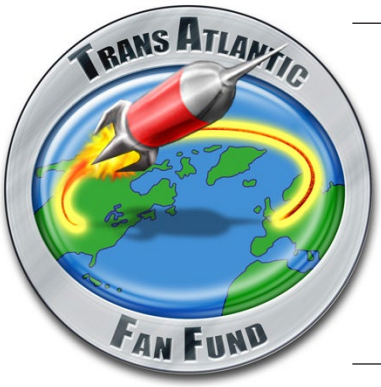
A TAFF Guide to Beer

From the TAFF ballot form: The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular [science fiction] fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted on by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation … These votes, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.



A TAFF Guide to Beer, published April 2019
in celebration of the 2019 eastbound TAFF race.

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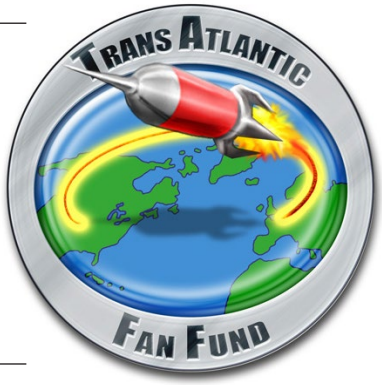

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Susan Levy Haskell, 39; Pat Virzi, 41; Geri Sullivan, 43.

INTRODUCTION
by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

Welcome to *A TAFF Guide to Beer*, published during the 2019 TAFF race. You can find more information about the race, including how to vote (by Monday 22 April) at taff.org.uk/ballots/taff2019.html which includes links to both online voting and a printable PDF ballot form. The candidates are: ***Teresa Cochran, Sarah Gulde, Michael Lowrey,*** and ***Geri Sullivan.***

This collection is intended as a celebration of TAFF, and the ways in which it brings together and fosters connections between fans from across Europe and North America, seen through the lens of beer in the experiences of TAFF delegates through the decades. Of course, it's not necessary for a TAFF delegate to like beer, or to drink alcohol at all – but it is one of the notable features of fan activity which many TAFF winners have encountered and observed on their trips. Like TAFF, beer can help to create fannish connections and some more stories to share in future.

This collection would not have happened without Geri Sullivan, whose idea it was and who is also doing all the design and production work. Beer, publishing, timebinding and fan funds are among the interests we share with Geri, so we really wanted to make it happen and to include some of her own writing about beer and fandom.

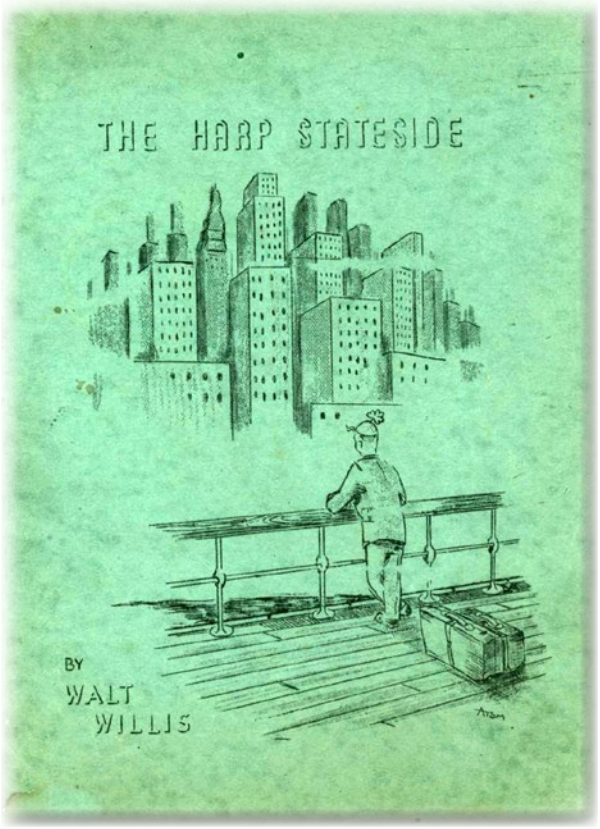
We're supporting Geri in the current TAFF race (Claire is one of her nominators). However, we were also pleased to be offered relevant contributions from the other candidates, which helps to emphasise the point that inclusion in *A TAFF Guide to Beer* does not in itself imply endorsement of a particular candidate. Some of the former delegates featured are supporting different candidates in this race – as noted with their contributions – and it seems like another commendable aspect of TAFF that everyone we contacted was enthusiastic and generous about such a project to support the fund.

