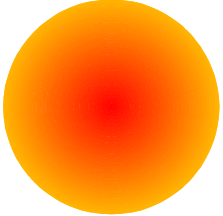


Thunderbirds are Go!
(Replica Model by Mary Mac, Photo by Keith Smith.)

Issue XXXIV - February 2013

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Musings from Under the Mountain

Why is so much reminding me of the sixties? And 1963 in particular? I suppose it's because it's fifty years on—and there are a lot of anniversaries coming up this year, because a lot happened in 1963, including an unusually large collection of disasters and assassinations, most of which someone will want to commemorate. If only to remind themselves that sometimes people do remarkably stupid things.

My earliest coherent memories are from that those years. I turned six in 1963, so I distinctly remember the bitter British winter that year, when there was still snow on the ground in our Somerset village in March. My first big TV memory is not as you might expect, the first broadcast of Doctor Who, or even the Kennedy assassination, but the first Telstar broadcast in 1962. We take international television for granted now—I could randomly view webcams from all over the world if I fancied—that it's hard to imagine that little girl watching that tiny B&W screen, amazed to see live pictures from the US. But that was me, just over fifty years ago. Ghods, I'm sounding so old...

It doesn't help that I've been reading "The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Sixties Cookbook". The word "American" should be inserted in there somewhere, because this is a strictly US look at sixties cuisine and culture. To the extent that in a panel headed "TV highlights of 1963" there is no mention at all of the debut of Doctor Who. And if memory serves me at all, this book doesn't reflect what *we* actually ate back then—tuna and duck didn't feature on our rather "traditional" British table, but fish and chips was served every Friday, and my mother made an excellent chicken and mushroom pie. How things have changed. I still don't do a lot of tuna, mainly because many species are endangered (another issue that never really entered into the equation back in 1963), but we had a delicious home-cooked duck breast with apple and red cabbage for our Valentine's Day feast this year.

It is said that "the past is a foreign country" and so indeed is the future. I don't think I could have imagined the world I live in now in 2013, back then in 1963. I'm fairly certain that no science fiction writer got close... Up for the Hugo awards back then were Simak's "Way Station" predicting a nuclear suicide that didn't happen, Clarke's "A Fall of Moondust" predicting tourism on the Moon by the mid-21st century which now seems unlikely, and Vonnegut's "Cat's Cradle" with its bizarre *ice-nine*. Not even close...

Jacqui, Editor

The View from the Comfy Chair

I see clouds, lots of them. For a while we had dazzling blue skies and clear nights, but quite probably too many one after the other. Is autumn coming late this year? I still blame humans and their effects on the overall climate, but whatever the cause, we've had a drought that affected all of the country and may have roll-on effects for a while. It's started raining again, but the farming industry is going to need a lot more fairly soon to recover properly. The ground has been rock hard, as I discovered when I attempted to put a spade in it to dig out the patio so I guess I'm going to have to wait a bit before trying to finished the patio and paths.

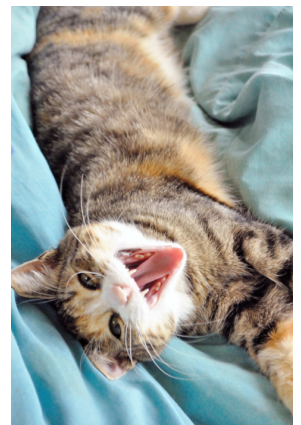
I've started an astronomy blog, mainly to expand on and compliment the 'Sky at Night' column in Novazine. I've also been volunteering at Stardome at public nights to help out. It's been interesting meeting people and discovering how much (or how little) they know about the Universe. Some people have some very strange ideas...

This coming meeting is the AGM and this will be my last President's column, for now. It's time for someone else to step up to the plate and guide Stella Nova on to a new direction. Our attending numbers have shrunk enough that it may not be cost effective to use the Horticultural Society room any more.

However, speaking of attendance, we will need enough for a quorum at the AGM so we can conduct the business we need to conduct, so please attend and let your voice be heard. Have a say on what Stella Nova does. Consider actually being on the crew, we need more active members.

Keith Smith
Outgoing President,
Stella Nova

(and here is a gratuitous photograph of Kit Kat because we know...)



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Of course, the other thing that has brought the sixties back to mind is the passing of Gerry Anderson—the TV genius who enriched many a childhood with the wonders of supermarionation. I have no memory of Supercar, but in 1963 it was Fireball XL5 that flew across the tiny black and white screen, and I’m pretty sure I remember that (I certainly recall “I wish I were a spaceman....”). Though not as well as the later series—Stingray, Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet—which have of course been repeated many times since (and we now have the first two on DVD to enjoy at our leisure).

Though it must be said that the years have not been kind to these childhood favourites. What were amazing special effects back then on those small screens, now plainly “show the strings” on a modern wide-screen TV. And some of the plots, and some of the set pieces look just a bit silly in view of events. But the ideas are fun, and the stories work. We’ve also been watching early Doctor Who serials thanks to UKTV, and I have to say that the Hartnell stories especially tend to move at a glacial pace. By comparison, Thunderbirds stories seem much more modern in their pacing, even though they were made at much the same time.

I’d like to watch *UFO* again sometime too. It’s probably the most adult of all the Gerry Anderson series, and in some ways the darkest. I’m afraid that there was too much silliness in the premise for *Space: 1999* to work for me even when I first saw it. But... there’s now hope for new Thunderbirds stories, to be made right here in New Zealand, with Weta Workshop involved. One can only hope that they do it justice—I’d love to see the technology used in Tintin applied to bring those puppets back to life, but with no strings attached!



A FAB QUIZ!

In memory of Gerry Anderson, a quiz about Thunderbirds and all that...

- Which was Gerry Anderson’s very first TV series?
 - Fireball XL5
 - Supercar
 - Terrahawks
 - The Adventures of Twizzle
- “Supercar” was the first series to use the “Supermarionation” technique which made Anderson famous. What was distinctive about “Supermarionation”?
 - Electronically lip-synching puppets
 - Extra-large puppets
 - Integrated puppet movement
 - Invisible strings

- The next series Anderson made was “Fireball XL5”. Who was pilot of the rocket ship Fireball XL5?
 - Captain Steve Zodiac
 - Commander Wilbur Zero
 - Jack Campbell
 - Jonathan Zero

- Which “Stingray” character is the only major Supermarionation puppet to have no spoken dialogue?
 - Atlanta
 - Marina
 - Phones
 - Troy

- “Thunderbirds are go!” Which 1963 disaster inspired Anderson to make Thunderbirds?
 - Hurricane Flora
 - Lengede-Broistedt mine flooding
 - Sinking of the cruise ship Lakonia
 - Vajont Dam disaster

- Which Tracy is the usual pilot of Thunderbird Four?
 - Alan
 - Gordon
 - John
 - Virgil

- Which male “Captain Scarlet” character became female in the remake?
 - Captain Magenta
 - Colonel White
 - Harmony Angel
 - Lieutenant Green

- The spinning device which confers knowledge and experience on Joe 90 is called the...
 - BIG BAT
 - BIG CAT
 - BIG HAT
 - BIG RAT

- What knocks the Moon out of orbit and hurtling into deep space in “Space:1999”?
 - A micro black hole
 - A nuclear accident
 - An alien spacecraft
 - An asteroid impact

- What is the name of the leader of the spherical robots stationed on Earth in “Terrahawks”?
 - Earth Sergeant One-oh-one
 - Sergeant Major One
 - Sergeant Major Zero
 - Sergeant Ninestein

(answers on page 9)



Text by
Jacqui
Smith

Replica
Models by
Mary Mac,
Photos by
Keith Smith

This is my homage to Gerry Anderson—a Thunderbirds story. I watched a number of episodes and saw that they tend to focus on new technologies that get into trouble, placing a small group of people in need of rescue. So, I borrowed an idea from James Cameron's "Abyss", threw in an eco-terrorist, put it in the blender, and out popped this tale starring Thunderbird Four—Jacqui.

