal
4 Westfield Way, Wantage,
Oxon OX12 7EW
PJBoal@aol.com

Only you would have the quickness of mind to create cover and contents to account for the fact that you had accidentally produced your zine back to front.

Ben Yalow
3242 Tibbett Ave, Bronx NY
10463, USA
ybmcu@panix.com

I was particularly amused by the article about beds, and the

description of Steve and Giulia's new one. But that's because there's a *terrible* commercial here for a moveable bed (or actually, a line of moveable beds) from a company called "Craftmatic". The constant theme is that these beds are no more expensive than regular beds, and fix back problems, let you sleep better, cure every disease known to man... all on the cheap. They've even got a bargain line, at half the price of their regular line.

And they've got this terrible commercial, which they constantly run on late night CNN, and during basketball games on cable (which I try to watch), so I hear it several times a day. After constantly having the narrator explain how the beds cost up to 50% less than other beds, we finally get an actor calling the operator to request information. And he says, "I'd like your new catalog, and 50% less information."

Paul Barnett
1554 Greenwood Lake
Turnpike, Hewitt NJ 07421
USA
ThogatThog@aol.com

Many thanks for the latest edition of *Plokta* and the fishy colour supplement—much appreciated by both Pam and myself... although it should be pointed out that there are two essential components to the ideal bagel-and-lox, the other one being the bagel. New York bagels are regarded as being the best in the USA (which obviously means, in this land of the World Series, the best in the world), with various bakeries vying for the Best of the Best title. Pam is far more of an expert on this than I am; if you'd like technical details I shall ask her to supply them.

Colin Fine
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Yorks BD18 1NE
colin@kindness.demon.co.uk

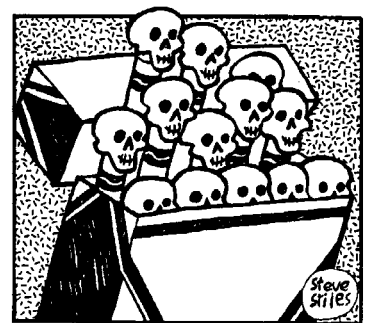
The Bradford Curry house is an institution different from a Balti house. You come in and get paper napkins, jugs of water and dishes of salad and

mint sauce automatically (in some, poppadums as well); your order includes chapattis (or naan or rice if you insist) in the price; and you can still have two courses and get change from a fiver. Of course you don't get things like tablecloths or cutlery (unless you order a biryani). None of these are licensed—some will let you bring booze in and some won't (and some will except in Ramadan). There are a few that have gone a bit upmarket—you have to order your chapattis or whatever separately, and you get tablecloths and cutlery. I rather like these for a change, but they're not real Bradford Curry houses.

'Almond Cordial with Fungus'—so all you fungivores have now tumbled to the fact that fungus is intrinsically revolting.

Ned Brooks
4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA
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nedbrooks@sprynet.com

This zine is beginning to look like a fannish cross between *Fortean Times* and *Weird NJ*—though neither of those zines have yet thought to imitate the Japanese and put the pages in reverse order—I am grateful you didn't follow through with text top-to-bottom and then right-to-left!



CRAYONS of DOOM

I do have both orange and blue corflu—alas I do not use nail varnish. But I don't think it would ever set hard enough for that purpose—it was meant to be re-typed on after all, it doesn't set harder than the original stencil. Nor would it make a very good glue, as it is more in the nature of a wax. The

aromatherapy idea (did you get this from Keith Walker?) might be hazardous—I think the corflu solvent is carcinogenic. Or maybe not—I checked one bottle of RexRotary Pink (a rather orangy pink, probably phenolphthalein) and it smells like ether to me. I also have Precision (made by Starkey in LaGrange IL) which is green; and Man-O-War (made by Ronnie Inc.) which is blue. I bought the RexRotary stuff new, the Precision was found in a thrift store, and the Man-O-War (with some stencils) was liberated from the back of a government supply cabinet, many years after NASA got rid of its last mimeo.

SMS
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Rochdale
Eirasms@aol.com

Idle thought of perennial
probs of getting enough
decent beer for a con.