The absence of some former TAFF delegates from this collection also does not imply anything about this race, but rather that they had unaccountably failed to feature specific references to beer in their accounts of their own trips – or had not, in fact, published anything about their trips at all. The full trip reports and other published chapters that do exist, though, are definitely worth reading anyway, and we've included a brief summary at the end of what's currently available.

We would, of course, like to thank everyone whose trips are featured here, as well as former TAFF delegates Sue Mason and Teresa Nielsen Hayden who provided the front cover and lettering respectively. Thanks are also particularly due to Dave Langford, for maintaining the unofficial TAFF website among many other continued contributions to SF fandom, and to everyone at fanac.org; their collective work makes all of this available to anyone who's interested, including anthologists.

Our research indicates that it would be equally possible to publish A *TAFF Guide to Wine* or *A TAFF Guide to Food* and so examine further ways in which fans have made connections and discovered some pleasant and bizarre surprises about one another's countries and customs. We leave that as a project for other editors in a future race… Meanwhile, we hope this publication will help to raise interest in the 2019 race as a whole and encourage people to vote and support the fund, no matter who they choose to vote for.

— Claire and Mark
(Verhaeghe Duchesse de Bourgogne
and Dogfish Head 90-Minute IPA)



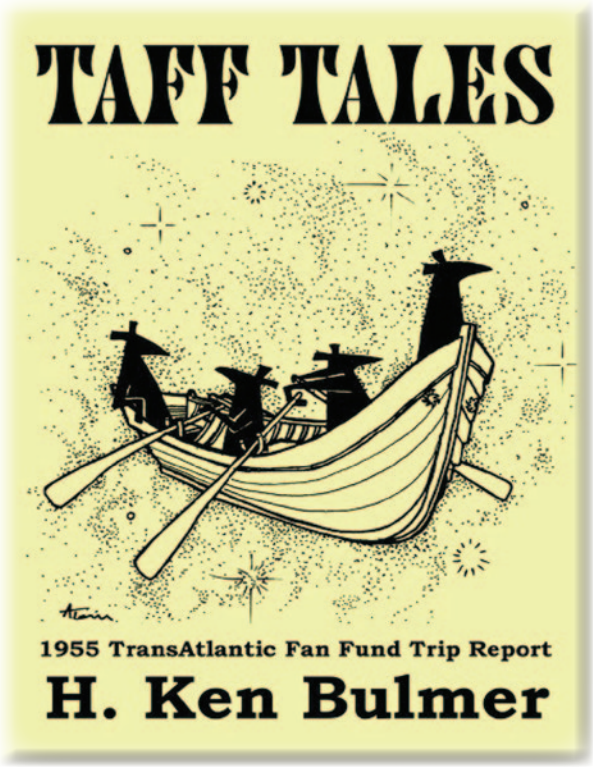
WALT WILLIS
Pre-TAFF trip that started it all:
westbound, 1952

From ***The Harp Stateside*** (1957)
as reprinted in *Warhoon* #28
(ed. Richard Bergeron, 1978)

In the evening I met Evelyn [Smith] again at one of the two stone lions that flank the entrance to the New York Public Library (which was obviously designed that way to force people to make jokes about reading between the lions) and we went to a Hydra Club meeting.

