

the drink tank 164





I prepare for travel only to realise that so many nice people are doing so many nice things for me! I'm quite pleased to see that folks out in the UK are lookin' out for me! I am slightly less panicked by the trip now, which is good.

And now, I have to run an issue or I'll feel as if I've done nothing. Here is a fine article from my man...James Bacon!

The Boys, Cape Coloureds, pickups and generally an Irish man blundering round in South Africa.
Drink Tank.

I am not long landed in the warmth of South Africa when I get my first reprimand from my new wife, this is not a bad thing, she is proving valuable, but it surprises me as it's in regard to terminology I find acceptable but which may be offensive to others. The racial Fux Pas as we might say.

You see when I see a group of fellas standing around or in a pack or just hanging loose I normally refer to them as The Bhoys or Boys or Boyo's. Now this is a general term, in no way offensive where I come from, it just means the lads, the posse, the gang, you know, the ejits over there. So I see some fellas working, they are at the car rental place, having a bit of high rev activity and I say to Sim, 'sure look there, the boys are having a bit of laugh'. I am immediately informed that the boys is a derogatory term used by whites for black men in times of apartheid and some would still use it as a term to put down others.

Now I can see how referring to a man as The Boy is offensive, that is for sure, and I can see why one would not do that, but my term would be of the same ilk as Gartn Ennis' comic book *The Boys* – an anti-superhero team of spooks with certain super abilities and a nasty element about them – a fantastic comic and another Irishman's take on the term. The boys mean business. It's similar to lads, but to an Irish person it also means men having a good time, Boys are out Fishing, Hunting, or in Mileys chamber...

Then there is also one of my favourite rock bands, Thinn Lizzy, who have the famous song – The Boys are Back in Town. Now this is in no way a reference of racist motivation on behalf of one of Ireland's most famous Black Men – Phil Lynott, rather this is just the way we speak. It's a term we use, but then one has to be careful.

When I was in school 'everyone' (watch that) would say 'that's gay' if something was wrong or bugged up (oh jeez), later I realised that this wasn't really a good way to refer to something as its implying there is something inherently wrong with being gay, which of course there isn't. There were about 60 people in my year, I hated most of em, but surprisingly of the 10 or so who decided to follow a gay lifestyle about half of them were good friends. They always got great chicks too, never asked afterwards what they thought of that 'gay' term, but school was odd as feck.

So just because a term is used, it doesn't make it OK, I suppose, but here it's a definite case of cultures using words very differently. After all, the Irishman has not been portrayed with any favour at times, so I understand that some things are culturally offensive that might be otherwise quite innocent, just depends on what is being meant.

I of course do not want to offend, so I curtail my use of the term boys. It's also not good to refer to 'the boys on the back of the backie'

Now a backie is a pickup truck in America, a four by four in the UK and Ireland, it can be anything from a Toyota Landcruiser to a Land Rover to a Ford F series– I am sure you get



seem to have dozens of varieties and sizes and calibres of vehicle. We saw a Mercedes Benz AMG GL 65 with a 6.3 litre engine and it was a V 8. Now this is a monster backie – its more like a Chelsea tractor for sure, but it's the cream, it's incredible. I had heard of a GL 55, but this was an awesome machine, just parked up next to whatever was there, at Mykonos on the western coast. It would cost over

the picture, but just as in Australia the UTE (and that's not a milk that doesn't go off) but short for utility vehicle, is a regular item on the road, here in South Africa, the Backie sort of pronounced Back - E is essentially a four by four with a flat back. Now the flat back can have a covering of some sort and there can be a full cab up front – with enough room for a full complement of five people. But here it's taken to a new level here in this country as the variety is tremendously diverse and also they are the vehicle of choice at a variety of levels. You know the country loves these type of vehicles when both Ford Fiestas and Opel Corsas come in Backie formats. (These are compact small cars, available in the UK, I have a Corsa)

Nearly every manufacturer, especially Ford and Nissan and Toyota

\$150,000 in the US.