Re: Beer. Re: The continuing battle to convince each hotel that we really *will* drink the amount we say we will. Since each hotel staff always knows better than us since they're professionals (snickersnicker-snicker) and we're just sci-fi fans, is it a reasonable idea to get a statement of how much beer was drunk at a convention from the organisers and then hand this sacred text onto the organisers of the *next* con at the handover ceremony in the form, say, of a ceremonial scroll... this builds up year by year, as a sacred documentation of alcoholism... Each to be presented (with relevant phone number) to the next hotel's Beer Ordering Resident Expert as credentials. I'm rather thinking here of the sort of lovely note the bar manager of the last Wincon ran off for us—entirely unasked—to state how impressed he was at our capacity (Yes; I have a

copy and I suspect I'm not alone). I rather wonder if some beer obsessive might like the preposterous title of 'Holder of the Sacred Testimonials To Con Alcoholism' or some such... Or, does this already exist in some arcane corner of Smoffdom?

Andrew Plotkin
1509 Woodway Club Drive
#632, Durham, NC 27713,
USA
erkyrath@eblong.com

I was delighted to receive your *Plokta*. The letter-column was fascinating, particularly the way my name kept appearing all over it.

I will make the (presumptuous, certainly) assumption from this observation that my maple research project appeared in some earlier issue of *Plokta*. Volume 5, number 1, I suppose—as all the earlier issues are up on the web site, and it's not in any of *them*. I expect 5/1 will follow its predecessors to the Net (another assumption, true, but one must have one's faith) and I look forward to reading it. I worry about my name being spelled right.

Not, of course, that I didn't *know* my Aceracean escapades would come up in some *Plokta* form or another. It seems only, ooh, well, I can't remember when it was that I received very kind email from one Alison Scott (if that *is* her name) asking permission to print it. I agreed, but with a vague sense that it would appear in the vague future. Certainly not the *now*.

If this is the future, I'd like a different one, please. Doesn't the future come in five colors?

However, I think I must comment on these locs. ("Letters of comment", that. Amazing what one can discover on the Internet.)

Everyone seems to have missed the basis of my effort, which was that I *don't have any damn maple mead*. I have no brewing equipment. I have no skills to use such. I don't—

well, I *do* know people who claim to make mead, but when I go look it's all just a bunch of urns and bubbling tubes, and that can't be right. And they insist so *loudly* that nothing has exploded. Recently. [*Watch for maple mead recipes next ish*].

Other questions, in brief:

"In transit"—from Pittsburgh to North Carolina. A mistake, and the stock price has been descending monotonously since my feet hit North Carolingian soil. Where do I keep my tongue? In my mouth, more's the pity. "Confusion of consonant clusters"—I'm famed for them, m'dear. Want some Glukx? "Drink the bourbon"—I don't drink alcohol. And don't get on my case; remember that I started with Graydon Saunders's Chocolate Elk recipe, and *he* doesn't eat chocolate.

EB Frohvet
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506,
Ellicott City MD 21042, USA

Nice to know that Giulia is *nubile*. Never doubted it for a minute, Giulia. It reminds me of the moment in Rob Reiner's *The Sure Thing*, when the Professor, in critiquing a student's paper, adds as an afterthought, " 'Nubile' by the way is spelled with a U."

Joseph T Major
1409 Christy Avenue,
Louisville KY 40204 USA
jtmajor@iglu.com

Marianne is really delighted, because she hasn't really worked out the full enormity of it yet. Aha! Coming Soon To A Cinema Near You: *PLOKTA: Omen IV!* The thrilling story of the birth of the Second Son of Satan! See *The Cat Possessed By A Moose Demon!* See *The Scientific Genius Fighting Unspeakable Evil!* See *The Modiste Consumed By Satan That Became Satan!* You'll Thrill, You'll Chill, at... *PLOKTA: Omen IV!* (Contains material unsuitable for anyone.)

Milt Stevens (what is it with these LAans anyway?) discusses the joys of harassing



Rupert gasps and shields his eyes
From wanton maids with naked thighs

one's cats by sticking socks to them. This sort of behaviour results in the cats harassing their slaves by sticking to them, and claws are a lot more... interesting... than static cling. Also, they know where we sleep.