It was in a dingy basement room, more like a Communist cell than a literary salon. Everyone was drinking canned beer and listening to one Jerome Stanton holding forth from a strategic position in front of the fireplace and beside the beer. Among the people I talked to later were Cyril Kornbluth, Lester del Rey (who had an advance copy of *Space* with a Chicon report in it, scooping all the fanzines), Robert W. Lowndes, Harry Harrison, 'J. J. Coupling' and others. I'm sure that with all these active minds countless brilliant things were said, but all I can remember is an impression that these people should publish a monthly guide of 'Who's Living With Whom' for the benefit of confused visitors, and that they were all much more like Europeans than any Americans I'd met so far.

They seemed to lack that fundamental innocence which seems to characterise Americans generally. I had liked the average American, but conversation with him seemed to be on a simpler basis than with Europeans. When Europeans talk there is, I think, a silent and complex interaction beneath the surface: each person is thinking not only of what he is actually saying but of the way he is saying it and its possible repercussions on other people and their opinion of him. Whereas Americans tend to be more straightforward, saying what they mean and taking what you say at its face value. In practice it works out that Americans seem tactless and Europeans touchy. I suppose the basic reason is the absence in America of class distinctions, national boundaries, divided loyalties and wide variations in cultural background: in a sense, the American is much more anonymous than the European. One reason I thought this might be true was that the American simplicity didn't seem so evident among fans. I suppose in a way fandom is a European-type culture, with its class distinctions and traditions and so many intensely individualistic characters and groups that social intercourse tends to be semantically loaded in the European manner.
[Chapter 34: 'Night Out in New York']



KEN BULMER
Westbound, 1955

From ***TAFF Tales*** (1998)

Chick Derry is a fan full of bubbling enthusiasm. He goes at things with full steam up. … I'd say that Chick was a first-class example of the fan who really believes in fandom as something positive, a force of pleasure in life, and yet does most of his work in the background and couldn't care less about egoboo and BNFmanship. The same can be said of Bob Pavlat. To me, those two fen represent most of what is good in fandom. They lived at that time fairly near each other, even by our more restricted standards, so that they were able to form a sort of continuing nucleus of interest in SF fandom around their area.

They took us to a bar where we could lower a stein or two and I was expecting one of the typical brash, neon-lit, chrome-plated, high-powered, and supremely efficient American bars. Instead, although the place was American in the sense that it throbbed with activity and possessed most of the usual appurtenances, it was a quiet sort of activity, with a closer, darker look and a strong atmosphere of friendliness to the customer, which although it may exist in any other bar is not particularly noticeable. A smooth and machine-like precision doesn't necessarily mean that the customer is made to feel at home. I feel that part of the reason why Americans say they like an English pub is just this immediate air of friendship and welcome which the place itself, quite apart from the people involved, extends.

ROBERT A. MADLE
Eastbound, 1957

From ***A Fake Fan in London*** (1976)

Meanwhile, back at the bar... Yes, in short order I had discovered that the bar was on the second floor and had wended my way up to partake of a glass of the warm beer I had heard so much about. However, much to my surprise – and elation – the bartender had thought to ice up several bottles, and my first venture into warm beer consumption didn't occur until some time later.
[Chapter 4: 'First Contact']

… this was Thursday evening and, as all British fandom knows, Thursday evening means just one thing: the Globe and the London Circle.

Ah, yes. Long shall I remember the anarchistic melee that is the Globe. We were riding in Sam [Youd]'s car and, after touring about on several main thoroughfares, we turned up what appeared to be a back alley, drove several blocks, and stopped in front of what appeared to be a smoke-filled den of iniquity, which reminded me of the local of "The Face on the Barroom Floor." The sign outside plainly stated that this was The Globe, so we forced our way in. I use the term "force" with purpose, for we had to do just that. Fans and

continued >

ROBERT A. MADLE *(continued)*

writers were packed into the Globe and, in fact, were overflowing through the door onto the pavement. I suppose all of the Americans were there, as well as most of British fandom and prodom.