THE POSEIDON INCIDENT

"She's a beauty, isn't she?" Alan remarked, as the Tracy family sat in the lounge, watching the television news on the big screen.

"It's c-certainly an advance in oil exploration," said Brains. "A sea-bed d-drilling platform has lots of advantages."

"They would call it Poseidon, though," commented Jeff, thoughtfully. "Not a name of especially good omen..."

"The Poseidon deep-sea drilling rig is to undergo trials on the continental shelf to the south-east of New Zealand where there is believed to be one of the world's largest remaining reserves of oil and natural gas. Various environmentalist organisations have protested this activity, citing vulnerable ecosystems in the vicinity..." the TV announcer continued on.

"Hmm... I think we'd better keep an ear on this one," said Jeff, turning to address the wall panels. "John, could you please monitor communications to and from the Poseidon rig?"

"FAB, father," responded John, from his station aboard Thunderbird 5, high above the Earth.

Meanwhile, over a hundred metres under the sea on the Campbell Plateau, the undersea drilling platform was being lowered into place. Above the platform, on the surface, the support ship swayed with the waves, the name RV Amphitrite visible on the stern. In the centre of the ship, men worked, managing the cranes that paid out the cables that controlled the platform in its slow descent into the depths. Among the cables ran the umbilical that provided the platform with air and communication. One man reached out, seemingly to steady the cable, but as he did so stealthily attaching a small magnetic device. Then he carried on working as if nothing had happened.

On the platform, the crew joked as they waited, their bodies slowly adjusting to the increasing pressure.

"Heck of a way to dive... in a can!"

"Yeah, but my ears still ache."

"Mine, too..."

"Par for the course... What the hell?" The entire submersible shook, rocking back and forth, so that the men almost fell off their chairs.

"We've lost contact with Amphitrite!"

"What? How?"

"Dunno, boss, but she's not responding!"

There was a sound of tortured metal, followed by an almighty lurch, and the rig canted to one side, leaving the deck sloping at nearly thirty degrees.

"That was one of the cables... I think."

"This is not good, not good at all."

"Situation report!" snapped the foreman.

"We have lost contact with the surface, and are now in an uncontrolled descent. It's unlikely we'll land at our intended site."

"We have air supplies for thirty-eight hours, depending. More if we cannibalise the reserves in the mini-sub and dive suits."

"We may have to..."

With another metallic scream the third cable snapped. Poseidon staggered into the depths, buffeted by unseen currents. Finally, the rig settled on the seabed, still leaning at an improbable angle.

"Father, the support ship Amphitrite is reporting that they have lost contact with Poseidon. They're speculating that the cables have snapped due to metal fatigue," reported John from Thunderbird Five.

"Sounds more like sabotage to me," commented Virgil.

"You may be right, son," said Jeff Tracy. "They haven't called for us yet, but I doubt that it will be long. I give them maybe an hour. Gordon, you'd better check out Thunderbird Four. Alan, you go with them on Thunderbird Two, I'm sure you'll find something useful to do. Brains, I need you to formulate a plan for getting those men out of there."

"Yessir, father," the boys answered.

"Sure th-thing, Mr Tracy," answered Brains.

"And we'd better get Thunderbirds One and Two ready to go," added Scott, nodding to Virgil.

"Good idea, son," said Jeff.

"Calling International Rescue, calling International Rescue," the radio blared on Thunderbird Five. John looked wryly at the clock, and commented to himself, "Fifty-eight minutes. Father, you were so right."

"Calling International Rescue, this is Amphitrite. Do you read me?"

"This is International Rescue, receiving you strength five. Go ahead."

"We've lost contact with deep-sea dive platform Poseidon, and we've no means of reaching her. You've got equipment we haven't. Can you get to those men?"

"We'll do what we can. International Rescue, over and out."

"Father, RV Amphitrite called. They want us to rescue the men aboard their dive platform."

"Why am I not surprised?" Jeff chuckled. "Off you go, boys."

Scott, Virgil, and Gordon, now in uniform, were transported to their Thunderbird craft. The swimming pool retracted, and Thunderbird One launched into the air with a roar, followed by the rumble of Thunderbird Two taking flight from its ramp, Thunderbird Four tucked inside the Pod clasped in its belly.

Meanwhile, deep under the South Pacific Ocean, things were not going so very well. The abrupt bump as the rig landed on the seabed had caused yet more damage to the stricken submersible, and none of the humans aboard had escaped injury. One nursed a broken arm, and the foreman, Peter, had a bandage wrapped around his head. "Leave it, Frank, I don't have time for a concussion right now," he ordered, as the medically trained Frank attempted to adjust the bandage. "We have to figure out a way out of here."

"Well, it isn't going to involve the moon pool," said Jimmy, the youngest of the crew. "It's flooded... and that last bump broke the cables holding the mini-sub in place. She's broke, but good, and no amount of number eight fencing wire is going to fix her this side of Christmas!"

“Any of the suits still operational?”
“One or two, maybe,” answered Keith, the dive specialist.
“And there’s six of us,”
“And there’s another problem,” said Jocelyn, the marine biologist. “Something’s gimmicked the emergency lock. It won’t budge.”
“I’m being to think this mission’s cursed,” said the foreman.
“By the eco-nuts, yeah....”
“You don’t think?”
“I know those guys... you don’t get far in marine biology without running into a few of them. Some of them will do anything to achieve what they see as protecting the oceans.”
“Including kill?”
“Oh yeah, if it saves the whales. I mean, I’m all for protecting the planet, or I wouldn’t be here.”
“Making sure we don’t mess up?”
“Exactly,” she said, smiling. “Instead they’ve messed things up for us.”
“Well, we’ll just have to see what we can do about that, won’t we?”
The foreman swung off the bunk, where he had been sitting. “Let’s have a look at that lock, shall we?”

On the surface, Thunderbird One hovered above the support ship Amphitrite.
“This is International Rescue calling Amphitrite,” Scott said into the radio. “It seems you’ve lost contact with your deep-sea rig, and you’d like us to rescue your personnel.”
“Aye, that’s about the size of it,” replied the Captain.
“We’ve retrieved all three cables. The fore and aft cables appear to have snapped... but it looks like they might have been partially cut through. As for the central cable, the one with the umbilical, it looks like explosive was used. Guess we’ve got a saboteur on board, but I’ve no idea who. Everyone was vetted.”
“Well, that’s not the immediate problem. Let’s first see what we can do about the people on your rig. Thunderbird Two will be here any minute with our submersible.”
“I just hope they’re still alive.”
“We wouldn’t be here if we thought otherwise.”
“Guess so... and good luck.”
“Thanks. Thunderbird One over and out.”

Soon, the roar of atomic motors announced the arrival of Thunderbird Two. The Thunderbird craft hovered just above the waves, and with a tremendous splash, dropped Pod Four onto the surface. A ramp extended and Thunderbird Four slid smoothly into the sea, quickly disappearing beneath the waves.