So people in these vehicles is common, and with what seems like abject poverty in many an area, travelling by lift or Mini bus taxi is key and you can get a bunch of fellas in to the backie much easier than into a sedan car. Transport is vital. Distances are American, not European, nearby is a a hundred klics. Getting to a place of work is vital, to keeping that job. Unemployment is horrendous, but those who are working are striving to improve as best they can. This is obvious, as you see a dozen men standing on a pick up truck back, men, running across six lane motorways, to hitch a lift, or sitting at street corners, waving a particular hand signal that indicates direction of travel. A lift to and from work, may be worth as much as the work itself. I learn later.

So it's common place to see a bunch sitting in the open air as the backie flies along at about 80 mph or more.

Good stuff I think. I have done that myself, after a stag night, for a friend of Mick's, when we went to the dogs in Shelbourne park dog course, and ended up in the back of Shea's Toyota very basic Hilux (he's a chippie) back to Marino. So I know it's a grand way to travel about, and even better when the back is loaded with a bunch of the boys after a belly full of beers, wind whishing by, ducking to avoid the cops, and also the sliding about, holding on all manly like, feeling more rugged than my soft body really is.

But referring to the men in the back as a bunch of boys is a bad thing, as that's derogatory, which is a hard change to make as almost anyone who meets me and my good manners, calling all gentlemen sir and all ladies madam or maam treat me very well and I think they know that my dulcet heavy Irish tones mean no harm at all. But one must be careful, who wants to cause an upset in such a fine and beautiful country, so I don't say boys in South Africa.

Manners here are reciprocated and I am much impressed not only by the genuineness of people whom I meet but also their friendliness. I do wear a variety of Irish Rugby jerseys and one trendy t-shirt with Ireland on the chest and of course, everyone loves an Irish fella, well mostly.

But this is not my only Gaffe. Now in work, I have come to understand that men and women from the wide variety of Afro Caribbean back grounds should be correctly referred to as BLACK. My good friend Steve is a black

man and proud of it. Now this is for all black people. Just as I am pale blue and say another mate is permanently under the sun beds so therefore rather swarthy and sun tanned, both of us are referred as white. So white I am I suppose. Although in work, I do correct anyone who says I am white and I say I am actually Irish. I would afford the same respect to any co-worker but as I say I understand the Black is the correct term of respect

– regardless of the hue of brown that a skins colour is belonging to someone. I am happy with this.

When I was younger sometimes I would hear Black people referred as coloured. Now I know this is a term of derision or at least disrespect as the black person is proud to be black and coloured is a wishy washy and if one things about it – not a fair term if I say I am white (or pale blue). I know in school, the black thing came up, a fella called Dave who had a Dutch Ghanan Mom and Irish dad, always ensured we knew he was Black. This was cool and he liked heavy metal like me and we hung quite a bit, and although he wasn't a reader of weird shit or comics, he was into the occult and I remember he had one of those boards that talks to the dead. He thought me and my comics were OK and never gave me a hard time, and to be honest, he blagged me into a Black Sabbath gig, so I suppose he was very good to me and he was a winner with the chicks. He was Black. And a scarier thing you will never see than a black youth swinging



a hurling stick calling out in Gaelic running towards you at speed.

So it came as a shock when I referred to a lady as a black lady, I was reprimanded again. I was informed this lady was coloured. In actual fact she was a cape coloured. I queried how this was so, and was informed that she had said so to my good wife. The lady, a wonderful sweet woman who was the manager of the Villa we were staying in.

I was of course confused. 'Coloureds' in South Africa refers to a group of people, who originally were imported as slaves, in the 1600's. They were often imported by the Dutch East India Company and it appears that many ladies were the partners of white men. Bit unsavoury one would think. This created an interesting mixed race, obviously with European and Southern African, Malayan, Indian, Madagascar and Indonesian ancestry.

These people spoke Afrikaans and in the 1900's were referred to as the Cape Coloureds as they were very prominent around the western cape.