Kevin Sorrell looks like he could use a few cans of Spam.

Jerry Kaufman
3522 NE 123rd St, Seattle WA
98125, USA
JAKaufman@aol.com

I await such future issues as the *New Music Express* version, the Hebrew version, and so forth. There's always new magazines to parody, too, such as Oprah Winfrey's new mag, entitled (if I recall correctly) *O*, and seemingly devoted to her and the sort of soul-searching questions she asks on her show. (I believe you'd have to call your version *A*.)

Brave attempt to reproduce one of Mae Strelkov's heckto scenes. I'll have to check your website to see if you've got it there in color. I'll also have to see what Amanda Baker looks like in leather—the photo in the zine betrays only the slightest gloss of shiny cow hide below her elbow.

No other comments this time, so I'll wish you a fun and fancy-free plokta.con.

James Bacon
16 Dulverton Road, Ruislip
Manor, Middlesex, HA4 9AD
aliensstolemyhandbag@
lostcarpark.com

Aliens Stole My Handbag is scheduled for 30th to 2nd of July next year in the Shepperton Moat House hotel in Surrey. This convention will be testing the limits of what is considered a science fiction convention. One of the events over the course of the weekend will be a convoy of military vehicles crammed with attendees leaving for Woking. There we will be going to the sandpit where HG Wells started *War of the Worlds*. This will also be the site of a multiple rocket launch. Any excuse for a jaunt in a chieftain tank.

Jane Barnett
61 Fairmead Crescent,
Edgware, London

Please find enclosed a diagram of a glamorous tent as worn by my mother to parties whilst heavily pregnant. (Please note the term *diagram*: I'm not good at drawing real stuff except clothes, and I couldn't find a good picture of a heavily pregnant woman to trace.) The original is gold, worn with a black band, and is now lost. Having tried it on I find the outfit is dead comfy, especially if made of silk. It might be worth noting, that this was in 1977 and may no longer be quite the thing.

Tips on Christmas dinner: don't have turkey. Have salmon. It's easy to cook, good cold, and if it won't fit in the oven, you can fold it.

On Corflu: I spent months cursing the name of the loon who had ordered twenty bottles of bloody pale green corflu at work before discovering that the green top and appellation "Aqua" actually meant water-based, environmentally friendly, non-addictive type corflu, in white, not green.

Can't think of anything else, except that this should really be an essay on Evariste Galois and not an utter displacement activity, so that's all for now. Fuelled by Starbucks and run-up to exam terror.

Martin Morse Wooster
PO Box 8093, Silver Spring,
Maryland 20907, USA

I don't know why Vicki Rosenzweig finds the deep-fried Mars bar so objectionable. I have in fact seen the very chip shop where this masterful treat was concocted; it's in North Warwick, Scotland, about a block away from a toilet that was awarded the coveted Loo of the Year award by the British Toilet Association. And in the intense global competition to unite all the food groups into a single product, the deep-fried Mars bar ensured a temporary

triumph for Scotland, since the bar needs only the addition of beer to provide a complete balanced meal. However, the Scots have been outclassed by the masterminds at our local Xando coffeehouse chain, who discovered that if you made a beverage with milk, ice cream, Kahlua, and espresso, you have a drink that unites *all* the food groups into a single delicious beverage (at only \$7.50 a glass, such a deal).

Unlike Kim Huett, I don't own a copy of *Cooking With Fat*. But I do have a copy of *The Bad For You Cookbook*, a 1993 masterpiece which has many recipes with butter, sugar, fatty cuts of meat, etc. The authors got celebrities to contribute recipes, including Martha Stewart, who contributed a recipe for "one very large pashka". The authors admitted they didn't know what a pashka was, precisely, but they liked the "very large" part, so the recipe was included.