Gordon confidently drove the little submarine into the deep. First order of business was to find the missing rig, and for that there he had sonar. Ah... there it was, the sound waves reflecting sharply from the metallic hull of the rig, creating a distinctive pattern. He dived to get a visual, the bright headlights of Thunderbird Four splashing circles of bright light across the tilted drilling platform. Then he surfaced to use the radio.
“International Rescue, this is Thunderbird Four,” he reported. “I’ve located the rig. It’s largely intact, but it’s stuck at an angle, and I doubt that I could get under it and into the moon pool. We could try the top hatch, or we could lift her off the bottom. There are lights inside, so

I’m going to assume there’s someone alive inside, and attempt to communicate. Even if I have to resort to banging on the hull!”
“Sounds like a plan, Gordon,” acknowledged Scott.
“FAB, over and out.”
Gordon dived Thunderbird Four again, and activated the “Gertrude” - the sonar phone used for underwater communication. Its range was notoriously short, but by then he was close enough to the rig that it ought to work.
“This is International Rescue calling Poseidon, please respond,” he called.
“This is Poseidon,” responded Peter, the foreman, after two or three repeats. “Man, it’s good to hear your voice.”
“Good to hear you too,” replied Gordon. “What’s your situation?”
“Okay for now, some injuries, but we’re stuck in here, the sub’s a wreck, and we’ll run out of air in... about twenty hours. Oh, and one of the reasons we can’t get out is that the top hatch is stuck. So, we’d appreciate your assistance.”
“Glad to help. I’ll have a look at that hatch, and get back to you,” Gordon answered. “International Rescue, over and out.”
“Poseidon, out.”

Gordon drove Thunderbird 4 around to the top hatch, and trained his lights on it. There was nothing wrong with it that he see. But when he tried the Thunderbird’s robotic arm, the hatch simply wouldn’t budge. Clearly it wasn’t opening any time soon, and in any case, there was probably an easier way. He turned his lights onto the cable mounts, and deftly used his laser to cut away the remains of the broken cables. Then he surfaced, and contacted International Rescue Headquarters about his plan.

“Yes, G-Gordon. That should work,” acknowledged Brains.
“Go ahead, Gordon,” confirmed Jeff. “It makes sense to me, too.”

“Okay, you can lower the cables now...” Gordon ordered. Scott and Virgil hovered in tight formation, each deploying a cable from their Thunderbird craft, while Alan dispensed a third cable from the Pod floating on the surface, including a relay which would allow Gordon to contact him by the hydrophone. One by one Gordon guided the cables into position and secured them to the mounts on top of the rig. Then he activated the Gertrude, and called Poseidon.



by
Jacqui
Smith

THE POSEIDON INCIDENT CONTD.

“Poseidon, this is International Rescue.”
 “This is Poseidon. Heard you banging around up there. How’s it going?”
 “We’ve attached new cables to the top of the rig, and we’re going to attempt to haul you off the bottom.”
 “Okay, we’ll be hanging on... Ah... to something solid, I mean.”
 “I get you. International Rescue, over and out.”
 “Poseidon, out.”

“Okay, let’s lift this thing!” said Gordon.
 “FAB, Gordon” replied Scott, Virgil, and Alan. Slowly, straining, the cable wound back onto the spools in each of their craft. Slowly, ponderously, the rig lifted from the bottom, straightening as Gordon instructed his brothers to pull their cable a little more.
 “Okay, she’s clear! Now, hold it steady, I’m going under.”
 “FAB, Gordon, take care,” said Scott.
 “Yeah, don’t do anything I wouldn’t,” added Virgil.

Slowly and carefully, very carefully, Gordon drove Thunderbird Four up and under the rig, and into the wreckage of the Moon Pool. Water sloshed across the deck as he surfaced, but none of the waiting riggers cared.

“Are we glad to see you!” the foreman said.
 “All aboard, and we’ll get you all out of here and into a decompression chamber,” said Gordon, opening the rear hatch on Thunderbird Four. The hatch closed, and just as cautiously, Gordon drove the Thunderbird craft out from under the stricken rig, and up to the surface. Soon Poseidon’s crew were all safely transferred into the decompression chamber on Amphitrite.

“I guess we may as well haul this rig up the rest of the way,” said Scott.
 “Yeah, we should tidy up after ourselves,” chuckled Virgil. “It’s the eco-friendly thing to do.”
 “Sure, let’s finish the job,” added Alan. So, the Thunderbirds pulled the damaged rig to the surface where sailors docked it into its place inside Amphitrite.

Some hours later, after the Thunderbirds had taken off, and headed back to Tracy Island, the marine biologist Jocelyn and her crewmates were released from the decompression chamber. They stood on the deck of Amphitrite and looked around at the cheering sailors and deckhands. Her eyes fastened on a face she remembered from her past.

“You did this, you short-sighted greenie idiot,” she yelled, as she strode across the deck to slap the man who owned that face. “You’d have killed us, and created an environmental nightmare, if it hadn’t been for those brave boys from International Rescue! You’re no friend of mine... nor of the Earth.”

“But...”
 “Oh, get him out of my sight!” she screamed at the nearest sailors, who grabbed the man’s arms.
 “Lock him in his cabin,” ordered the Captain. “I think we’ve found our saboteur.”

Obituaries

December 21, 2012

Daphne Oxenford, (aged 93), English television and radio actress, whose best known role was the voice for BBC radio’s *Listen with Mother* from 1950 to 1971. Fans would recognise her from the Doctor Who serials *Dragonfire* and *The Unicorn and the Wasp*, and as Cully’s grandmother, Muriel in *Midsommer Murders*.



December 26, 2012

Gerry Anderson, (aged 83), British producer, writer and director, famous for his “supermarionation” series including *Thunderbirds*, *Stingray*, and *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons*, and for the live action series *UFO* and *Space: 1999*.

December 27, 2012

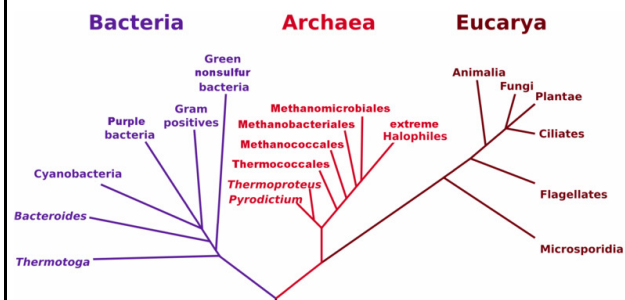
Jesco von Puttkamer, (aged 79), German-born American aerospace engineer and NASA manager, who worked with Gene Roddenberry as Technical Advisor on *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

December 30, 2012

Mike Hopkins, (aged 53), New Zealand sound editor who shared Oscars for his work on *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* and *King Kong*. He drowned when his raft capsized in a flash flood on the Waiohine River.

Carl Woese, (aged 84),

American biologist, famous for defining the Archaea (or microbes—the third Domain of life) in 1977 by phylogenetic taxonomy of 16S ribosomal RNA, a technique pioneered by Woese which revolutionized the discipline of microbiology.



January 1, 2013

Michael Patrick Cronan, (aged 61), American graphic designer and artist, who named the TiVo and the Amazon Kindle, among many others.

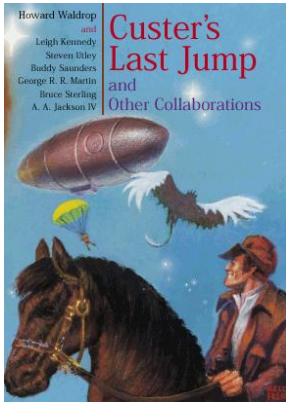
Patti Page, (aged 85),

American singer, among the best-known female artists in “traditional pop music”, noted for songs such as *How Much is That Doggie in the Window?* and *Tennessee Waltz*.