Now by that stage some sort of identity had of course forged itself and today, now in post apartheid South Africa, people openly refer to being coloured.

It's hard to know what to think or say. Like one feels in a sense that this is a term imposed upon the people, but then they see themselves as an independent race. This though was also borne out during apartheid, when the government saw four types of people Blacks, Whites,

Coloureds and Indians. I won't mention honourable whites at this stage, as that won't be helpful.

It gets messy like Ulster politics real quick round here, and to be honest it's hard to know what's right, but my mind is open and I listen.

The manager of the guest house we are staying at, Susie is a Cape Coloured, that's how she sees herself. I get introduced to this fascinating race of people, who have lived on the western coast of South Africa and around the Cape for many many generations. I understand that original they were a mixed race – ancestry mixing to create a soft milk coffee pigmentation of the skin. But at some stage the mixing stopped, and there were so many cape coloureds that a race was born, with their own identity. Now Coloured people generally marry coloureds, rather like many other groups of people, but just like anywhere else, mixed marriages are on the increase. These people speak Afrikaans. This is their language as much as anyone else's, and they are very proud of it.

I was worried that this was some misguided resolution to having to deal with a language that is forced upon them, but the mixed background belies this, as does the self recognition that in Ireland most people speak English and like to, our greatest writers and poets have written in English and English is fine by me as a language, although I do speak Irish – but with the Cape Coloureds they feel it's their language.

Who am I to argue with a whole race of proud hard working people, who are tremendously pleasant and friendly and such a nice bunch – well that was any of the Cape Coloureds I met – but I must now discuss this with some black friends at home – it's hard – adjusting to differences that people require – I know this is new to me anyhow but I am very happy to oblige and do whatever someone wishes.

Interestingly, the Coloureds refer to Blacks as, er, Blacks (ok it's interesting to me) and feel that they have perhaps been discriminated against more since the change over, and oddly, with universal suffrage early on many Cape Coloureds voted for the Nationalist party (er, they'd be the bad white fella's who instigated apartheid, but also the decent white fellas who instigated the change I suppose). Now though other political parties are in the fray, but there is a feeling of difference.

Jeez.

It's an amazing country I tell you, quite takes one by surprise. There are four million Cape Coloureds and they can choose whatever they want, that's more people than live in the

Republic of Ireland, so whom am I to argue and of course, I learn that the next person may not be happy with this, and again I am happy to adjust to how people want to be treated.

The good thing though, and this is evident – no matter when I gaffed or fouled up, my good wife was on hand to give good guidance. She is so proud of her history, of her country and of course of her husband – that I do my bestest to learn and stop saying bhoys and not refer to the wrong person as Black.

A smile and a laugh and of course, the touch of a hand a soft gesture seems to serve me as well as anything as well as good manners, and at every hand's turn I am treated tremendously well. I note my charms work as well on South Africans of all backgrounds, so some things are the same where ever I go, but I am married now and I curtail the flirtatiousness that I frequently feel with some quite beautiful women. (er Girls – but you know what I mean, don't you.)

But now I am on my way to Jo'burg and I wonder what errors or interesting quirks of socio cultural racial idiosyncrasies I will learn there and if the gift of the gab and an understanding of what it is to have an appreciation of a diverse and perhaps



conflicted background will tangibly help me on my way.

It's a hard place and one needs an open mind and I have to be careful not to see everything as, well a rich dark brown or a pale pasty blue.

This is an interesting topic, by the way. There are many Indian groups that have similar attitudes as to how they should be referred to as the Cape Coloured do. Indian, by many tribes, is the preferred phrase, not Native American. My grandmother is one of them, and she'll give you quite a telling off.

And of course, I had no idea you were just married .

**Letter-Graded Mail
sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by my Gentle Readers
with photos from Cinequest movies!**

**Here's something of an LoC from
John Purcell**

Actually, this is more of an explanation of my lack of loccing recently. Pub this at your own risk.