Based on Joseph T Major's rule that fen like snakes, I'll have to conclude that I'm semi-mundane. I certainly enjoy petting snakes, and have a Polaroid of me holding a python on display at a ratty little circus that visited Silver Spring. But I draw the line at *feeding* snakes. I once housesat for a family that had a pet snake, and was shown the frozen skinned mice that I was to feed the reptile. I could not bear to watch the snake consuming his daily treat, so I spent each morning throwing the snake into the terrarium, closing the lid, and loudly announcing "Snake yummys! Time for snake yummys!" I never looked, but was assured that the snake did indeed consume the mice that were given him.

In 1988 I was on a European Union junket where I visited unemployment and welfare offices and Dave Langford. In Brussels, I was taken to lunch by officials of the EU Social Insurance directorate at a very good Italian restaurant.

For dessert, we had zabaglione, a word that couldn't be translated into Danish. So the Danes call a zabaglione "Ein Calorie-Bomb".

"Do you think Martin Morse
Wooster reads ALT tags?"

Martin Morse Wooster
(again)

Many thanks for *Plokta* 18. I've never tried almond cordial with fungus, but I do know where to buy "kidney-liver tea." Would you like a box?

About Ken's cock ring—I first read about this amazing piece of jewellery in the *Washington City Paper* (our alternative paper) c. 1992. I am surprised that the news has just reached Britain. But then, I have long maintained that Ken long ago lost interest in Barbie and was going steady with GI Joe, so obviously he has to be armed and ready.

Joseph T. Major and Steve Jeffery's recipes remind me of Winston Churchill's recipe for the proper amount of vermouth to put in a martini. Churchill went over to the vermouth bottle, stared at it, and put it back in the cabinet, and then went back to drinking gin.

Lilian Edwards
39 Viewforth, Edinburgh
EH10 4JE
L.Edwards@ed.ac.uk

It's a *really* weird bunch of attendees, Plokta. I mean, Keith Mitchell? Vicki King? It's sort of 80s CUSFS meets groovy start de siècle hip post Corflu fandom. Should be very weird, I hope.

Michael Lowrey
1847 N 2nd St., Milwaukee WI
53212, USA

Here in the provincial Midwest we have little idea of just what the hell an IKEA is, save that it seems to be discussed with the kind of guilt bachelors associate with *Victoria's Secret* catalogs, or gardeners with seed/bulb catalogs. I get a vague

impression of colorful Scandinavian *tchotchkes* for the aging affluent ex-hippie market; am I close?

The “drunken fuckwit” (*moronicus alcoholicus*) is a species not unknown to these shores. I am particularly amazed, as the daddy of a 45-year-old, at your bravery in venturing forth on Y2K Eve with Marianne in tow. Still you do make it sound worthwhile.

“Kipple” is not in the American vocabulary; nonetheless, it is quite clear that the Kipple Fairy is quite trans-Atlantic (uses the Concorde, no doubt). Cicatrice and I have concluded that we *dare not* move, as our kipple already encompasses the equivalent of three flats.

Milt Stevens
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CA 93063 USA
sardonicus@msn.com

Even before seeing the cover on *Plokta* #18, I knew the Japanese were enterprising folk, but how did they get you all to wear headbands reading “Drink Asahi Beer”? I won’t even ask where you may have met Beefzilla.

Years ago in the Orient, I was visiting the fans in Tokyo. Since I was a visiting fan, they naturally showed me some of their local fanzine production. Without illos, I would have had a tough time determining which end was supposed to be the top. After an hour or so of looking at Japanese fanzines, they showed me some German fanzines. I found I could read German with perfect fluency. While looking at one of the German fanzines, I was thinking of commenting that it looked like a fanzine and smelled like a fanzine, but it couldn’t be a real fanzine. It didn’t have a letter from Harry Warner. But it did! “Arg,” I exclaimed, “I’ll never question the omniscience of Harry Warner again!”

Dave Langford
94 London Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK

Latest *Plokta* much enjoyed, especially the splendidly daft cod-Japanese cover and stapling. Quintessentially fannish, expending all that effort for one moment of perfect silliness.

Steelhead, incidentally, is the name of the hero’s mysterious magical mentor in William Morris’s 1897 fantasy epic *The Sundering Flood*. Not a lot of people wanted to know that.