January 2, 2013

Alfie Fripp, (aged 98),

British RAF airman, longest-serving British POW during World War II, having been shot down by the Luftwaffe in 1939 and held in twelve different prisoner of war camps, including Stalag Luft III, later the site of the “The Great Escape” (which he helped gather tools for, but was transferred two months before the event).



January 12, 2013

Steven Utley, (aged 64),

American science-fiction writer, whom Gardner Dozois claimed "may be the most under-rated science fiction writer alive." Nominated for a Nebula award for *Custer's Last Jump*, he was probably best known for his series of *Silurian Tales*. You can find some of his stories here: http://www.freesfonline.de/authors/Steven_Utley.html

January 16, 2013

André Cassagnes, (aged 86),

French inventor, electrical technician, toymaker, and kite designer, best known as the inventor in 1959 of the *Etch-A-Sketch*, a popular mechanical drawing toy—which he called *L'Ecran Magique*, “the Magic Screen”.

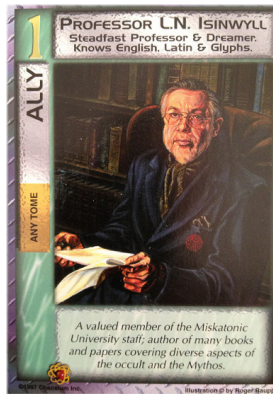
Pauline Phillips, (aged 94),

American advice columnist responsible for the “Dear Abby” column which at its height was the most widely-syndicated newspaper column in the world.

January 18

Lynn Willis, (aged ??)

American game designer who was Editor-in-Chief at Chaosium, co-creator of *Call of Cthulhu*, and writer of *Basic Roleplaying*, *Stormbringer* and numerous other RPG manuals and supplements. He also co-created the *Ghostbusters* RPG for West End Games, which won the H.G. Wells Award for Best Role-playing Rules of 1986. Best comment found while trying to find his birth date: “RIP Lynn Willis, co-creator of the Call of Cthulhu role playing game. Please make a sanity check.”



January 20

Michael Winner, (aged 77),

English film director and producer, and restaurant critic for *The Sunday Times*. No more “Winner’s Dinners”.

January 22

Leslie Frankenheimer, (aged 64),

American set designer who worked on *Blade Runner*, *Star Trek: Voyager*, and *SeaQuest* and many other shows. She shared in an Emmy for her work on Max Headroom (and three others for non-genre series).

January 30

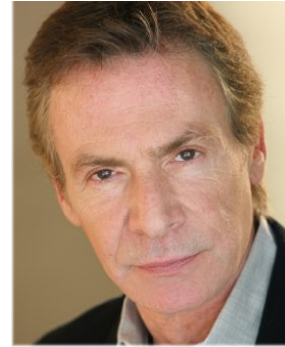
Patty Andrews, (aged 94),

American singer, last surviving member of *The Andrews Sisters*, famous for hits like *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*, and *Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree*.

February 1

Robin Sachs, (aged 61),

English actor, best known to fans as the sorcerer Ethan Rayne in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. He also appeared in numerous genre productions including *Galaxy Quest*, *Babylon 5*, *Star Trek: Voyager* and *Torchwood*.



February 2

Chris Kyle, (aged 38),

American author and Navy SEAL sniper, most lethal in U.S. military history, with 160 confirmed kills. He was shot and killed on a range by a fellow veteran who was suffering from PTSD. His funeral stretched over 200 miles, and may have been longest in American history.

February 3

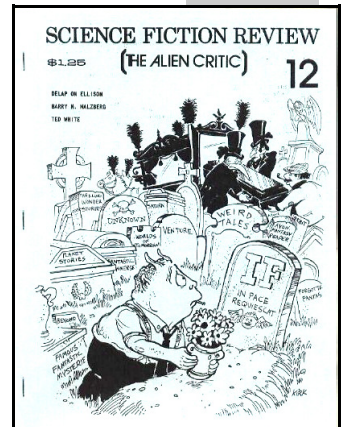
Peter Gilmore, (aged 81),

British actor who played Captain James Onedin in *The Onedin Line* and appeared as Brazen in the Doctor Who serial *Frontios* (1984).

February 4

Richard E. Geis, (aged 85),

American science fiction fan and writer, and erotica author, who won the Hugo Award for Best Fan Writer in 1982 and 1983; and whose science fiction fanzine *Science Fiction Review* won multiple Hugo Awards for Best Fanzine.



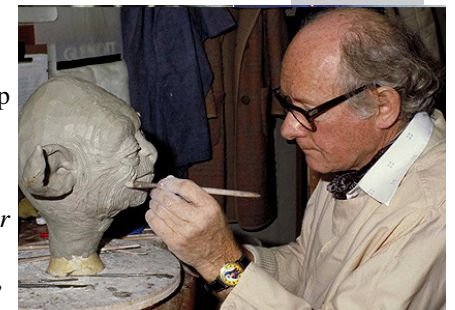
Reg Presley, (aged 71),

British musician and composer, lead singer with the 1960s rock and roll band *The Troggs*, whose best known hit was "Wild Thing". His most famous composition was "Love Is All Around".

February 5

Stuart Freeborn, (aged 98),

English motion picture make-up artist, referred to as the "grandfather of modern make-up design" perhaps best known for his work on the original *Star Wars* trilogy, most notably the design and fabrication of Yoda, Chewbacca and Jabba the Hutt.



He was also the make-up artist on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where he created the man apes for the "Dawn of Man" sequence.

February 10

W. Watts Biggers, (aged 85),

American novelist and co-creator of the *Underdog* TV cartoon series among several others.

Compiled
by
Jacqui
Smith

The Sky at Night – March 2013

Comets and asteroids have been hitting the news lately (and the planet—there was that meteor that exploded in an air burst over Chelyabinsk Oblast in Russia on February 15, coincidentally the same day we were all looking out for the near approach of DA14—Ed). There's the possibility of two Great Comets this year and some Near Earth Objects (NEOs) have been flying close to Earth lately. Last year there were near approaches of Apophis and Toutatis and very recently was an object with the rather boring name of DA14 that actually passed inside the orbit of our geo-synchronous satellites.

Those two names are also significant in fandom. In Stargate SG-1, Apophis was the first Gou'ald that SG-1 encountered and much of the first three seasons was mainly about their conflicts with him including Apophis's attempts to either take over, or destroy the Earth. Toutatis, on the other hand, was the God of the Gauls in Asterix and Obelix and the Gaul's biggest fear was the 'sky falling on their heads'. If Toutatis did hit – that would definitely count.

Meanwhile the potential Great Comets are Comet PANSTARRS (C/2011 F4) and ISON (C/2012 S1). C/2011 F4, which was picked up by the Panoramic Survey Telescope and Rapid Response System, is peaking in March while C/2012 S1, detected by the International Scientific Observation Network will peak in November. Another comet that is worth keeping an eye on is Comet Lemmon (C/2012 F6). It is currently traversing the southern sky and may reach naked eye visibility. More information on these comets can be obtained from the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand's website (<http://www.rasnz.org.nz/>)

Asteroids are basically lumps of rock, most of which orbit in the area between Mars and Jupiter, but some have been perturbed into orbits which can basically go anywhere. Many organisations are watching out for stray asteroids, especially those that are heading our way. After all, it's thought by many that it was an asteroid impact that took out the dinosaurs.