You know I'm up for the challenge!

Man, I have been *busy* this semester both with teaching classes and taking them. Granted, only one of my PhD classes is a real course while the other is a credit-earning research course designed to help doctoral students get their dissertation shit together. Of course, I am a bit ahead of the curve there since I have my research instrument, proposal, and core coursework all completed by now. Next up are comp exams, then everything else is going to go pretty fast. So I have been loccing less this year so far.

Well, I can say for sure that dissertations ain't no joke, but fear not, even with some gaps in contact we'll still love ya!

Even so, I have some locs to write - being more selective as a result - and an annish to complete (should be done by next weekend), so I will still be in the loop.

An annish! I can't wait to read it. I



have a piece of my TAFF report all set aside for ya!

Got the tax refund in the bank this morning. Very nice chunk of change. Now I can book my flight and room for Corflu Silver. Wish you were going, young feller, but them's the convention breaks. Have a grand time in merry old England, and I hope to see you again RSN.

My refund is what's keeping me afloat.

Ciao, roomie.

John

And hey, since we've got the chance, here's a real LoC from John!

Well, since the last time I locced

one of your zines you seem to have pubbed three issues. Somehow this does not surprise me.

Well, that's what I do.

So it is with great relish - horse-relish, that is - that I read R Twidner's debut article in *Drink Tank*. Good to see the fellow getting his name out onto the aether to show us young-uns how it's done. I am also gladdened by the knowledge that his spelling hasn't improved. That would be a crying shame. Thank you, Chris, for rescuing this bit of redneck poetry from the dustbin of history.

I count Art as one of my Fannish heroes so it was a real awesome honor to have it to run!

Taral Wayne seems to have become a regular in your pages. His tale of financial woe will strike a

familiar chord in most fans' hearts, mine among them. But, what I really like about this particular arkle is that Taral provides a listing of his stories at the end. When I have a bit of free time -- free time? what in the heck is *that?!?* - I will Google in "E" and see what happens. Of course, if Taral has the actual URL handy that would be good, too. It would be interesting to read these stories, I bet.

Yeah, it's good to have Taral in these pages. The less of my writing there is the better off I think the issues are!

Brianna Flynt (any relation to Larry?) and Frank Wu have come up with a fun listing. There are probably many other ways that computers have failed us, but I really have no idea what they are at the moment. I do have to say that the television and movie tie-ins they list with each type of failure. A clever article and quite enjoyable.

Not knowing where my socks are must be computer's greatest failing. I must say that movies and TV have lied to us more about computers than anything other than World War II. I'll get to hang with Frank and Brianna in England in almost exactly one week!

What in the world are we to make of Jay Lake's little, er, piece? I have to admit that it was a bit of a rib-tickler in spots, but didn't quite cut the mustard in what I was expecting Jay to deliver. Methinks he needs to repair to the computer again to fix up this article, which read a bit like my dad's '64 Rambler. Then again, I always did like that car.



If you're trying to make anything out of anything that appears in The Drink Tank, it is you who must look deep within yourself to figure out why. I have to say that I enjoyed the hell out of it, but then again it's exactly my sense of humour. If you watch the short film 121 To Aztec, you'll get the reason why.

In your brief li'l, ol' loccol, Lloyd Penney talks American presidential politics. It's gonna be an interesting election. I have no idea how this is going to turn out, but the Republican nominee, short of assassination, is going to be Senator John McCain (whom I respect a great deal), and Senators Clinton and Obama are still duking it out neck and neck in the delegate count for the Democratic nod. It should be interesting come November. No matter what, the historical significance of this campaign

season has been remarkable: major candidates have been a woman, a black man, an Hispanic, plus a devout Mormon, Southern Evangelical Baptist, and one really weird long-shot old fart candidate (Ron Paul). Ya gotta love democratic politics. Always a good conversation starter.

