



More Balls

December 2004

Making Tony Keen's fanwriting look even better since 2004.



At Novacon 34 at least two people asked me when I would be producing "another fanzine". This was in reference to **Gnat's Testicles**, a jokey one-shot put out by Max and myself and based on a late night messenger conversation. Sadly I've stopped drinking at home late into the night and Max has found better things to do than manipulate playmobil so the runaway success of **GT** is unlikely to be repeated anytime soon.

So following Claire Brialey's cry of "write, damn you!" to the fannish and the sad demise of **The Convertible Bus** (the fanzine you CAN fit your beer on) I've decided to produce my own single page flyer.

By the end of this edition of **More Balls** [1] I suspect those who ask why I've not written a fanzine will realise the horrible truth: *because it won't be terribly good*. At the very least I hope you find it adequately absorbent.

I've no idea if I'll produce even more balls. I'd like to take something with me to Worldcon in August (I'm stupidly excited about going to this next year). Like a number of other newish fans this is my first opportunity to attend an international fannish gathering and I'm going to try and do what I can to make it a success. Perhaps I should hold back?

[1] Do you see what I did there?

Battlestar Galactica

A review in ten bullet points.

1. Starbuck's a girl.
2. The Cyclons look human.
3. The Cyclons also are mostly girls.
4. Who use their evil girly ways to manipulate the weak and feeble men.
5. Apart from Captain Adama.
6. Who would like to be manipulated by the lady president.
7. But she has more important things on her mind. Like her cancer.
8. And the rag tag fleet of human survivors (although possibly Cyclons) who are roaming the galaxy trying to find a safe planet to survive on.
9. Which all adds up, as far as I can see, to neo-conservative fantasy where the events of Genesis meet Al Qaeda
10. AND I'M STILL BLOODY WATCHING IT!



What Could Be An Embarrassing Gap

A month has passed since the fannish fervour of Novacon encouraged me to try and write something. It seemed a perfect opportunity to learn a little about Microsoft Publisher, an annoying program that people keep sending me documents in, so the first few

days I spent fiddling around with fonts and columns and finding tacky bits of festive clip art.

It soon became obvious to even my tiny mind that eventually I'd have to produce some actual content. A small editorial and my contact details amply filled a column and a half before I had to do any real thinking.

The roundabout tales overleaf came from a conversation at the previously mentioned Novacon and flowed pretty quickly to fill a page. The Galactica review would have appeared on my livejournal if I hadn't decided to write this. That left me with a column or so still to fill.

My first thought was to change the spacing and font size to fill the space but I appreciated that people wouldn't want to read some-

thing lettered like

this.

Then I considered putting in my favourite potato recipe but as that's pretty much "cook potato, eat potato" it still wouldn't fill enough space. Sod it. I think I'll put in a badly-reproduced picture of my cat...



Roundabouts and Me

I consider myself a pretty good driver as does, I suppose, every other driver on the road until they find themselves with a 12 month ban. Supporting my conceit is a clean driving license, car insurance I've not made a claim on since established 12 years ago [1] and the fact that my Dad will let me drive his new car.

I have made mistakes. Who hasn't driven the wrong way up a one way street? Or realised after a half hour of driving you've no lights on? Or forgotten to put the car into gear when parked on a hill? These, however, are isolated incidents where I didn't get caught and (more importantly) nobody got hurt.

Not so isolated, sadly, are my encounters with roundabouts [2]. For some reason I can get onto a roundabout no problem at all but feel disinclined to leave by the correct exit. This is a slightly different situation to that experienced by my friend Brendan who has a problem accepting he is faced with circular junction. One particularly foggy night Bren drove right over the middle of a roundabout, and not one of those wishy-washy painted on the road things, either. This had a kerb around it, a flower bed in the middle, and handy pointing signs around it explaining the direction you should go. Never before, nor since, have I been in a car when the passengers screamed in such perfect union. To the man's credit he did miraculously exit at the correct place.

Back to my problem of over-attachment. Missing one's exit isn't really that much of a problem on a normal roundabout - you just drive around in circles until the correct exit reappears. Taking the **wrong** exit isn't that horrific either - you just have to find a side road to turn around in and head back the way you came. Difficulties occur, however, when the roundabout has a more specialised approach to traffic management...

The One-Way System

The entrances and exits to the roundabout are one-way only: the most common example of this being the motorway junction. Taking the wrong exit here leads to a long journey either back in the direction you originally came, or through unknown countryside. Eventually you find somewhere to turn but, inevitably, it's Crewe, or in a field outside a farmhouse with an unappreciative bovine audience.

The Hidden One-Way System

It looks like a normal two way road when you leave then WHAM! You are entering a bus lane and are about to commit a serious traffic violation. The example that immediately springs to mind is junction 10 of the M6, the road junction outside The Quality Hotel in Walsall. What should have been a ten minute drive to a local Travel Inn turned into a twenty minute whirl of death. I think I entered and exited at least five roundabouts but at least one of those was the same junction twice.

The Roundabout That Is Actually A Sophisticated Mantrap.

The late 90's. A young woman is travelling on the A19 to a party in the outskirts of Newcastle. To reach her destination she is obliged to use the Tyne Tunnel. To her horror after paying to exit the tunnel she is immediately faced with a roundabout and, predictably, misses her exit. Luckily for her missing the exit means she can drive right round and... DISASTER! This is a roundabout with rigid directionality, more a spiral than a circle, if you will. At **this** roundabout you are fed down a "last chance" exit and right back into the tunnel.

Eeep!

I had two choices. I could drive back through the tunnel, turn round at the other end and come back through, paying again for using it OR I could stop a handy tunnel patrol person and ask if there was any other way of getting out without, well, paying another pound. Oh how

I wish I'd chosen the first option!

It turns out that the way to get back out of the Tyne Tunnel traffic if you enter it in error is for lights to flash, barriers to drop, and you to drive red-faced past the halted cars, mouthing sorry and trying to make your pink Punto as small as possible.

Then you very, **very** carefully select the right exit.

On the bright side the telling of the tale, complete with cutlery and cruet accompaniment, did provide entertainment for my friends over dinner. It also amused the waiting staff and other customers in the restaurant.

[1] Sod's law. Within a few weeks of writing this my car was broken into and the stereo stolen.

[2] I believe these are called traffic circles in other countries.

More Balls is available "for the usual" from:

*Ang Rosin
26 Hermitage Grove
Bootle
Merseyside
United Kingdom
L20 6DR*

Or as a pdf file via that new fangled interweb thingy:

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/~lister/balls/>

A page that also includes links of interest connected with this fanzine.

Ang's livejournal is at:

http://ang_grrr.livejournal.com/

Your one stop source for information on soup-making, cowboy boots and cat-facilitated rodent death.