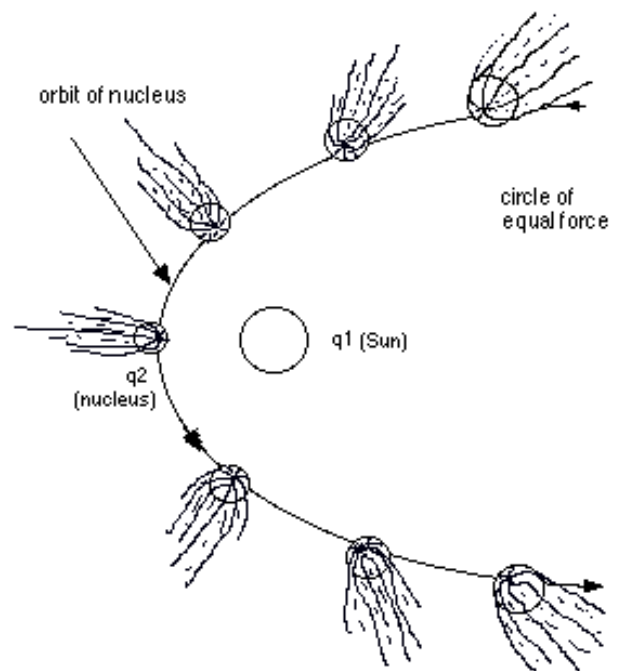
Comets are cosmic snowballs that come from way beyond the orbits of Neptune, specifically from the Oort Cloud, but they can be influenced by the planets, usually Jupiter, into shorter orbits. One comet, Shoemaker-Levy 9, actually got perturbed into an orbit that led into an impact with Jupiter. So they need watching too.

Speaking of Jupiter it still dominates the evening sky but is getting lower and lower as its orbit brings it behind the sun. Saturn is rising earlier and earlier in the night and will be able to be seen in the late evening, ready to take over from Jupiter. None of the other planets are well placed to be visible, although Mercury can be spotted in the morning sky in the latter half of March. C/2011 F4 will also be in the early evening sky early in the month (probably gone by the time you read this).

Phases of the Moon:
 Last Quarter—4th March
 New Moon—11th March
 First Quarter—19th March
 Full Moon—27th March

Comet Lemmon
 (photo taken in the back yard at Chez Smith by Keith Smith)

Comet PanStarrs
 (photo taken from the deck at Chez Smith by Keith Smith)



Uncorked

by Broderick Wells

Words, words and more words. I've managed to write 10,000 of the little blighters for chapter one of the thesis. And now my supervisor wants me to critique (along with several others) a chapter of an upcoming book. Which means more reading and writing. Aargh. The saving grace is that the writing is considerably better than any of the essays I had to mark. Don't even mention the exams.

Of late I've discovered the joys of recording digital television. You've probably seen the adverts on TV, so it shouldn't be a mystery to most of you. There are a god-awful number of channels available to digital subscribers, but most of it is total shyte. For most people, and I don't care what your tastes are, I would estimate that a discerning viewer would have less than 8 hours of decent TV a week. Maybe twelve hours on the outside. There are the general interest programmes you may like to watch, but genuine must see programmes are still few and far between.

I guess it's a bit like finding must read authors: there are a few you really wait for their next opus to arrive, and then there are your second tier choices. The ones you read if the a-listers haven't released anything lately. I used to be a bit like that with music – there were the bands that could always be counted on to produce something good, and then there were the not quite so consistent geniuses. But this classification fell apart under the influence of disco. Even Supertramp's *Breakfast in America* was subpar. At least there was Punk Music.

Cooks in SPACE!

Here follows the recipe for the lemon slice that I served at the January club meeting:

Base:

- 150g butter, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup icing sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 2 cups plain flour

Lemon topping:

- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind
- 1/3 cup plain flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup lemon juice

Method:

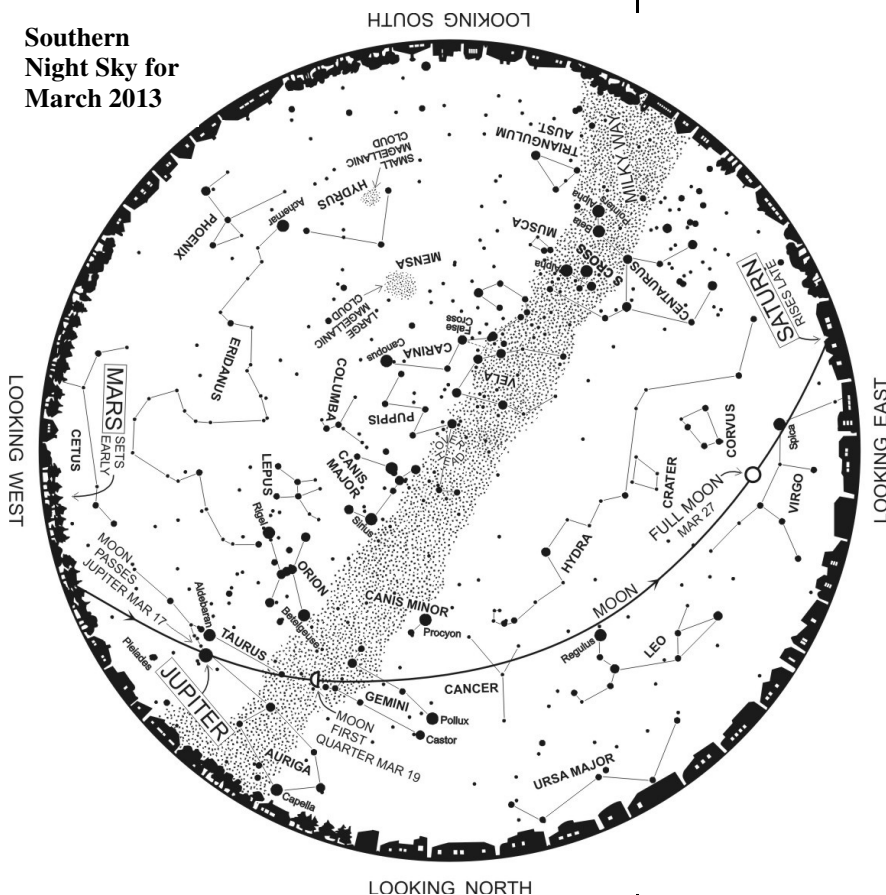
- Preheat oven to 180°C.
- Whiz all the base ingredients in a food processor until a soft dough forms.
- Press the dough into a 25 cm square pan, greased and lined with baking paper (this makes it much easier to get out even from a non-stick pan).
- Bake for 15 min. Let cool.
- Blend the topping ingredients in the food processor.
- Pour the topping over the base.
- Bake for a further 25 min.
- Leave to cool then sift icing sugar over the top, cut into pieces and serve.

UNCORKED



(Photo borrowed from the internet—I really must get Keith interested in food photography.)

Southern Night Sky for March 2013



Quiz Answers:

1. D. The Adventures of Twizzle
2. A. Electronically lip-synching puppets
3. A. Captain Steve Zodiac
4. B. Marina
5. B. Lengede-Broistedt mine flooding
6. A. Alan
7. D. Lieutenant Green
8. D. BIG RAT
9. B. A nuclear accident
10. C. Sergeant Major Zero

THE HOBBIT

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Directed by Peter Jackson
 Produced by Carolynne Cunningham, Zane Weiner
 Fran Walsh, Peter Jackson
 Screenplay by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens
 Peter Jackson, Guillermo del Toro
 Based on The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien
 Reviewed by Brett Peacock

Well, where do you begin to write this? So much ink (both real and virtual) has been shed over this production that, at times, it sometimes seemed as if it would *never* arrive on screen. It seemed like *everyone* had the knives out for this film. Which is a pity because the film winds up being pretty good. I don't think it achieves the depth and range of the Lord of the Rings' trilogy, but, then again, it was *never aiming* at that level of storytelling. Jackson did aim a bit higher than the original book (published in 1937) which Tolkien had written for his young children as a bedtime serial story in the mid to late 1920s. Later in life Tolkien wrote extensive appendices (in LOTR) and other works, all aimed at tying together 'grand history' of Middle Earth. The first step in this process was the revisions he added when turning his "serial" bedtime story into a children's novel. It has also been discovered that Tolkien had hoped to rewrite "The Hobbit" in full, as a Prelude to LOTR with all the "offscreen" doings fully developed and included. So this is the material which Jackson & Co have drawn on to make the Hobbit trilogy, and I for one scarcely dared hope that they would do it at all....