I like Ron Paul. I do hope that Obama gets the nom, and if he does I think he could win it all. I think Hilary is a long-shot to win the election (imagine the gathering of the hardest of the hard core Republicans trying to stop her)

Steve Green neatly wrapped up this issue with a nice little piece about his run-ins with genre-specific plagiarism. I guess this is a risk one takes working in such a narrow milieu (I love using foreign words in English sentences) such as horror fiction. There must be a lot of over-lap between writers and content. Gawd only knows

SF and fantasy suffers from that affliction from time to time.

I think Steve's been a great addition to The Drink Tank over the last 6 months or so. I really liked his latest series and I'm hoping that I can get more out of him. Sadly, since this issue was a speedy-blast, I didn't have time to ask him for a piece!

Well, there's a loc for youse. Feels good to write one of these things again. Thanks much for posting this, and let's meet again sometime. Have fun in England, and say hi to the laddies and lasses for me.

All the best,

John Purcell

And I'll mak esure to capture it all and make a good report! Thanks, John!

And now...Lloyd Penney!!!

Dear Chris:

I am going to take full advantage of the fact that you're either very busy getting ready to go to Britain, or you're already on the plane. I'll catch up with the tons of Garciazines I've been loccing. Here's some comments on The Drink Tank 162. (Probably going to make me a liar, probably working on 163 on the plane...)

I've managed to make you a liar twice, and I will probably do an issue on the plane!

Your museum must have the



most amazing old computer stuff. I can only imagine how old that Univac is. We'd all like to make a living at what we like to do...I know that I cannot, so I try to make a living in an area I like, publishing. That means an office, going out when I'd rather stay in, etc. Staying in one place has been a problem, but hey, at least the Globe and Mail likes me. There is a hug snowstorm on the way, and I will head off into it, disappearing into the swirling white. ***So many things happening at the museum. UNIVACs are interesting, but the things they used to market***

these computers were bizarre.

Our computers have not failed us, for they can only go where our imaginations and wallets lead, and our imaginations go a lot further. A lot of this also applies to movies, too. There are no buttons on our computers, PDAs, etc., that say, "Give me what I want".

nd When computers can start making decisions, then we really have to worry.

My loc...a huge storm is on the way that could dump as much as a foot of snow on the already-snowy

ground here. All groundhogs are endangered... Your own prediction is that Spring will arrive on the first day of Spring, but there'll be lots of Winter around yet. The furry con in Montreal is called Anthrofest. I believe some of the local furies in Montreal will be assisting with the Worldcon there next year.

I had no idea that Groundhogs are endangered. I must look into that more. Hope you weathered the storm well, big guy!

I think, you may find that the grand St. Patrick's piss-up is very much a North American phenomenon. I gather that St. Patrick's is an regular day in Ireland, with the Irish angry that their national day has been shanghaied with faux-Irish pub serving up green beer. You'll probably find a little extra party here and there.

I've heard that from others, as well as there are pockets of folks who go ape-shit on the day!

Have the best time possible, and let us all know about it. Can't wait for you to cut a swath through British fandom, and I want to hear all about your adventures...I'm sure the Brits will write about the aftermath. Bring us back something good!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Don't expect me to keep a low profile out there. I'm hoping that I'll have my report ready by May first for folks to read!



OK, so that's the last issue before I leave for England. I can't wait to meet folks out there. There's not likely to be anything out of me from there, though I'll try and do eMail for folks writing in, but no issues will likely come forth until after I'm back and have done the majority of my TAFF Report. You can keep an eye out for that in various zines and you'll be able to get access to it by making a donation to TAFF and I'll send you the URL and Password. There ain't gonna be a regular printed

edition, though I'll be trying to get a few printed copies for the various groups that have bounties available. I'm still freaking out about money for the Fund, so any donations will be much appreciated.

There's nothing gonna happen until after I'm back, but I'm betting there's gonna be news and I'll try and update my blog (johnnyeponymous on LJ) and maybe even manage to get some photos up. If you're in the UK, lemme know contact info so I can get in touch!