Phil and Jill Bradley
Flat 2, 65 Albion Road, Sutton,
Surrey SM2 5TD

Phil: *Jill, we’ve got to feed the Plokta again!*

Jill: Oh? Why’s that then?

Because the Scary Person told me to.

What Scary Person? You mean Alison? She’s not scary!

Oh yes she is... when she waves a copy of Plokta at you, you just do as you’re damned well told, and I’ve been told to feed it again.

Oh well, you’d better do it then hadn’t you!

All well and good for you to say that—you don’t have to write anything!

Well—what have they written about in the current one? That might give you some ideas perhaps?

Uh.. beds. They talk about beds.

Ah.

Damn right ‘Ah’. We’d better leave that one well alone... no point in telling them that our main criteria was one that we’d be able to use to tie people to it.

No, I see your point. Better not mention the new eye hooks you’ve put into the walls then.

No. No point in mentioning that at all. Absolutely not.

You could mention what we get up to at the weekend?

What—you mean when we get dressed up in leather, and you get all excited and stuff?

That’s right. Don’t tell them about getting a motorbike, it’s probably a bad idea.

OK. Well, that’s three things we won’t tell them about. What else shouldn’t we mention?

Umm. How about cutting holes in my t-shirt at Eastercon?

No, we don’t need to tell them about that, though if anyone was wondering why they kept finding small circles of black fabric, that might explain it.

Small? Some of them weren’t that small you know....

Well, ok. Yes, some were quite large actually. But still, as we’re not going to mention it, we don’t need to say what happened next do we?



No. We don’t need to say anything about that at all. What else do they talk about?

Hmm. Giulia being nubile. But I’m not quite sure what to say about that, though I could say...

No. Really, that’s not a good idea. You just keep your mucky fantasies to yourself.

Probably for the best.

How about telling them about the Eastercon?

They were there—they don’t need to be told about that.

Fair point; can’t disagree with that.

Could we give it a saucer of milk?

What—*Plokta*? Don’t think it drinks milk—it’d get all soggy.

Yes, it probably would, thinking about it. But we’ve got to tell them something for heaven’s sake, else the Scary Person will come after me again at the next Eastercon!

Yes, but you’d probably quite enjoy that, wouldn’t you?

Actually you know... it’s an interesting thought.

So you better hadn’t feed it at all in that case had you?

No, I think, all things considered, and all possible outcomes taken into account, we better hadn’t feed it after all.

We Also Heard From:

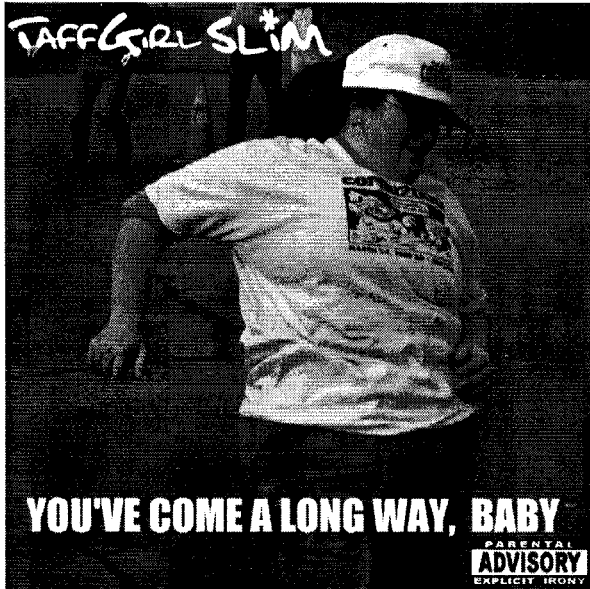
Bruce Pelz (with Tripe Reportcards from Karnak and Catalina Island), **Jim Dewitt** (who saw us in *Fosfax* and sent poetry which is *not quite the thing* for *Plokta*) **Richard Brandt** (“*Plokta* v5 n2 is mostly reminding me how much I missed being at Corflu”), **Terry Jeeves** (Nice load of LOCs, as for ‘four fluids’, what happened to Blog?), **Tony Berry** (Don’t forget Dave Holmes’s Magic Labyrinth in Rutland St. near the station), **Lloyd Penney** (I finally have the time to dive inside and see if it was worth you going to France to mail them. I guess Brussels has lost its appeal, or its mailing permit), **Harry Payne** (a grand example of Superfluous Technology may be found at <http://bastilleweb.techhouse.org>), and **Harry Andruschak**.