And that, at last, brings me to reviewing the movie, itself. I had no problem with the 3D HFR (High Frame Rate) showing. I usually find that just over two hours of normal, 24FPS 3D is about as much as my eyes take without getting noticeably tired. After almost three hours I could have sat through another showing in 48FPS. And, it does look "different" at first. It looked different, because it looked far more "lifelike" than people may be used to seeing. A good friend went to a 2pm session of "The Hobbit" and then a 6pm session of "Skyfall", and he later made the comment to me that "Skyfall" looked like mud (onscreen) in comparison to "The Hobbit". Peter Jackson and company made the very smart decision, well before production, to rehire as many of the LOTR Production staff as was humanly possible. The result has been a movie that places continuity of design and "look" as centrally important to the movie as the story. You should be able to eventually watch all six films and be able to see one huge, seamless story. Much has been made of the casting and I will add only one or two comments. Martin Freeman as Bilbo is inspired casting, as are the LOTR alumni, but I had a few reservations about one or two of the dwarves, specifically, Thorin and Ori. Richard Armitage has turned out to be a great Thorin, but I still felt he needed to be older and greyer, a little more set in his ways, rather than the 'Aragorn type'. Ori on the other hand... was he supposed to be a retard, or something? Frankly he did not appear to have a 'full six pack' there, Peter. In fact the

dwarf with the axe in his head seemed smarter than Ori... and he wasn't firing on all cylinders, either! We were told that Thorin had chosen the company with great care. He must have been absolutely desperate (or bribed) to have chosen this Ori for the Company.

The other piece of casting that really stood out for me was Sylvester McCoy as Radagast the Brown, one of the other Istari sent to Middle Earth. Some critics (read 'illiterate American idiots') compared him to Jar-Jar Binks. But, to me, he was closer to being a re-imagining of one of my favourite TV wizards of my youth - Catweazle! I'm a little surprised that no one else seems to have made that connection, at all.

I do sometimes think that attention spans have shortened drastically in the past ten years. A common complaint has been, "it's too long and it spend almost 40 minutes in the Shire". So I checked. Believe it or not, "The Fellowship of the Ring" spent almost an hour in the Shire, all up. The 40 minutes in "The Hobbit" included ALL of the background & side trips so all up the movie spends less time in the shire than LOTR did by about 20 minutes. As for it being too long... I could have sat through it TWICE without any complaint at all. I did not have any issues with pacing or following the story and it held my interest at least as well as LOTR did twelve years ago. Perhaps people were expecting something "bigger and better" than LOTR and were thus primed to be disappointed when it was not either. It was designed to be seen as the FIRST part of an eventual six part epic tale. As such, Peter Jackson and company were wise not to shoot off all their best ammo before the whole story is done.

I was more than a little shocked to see Time put the Hobbit as the Worst Movie of 2012. They clearly did not watch some of the **absolutely, horrifically, awful** movies that Hollywood inflicted on us this past year...

"The Hobbit" is a pretty good film, but compared with some recent efforts, it's practically an art-house classic. Was it too long? No—but there were two or three sequences that held on a bit longer than strictly necessary, and I feel they gave away a little too much about the White Council too early in the trilogy. It could have MAYBE lost about ten minutes in running time and nothing in storytelling terms.

I'll conclude with this: I never, not for one second of the 2 ¾ hours, lost interest, or was confused by the story, or felt it was dumbed down, or was bored. There were a number of scenes that were handled in a different manner to how I would have thought they would be, but never mind, it still worked for me. The absolute highlight of the film was the "riddles in the dark" sequence between Gollum and Bilbo. It was a close to perfect as I could have hoped – and it wasn't until later that I realised they only used five of the riddles from the book!

Part one, "An Unexpected Journey" ended about where I had guessed it would, with the rescue of the party from the Wargs and Goblins by the eagles and their being deposited on the Carrock. So that means we can look forward to meeting Beorn in "The Desolation of Smaug" at the end of this year. *Yessss... preciousssss! Bearses and Sssspiderses! And more nasssty elvesssss.....* But sadly, no more Gollum, Precious.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey rates... 8.5 stars out of 10 It's not the best movie I've seen this year, but it's very, very far from the worst. It's enjoyable and a great, fun ride with many fine performances!

**The Game Of Thrones:
A Song Of Ice And Fire Bk1**

by George RR Martin
Published by Harper Voyager
Supplied for Broderick Wells
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

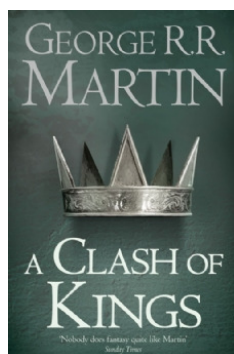
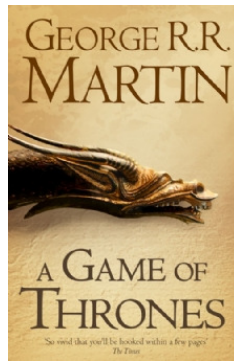
The men of the Night Watch guard the giant wall of ice that keeps the kingdom below safe from wildling raiders, outlaws, and scarier things. They have learnt of the return of the Others, dead men come to life, who can't be killed by sword or dagger. Lord Eddard Stark of Winterfell is Warden of the North. He's summoned by King Robert, a close friend, to become the *Hand Of The King*, second in charge of the throne. Ned reluctantly travels to King's Landing to take up the office of the Hand, taking his daughters, Sansa and Arya, to experience life at court. His sons, Robb, Brandon, and Rickon, remain at Winterfell with their mother, Lady Catelyn. Jon Snow, Ned's bastard son, travels to the Wall to join the men of the Night Watch. Daenerys is daughter to the mad king who was overthrown when Robert came to power. Raised in exile along with her brother, they've spent years trying to find the support to raise an army to reclaim the throne. Her brother trades Dany in marriage to a Dothraki khal to get a 50000 strong army of Dothraki warriors.

These are the three interconnected storylines that form TGOT. They are woven together very neatly, with each chapter being told from the perspective of a different character. I thought Ned was an idiot for warning Cersei he was going to tell – how could he think she'd meekly slink away? Sansa was a drip, thinking life was like a romantic tale. By the end she showed some strength, even if it wasn't sticking a knife in Joffrey's ribs. There was a lot of violence, especially toward women, and young girls were considered as adults sexually, which was disturbing. The book is 790 pages, and very little of that is spent on battles or scenery, or even a resolution to the plot. Instead it's densely packed with the thoughts, feelings, schemes, and observations of the characters, and you're unlikely to avoid getting very emotionally entangled to at least one of them. This combined with the brutal setting makes you genuinely cheer whenever a sympathetic character finally accomplishes something positive, or groan with dread when another character makes a tragic mistake.

**A Clash Of Kings:
A Song Of Ice And Fire Bk2**

by George RR Martin
Published by Harper Voyager
Supplied for Broderick Wells
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

The same three stories continue to interweave, with new characters being introduced and the threads growing to include new places/situations. There's a lot of action happening with lots of battles, fighting, and political machinations. You need to pay close attention when you read this book as there are so many characters it's easy to lose track of who's who and what's happening. Beyond the Wall an army is assembling, of Wildlings,



shapechangers, giants, and other scary creatures. Led by Mance Ryder they plan to break through the Wall and conquer the Seven Kingdoms. The Night Watch alone stand between them and the kingdom.

Robb Stark has been crowned King of the North and fights the various armies fighting for Joffrey Baratheon. Lady Catelyn has joined him, providing advice at the command centre of Robb's armies. Arya disappeared from King's Landing on the day Ned was executed, joining the latest intake of Night Watch recruits. Sansa is held hostage in the palace, still engaged to Joffrey, the one who ordered her father beheaded. Theon Greyjoy is the former ward of Ned Stark, trusted as an envoy by Robb. Tyrion Lannister, the dwarf brother of the Regent Queen, has been made the Hand and chief councillor to the young King Joffrey. He plots, schemes, punishes traitors, all while avoiding Cersei's manipulations - she wants him dead. He also has the best line when leading a charge against Stannis's men – "What brave men...let's go kill them". Robert's two brothers, Stannis and Renly, both claim the throne as their own.

Daenerys Targaryn is moving slowly to build an army to reclaim her "rightful" throne. She has three dragons that are slowly maturing and is learning who to trust and how to outwit those that just want something from her. I recommend reading TGOT before this, to get the background. More scheming and a lot of action makes the plot move fast. I thought it was odd that Robb was fighting a war with his mummy. The violence against women was a bit much, don't read if you've got no patience for that sort of carry on. Being 913 pages in paperback form, I found it awkward to hold, maybe an e-book would be easier?

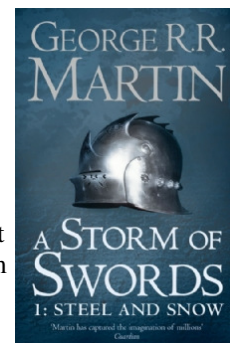
**A Storm Of Swords: Steel and Snow:
A Song Of Ice And Fire
Bk3, PtI**

by George RR Martin
Published by Harper Voyager
Supplied for Broderick Wells
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

The Night Watch is fighting the Wildlings while its men plot against their brothers. The Others give them a ferocious battle, which only a few survive. Jon Snow spends time among the Wildlings, fighting his former brothers after having renounced the vows he made to the Night Watch.

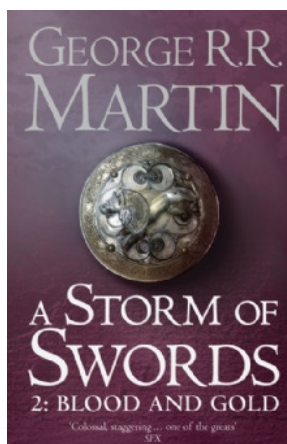
Brienne of Tarth has been tasked by Lady Caitlyn to rescue and release Jamie Lannister, so he will then release her daughters, held hostage by the court. She doesn't know that Arya escaped and has fled to find her and Robb, while Sansa ends up forced to wed. Bran and Rickon have fled the ruins of Winterfell, separated to keep them safe.

Daenerys Targaryan fights a few battles while trying to find a safe place for her children and three dragons. Stannis is greatly influenced by the Red Priestess and honours her god by giving sacrifices to the flames. Lots of action, intrigues and adventure, with alliances made and broken and loyalties bought. The characters are growing and you understand more of their motivations. Book 3 is split into two books, this is the first and a manageable 623 pages and easy to hold.



**A Storm Of Swords: Blood and Gold:
A Song Of Ice And Fire Book 3, Pt II**

by George RR Martin
Published by Harper Voyager
Supplied for Broderick Wells
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

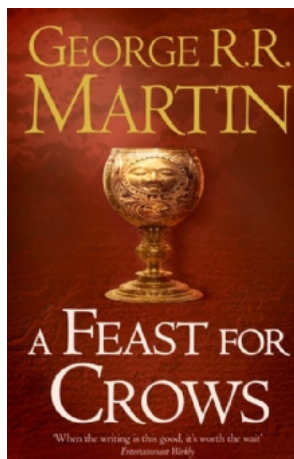


The Night Watch is still fighting the Wildlings, who were shown the Wall's weaknesses by Jon Snow. Returned to his brothers, Jon is now Lord Commander of the Night Watch and leads his men in defending the Wall. Lady Catelyn finally leaves her sons side and lets him concentrate on fighting a war. Robb has deeply offended one of their allies though, breaking a pact to marry a daughter of theirs in return for support for his war. Arya has been found by the Hound, who keeps her safe to ransom back to her mother. Arya still wants him dead for killing her friend though, but bides her time. Sansa finds an unexpected ally at court, though she still longs for a knight in shining armour to come to her rescue. Freed by his father's men, Jamie now rescues Brienne from death in a bear pit and is occupied with furthering Lannister interests. Joffrey wed his bride and all of Cersei's schemes seem to be falling into place. For a short time. Ha! Stannis is still gathering support for his bid to reclaim the throne and ignores his advisors. Daenerys prepares to fight for her city's survival against the Yunakai forces. She battles friendly enemies inside the city as well as the foes outside. Meanwhile the dragons grow.

I did not see the Red Wedding coming and was shocked at the betrayal. Something was confirmed that I always suspected but I was surprised at the instigator behind it – though it's obvious now. Treachery, betrayal, and cold-bloodness feature strongly in this story. Good characters do bad things (Stannis), bad characters do good things (the Hound), and characters that do bad things make you like them (Jamie). You definitely need to read the previous books in order to grasp who is who but book 3 (both parts) is a must read, weighing in at 607 pages.

**A Feast For Crows:
A Song of Ice and Fire Book 4**

by George RR Martin
Published by Harper Voyager
Supplied for Broderick Wells
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth



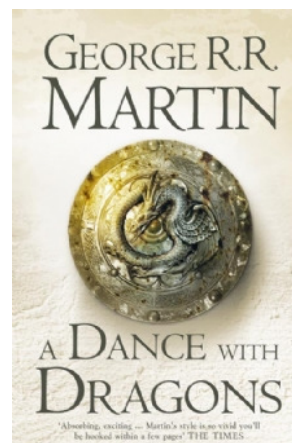
The Night Watch has won the battle but is still fighting the war against the Others. Nothing is said about Jon, but we follow Samwell Tarly on a quest, with a mother, a baby, and a 103 yr old blind man. The country of Dorne was pulled into the plotting for the Iron Throne, with the Martell

family plotting for vengeance for their dead. They have Myrcella as a hostage and according to Dornish law; she inherits the Iron Throne now Joffrey is dead. Lord Tywin was slain by his son Tyrion, who is fleeing his sister's wrath. His brother Jamie shows more honesty and honour than in previous books and he's more likeable. Cersei and her schemes are shown in more detail and she's currently in a silent war over Tommen, the 7-year-old boy king, with his wife Margery, whose father is a Lannister ally. Briane was on a quest to find Sansa, who's hiding in the Eyrie with Petyr. Some of his plotting is finally revealed, though I think he's got a few more schemes up his sleeve. Arya has left the country and is hiding in Pentos pretending to be someone different. The war for the North has ended but new rivalries have risen.

I was constantly surprised in this book - she came back from the dead, he was banished, she was killed, who IS he? I was happy that Cersei's manipulations are finally exposed and she gets what she deserves. An interesting read, lots of action and unravelling of secrets. You learn more of the story of the series.