Finally, a special mention for **Steve Jeffery**, who sent us a fishy tape of comment on *Steelhead*. Also a letter, which we’ve mislaid but will find for next time. The tape included “Salmon Song” by Steve Hillage, “Goldfish and Paracetamol” by Catatonia, “Halibut”, by Katherine Tickell, and lots of other fishy masterpieces. We listened to it in the car on the way over. The second side contained only the studio version of “Salmon Song”. “Ah, that means most of the tape will be blank,” said Alison. “No” explained Steven. “We’re talking about 70s progressive rock here; that track could easily be half an hour long.” And so it proved. Our brains started leaking out our ears somewhere on the M4.

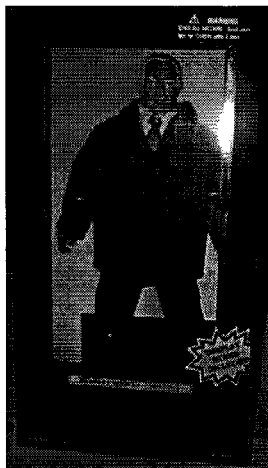
Photos from the *Plokta* Vaults

Potlatch and Corflu

Alison Freebairn sidled up to me at 2Kon while I was looking through the Corflu pictures. "That's the softball game, isn't it? Hey, Ulrika looks like the cover from the FatBoy Slim album." Thereby proving that Alison is a Wicked Woman.



One person we were really pleased to meet was Kate Schaefer, who gave us our first chance to see, live in the flesh, her Herbert Hoover Action Figure.



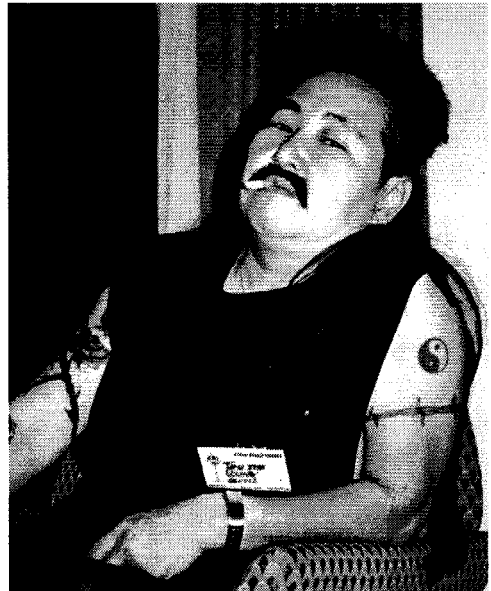
Frankly, my dear, I don't give a dam

One major problem with Seattle is the number of down and outs you find lying around the place.



Spare a dime for a cup of Corflu?

In her pogonophobic guise, Alison Freebairn was passing round a set of false moustaches. We'd previously seen these and considered buying them for Pat McMurray, so that he could prove how macho he is. One person who has no fear of her masculinity being questioned was Tami Vining.

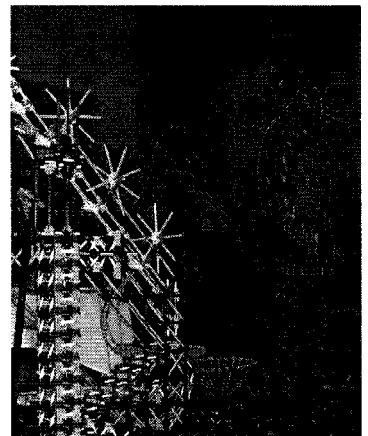


"You'd better not show that photo to Gail or she'll wet herself" exclaimed Sue.