**A Dance With Dragons:
A Song of Ice and Fire Book 5**

by George RR Martin
Published by Harper Voyager
Supplied for Broderick Wells
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth



The 998th Lord Commander of the Night Watch, Jon Snow has enemies within as well as outside the wall. He's made some decisions that are not popular. Stannis has left the Wall to declare war on the North and claim it. The North is still teaming with suspicion with distrust and making nice with enemies. The Frys still have weddings, despite them hosting the Red Wedding. Bolton's son is preparing to marry Arya Cersei gets her trial and punishment from the High Septon and I now feel sorry for her. Her uncle Kevan returns to look after Tommen, who is being influenced by the Tyrells. After turning his back on Cersei, Jamie is involved in brokering peace on terms rewarding Lannister allies. Tyrion ends up as a slave in a marketplace near Daenerys. Dorne sends its Crown Prince to find and marry Daenerys as part of an alliance agreed to years ago. Dany is busy fighting a war though and about to marry to bring peace to her city. Her dragons are not happy being caged. Briane now as another quest despite being hanged in the last book. Or was she? No, he can't be dead! Will he stay dead? I have a theory how ColdHands is but need to wait to see. I want to know how the task Davos was given turns out, despite Davos being officially dead. This book was 1117 pages long, but that was not long enough. Mr Martin, please finish "The Winds of Winter". I need to know!

Ghost Hand: PSS Book 1

by Ripley Patton

Published by Ripley Patton

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

Olivia Black has a ghost hand, a rare birth defect that means her glowy, see-through hand is presently lit up, making the teen stand out from her peers. Taking a test in calc class one day her ghost hand loses control, plunging into the back of the girl sitting in front of her and pulling something out. The hot new guy, Marcus, helps control her hand so no one notices and warns Olivia people are out to get her. Figuring he's crazy, Olivia runs from him, only to find people really are after her. She needs help and Marcus is the only one she can turn to.....

I've been a witness through social media to the birth of this book; from the writing of an idea into a story, to the editing, designing a book cover, publishing hassles like getting an ISBN; and marketing. I'm delighted to say it's wonderful and exceeded my expectations. The premise is great; a ghostly hand that can pull problems out of someone. The plot is tightly woven and moves quickly along, with plenty of action and moments where you wonder how they will get out of this. The characters are strong and believable and easily come to life as you read. Revelations are made and there are lots of I-didn't-see-that-coming moments.

There is a tiny bit of romance but it's all very innocent, building tension and developing relationships for future books in the series. This is definitely a book suitable for teens but enjoyable for adults too. Try it, you'll love it. I'm eagerly awaiting the next in the series so I can see what happens next.



Wool: Silo Series Book 1

by Hugh Howey

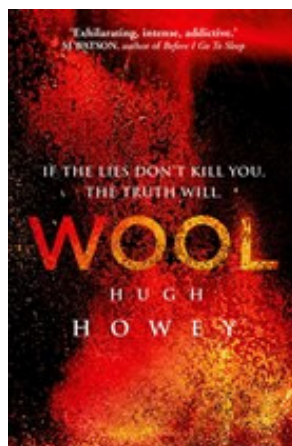
Published by Century

Supplied by Random House

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

Every so often one of the residents of the silo is chosen to go Outside and clean the windows. As the air outside is poisonous, they all wear protective suits and are not expected to return, quickly succumbing to the deadly air Outside. Now it's Holsten's turn, the only difference being he volunteered, three years after his wife went Outside. As he was the Sheriff, responsible for keeping the peace in the silo, a new person must be found to hold the office. That person is Juliette.

Living deep down in the mechanical division, Juliette is reluctant to leave her essential work to move ninety floors up top. She proves to be an efficient sheriff – until she



uncovers the truth about the history of the silo. Now *The Powers That Be* need her to bury that knowledge before others find out.

I generally don't like science fiction and didn't expect to enjoy this book. I was wrong. The world of the silo was intriguing, with people accepting things without question, content to live in little cliques. The characters were well defined and came alive; you could see them in your mind. The plot was tightly woven with something always happening, and there was an intriguing political conspiracy. In the end it came down to good vs evil and how people would react. My one complaint is that it ended too soon.

Angel's Flight

by Nalini Singh

Published by Gollancz

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

Angel's Pawn - Ashwini is a Guild Hunter, dedicated to tracking down rogue vampires and bringing them to justice. Janiver is a rogue vampire with a talent for pissing off angels and ending up on the Guild Hunter's hunt list. An ancient vampire has managed

to annoy the angel who controls the territory he lives in and a Kiss has been sent after him to kill him – a Kiss being a group of vampires united with a common purpose. Ashwini has been sent to stop the carnage but needs Janiver's help.

Angel's Judgement – Sara is the top choice for being the director of the US Guild Hunters. On a mission to track down a rogue guild hunter who's slaughtering vampires, she's assigned Deacon to watch her back. A loner who polices the Hunters, Deacon is known as the Slayer and is their boogymon. He is appointed as Sara's bodyguard on the hunt for the murderer as they angels and vampires are testing the future Guild Director's strength.

Angel's Wolf – Nimra is a strong angel ruling the Louisiana territory. She also has a problem; one of the trusted members of her court is trying to kill her. Noel is sent by Raphael to find the intruder, a move he views as a move sideways; he was brutally tortured and feels he is viewed as lesser because of it. As Nimra and Noel seek the traitor, another victim is discovered.

Angel's Dance – Jessamy and Galen's story is finally told; how the forthright weapons master taught the angel with the twisted wing how to fly. Galen had come to Raphael's territory to serve as weapons master and found himself taken with the shy schoolmarm and record keeper. Then someone tried to kill her and Galen appointed himself her protector.

This was a good read – if you know the world. You will still enjoy the stories if you don't though. I read the stories before – published in novellas and on Nalini's website – and love the fact they are all gathered in one place. A must have for fans.



Au Contraire 2013 will be the 34th National Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention, and the second Au Contraire convention.

Where: Wellington

When : 12th to 14th of July 2013
(last weekend of university holidays)

Venue: Quality Hotel,
Upper Cuba Street

**Guests of Honour:
Jennifer Fallon**

Jennifer Fallon is the author of 15 full-length novels, and a number of published short stories. In addition to her own fantasy series - the Demon Child trilogy, the Hythrun Chronicles, the Second Sons trilogy, the Tide Lords quadrilogy, and the Rift Runners series - she has written both a tie-in novel and short fiction for the TV series Stargate SG-1, an official Zorro story for Disney, a novella for the Legends of Australian Fantasy anthology, and has her own superhero - the Violet Valet.



**Fan Guest of Honour:
Anna Klein**

The Fan Guest of Honour for 2013 has been instrumental in the development of both the Auckland and the wider national live action roleplaying community. She has been a driving force behind the New Zealand Live Action Roleplaying Society, a funding and advisory organisation for the hobby. Anna has also led the organisation of Chimera, the original Larp convention in New Zealand.



Charity:
Wellington Women's Refuge



WOMEN'S REFUGE®

Stella Nova Wiki:

http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

Nova Zine Back Issues:

<http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/StellaNova:Novazine-new>

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This Month:

BOOK Monday February 25th
(at Marie Williams')

SPACE At Maree's BBQ
Friday 1st March at 7pm

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 20th March, 2013, 7:30 pm
Auckland Horticultural Centre,
990 Great North Road,
Western Springs



Upcoming Events:

July 12-14th 2013

Au Contraire 2013

34th New Zealand National SF Convention
<http://www.aucontraire.org.nz/index.php>