Unmissable Sights of Seattle



Above: The famous Seattle Underground Tour



Above Right: Demolished since Corflatch, The Kingdome is here shown shrouded in scaffolding.

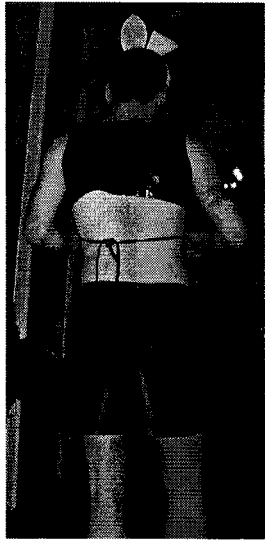
Below Right: The Space Needle



Below: The Fremont Troll



Is that a 2Kon in your cleavage or are you just pleased to see me?



Left: Tommy Ferguson taken from behind

Below: Yvonne Rowse plays with a strange man's tool



SMS & Eira's wedding

In a blatant attempt to ingratiate themselves with a wide selection of deities, SMS and Eira took polytheism to its logical conclusion and got married on three separate occasions. The *Plokta* cabal took digital cameras to all three. The first was a Methodist affair.



Look! The Winged Victory of Samothrace

At the handfasting, the happy couple jumped over a broom, here displayed by Astral Leauge mistress Miche, and fed cake and mead to each other in an outrageous display of phlosque.



The 2Kon Masquerade: SMS as Dick Dastardly, Eira as Muttley, with Matt & Miche as the Pantomime Horse



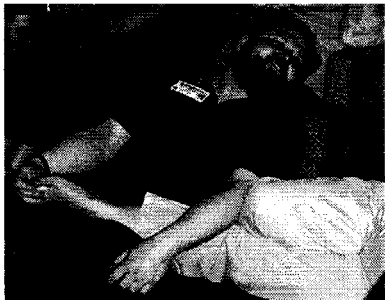
I've mislaid my Snitch again



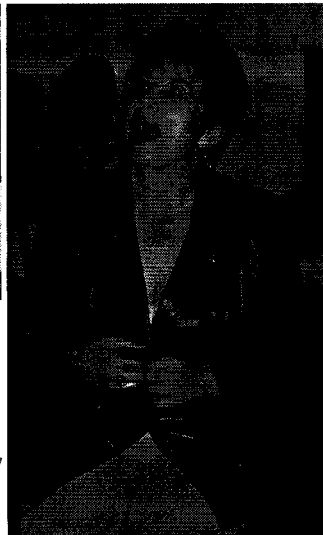
Have you phlosqued recently, darling?

Finally, at the civil ceremony, the perseverance of the crowd was rewarded, as SMS's full name was finally revealed. Sealed bids should be sent to *Plokta* HQ.

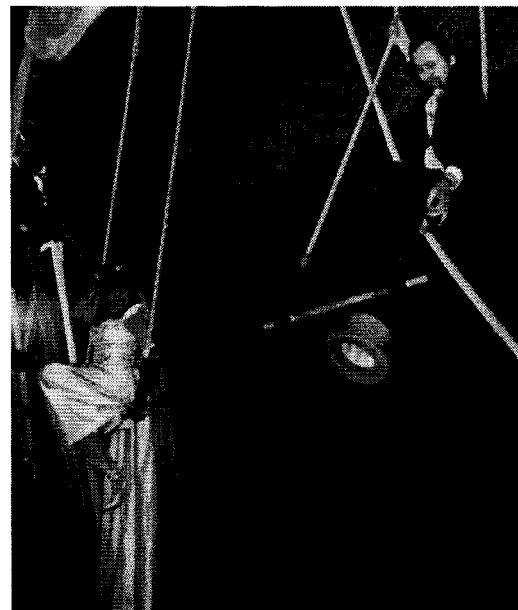
One of the particular delights of running the not-really-a-creche-honest-guv was that we had an excellent room. Which allowed us to have a room party.



Above: John Dallman massages Lilian Edwards' feet at the Plokta room party



Right: Lilian having her feet massaged by John at the Plokta room party



Are you sure this is how we're supposed to consummate the marriage, dear?