I recall pushing my way forward to the bar and ordering a "large beer." Let me tell you – this *was* a large one! I no sooner finished that one than Ron Bennett grabbed my glass and had it refilled. After quaffing that one, I felt all aglow with a mystical ethereal feeling; I could truly feel the magnificence of Trufandom, which was all about me. My head was whirling and my mind almost reeled with awelike reverence when GHOD himself approached me! Yes he did, really and truly. Walter A. Willis displayed to me a photograph of myself taken at the Chicon (1952).
[Chapter 5: 'Around the Globe in Eighty Bheers']

Dave Newman and Ron Bennett, after several hours of beer-drinking and fan-gabbing, suggested a little game of Brag. … When the hotel clerk informed us that one of the hotel patrons (a faaan no less!) was complaining about the noise, I decided to retire. It was only 5 a.m., I realise, but, after all, while this was but the first day of the *convention*, it was my *fourth* day in England.
[Chapter 7: 'The Day the Loncon Started']

Someone (it *must* have been Dave Newman) talked me into having a glass of beer for breakfast. This didn't require too much convincing, as the banquet was due to get under way at 1 o'clock.
[Chapter 8: 'In Search of Piccadilly Lilly']

RON BENNETT
Westbound, 1958

From ***Colonial Excursion*** (1961)

Charles Hornig and I went down to the bar where I tried further samples of local brew and we discussed his part on the SF scene. It was most interesting to have the chance to hear slices of SF history from the horse's mouth, as it were. A very nice chap, Charlie, and probably the youngest old-timer in the field. He was working as an income tax consultant, paying fairly regular visits to Mexico. We had a couple of bottles of Schlitz and then it was time for Charlie to go off home. I wandered up to the Detroit suite on the fifth floor to see how their nonstop party was getting on.
[Chapter 14: 'South Gate Saturday']

We were naturally not surprised to find a typical Nunnery party in full swing and to be greeted enthusiastically by Pat and Dick [Ellington], but we were very, very surprised to find in attendance Nick and Noreen Falasca, Roger Sims and Bill Rickhardt, those four very good Summer Soldiers I had last seen in Las Vegas. Larry Shaw let me smoke his pipe and Bill Donaho poured drinks into me and introduced me to all the young ladies present, as a gesture towards Anglo-American relations, he said. Dick Ellington told me that the Liverpool gang had sent over drink money for me and that this had been chasing me round the country. Finally, Rick Sneary had sent it to Dick and he was now going to make sure that I was going to get my dues. This sounded sinister, but he continued by asking what my favourite drink was. Right then I could have done with a brown ale, and said so. Dick said I was going to have Jack Daniels and like it…
[Chapter 23: 'Final Fling']

Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund

ERIC BENTCLIFFE
Westbound, 1960

From ***Epitaff*** (1961)

Our first stop was at Cornwall, a smallish town in Quebec. Ruth [Kyle] wanted to pick up some provisions so we stopped at a convenient supermarket. Whilst Ruth and I shopped for the solids, Dave took the car and went in search of some Canadian beer – which he said was superior to the American brew, a statement with which I'm now inclined to agree.
[August 29th]

… we were all feeling a little footsore so it was decided to go to the White Pad in Greenwich Village, buy some beer en route and have a gab-fest for the couple of hours before I was due back at the Chesterfield to meet Larry, Noreen [Shaw], Dave and Ruth for dinner. We did just that, and it was a very interesting session. If I may mention focal-points for a moment without being clobbered, Ted & Sylvia seem to be just that for the younger N.Y. fans … I'd like to have spent more time investigating Greenwich Village – which seemed very reminiscent of Soho, to me – and in gabbing with the Whites. Around 5.30 p.m. I drained my third or fourth glass of beer, left several fascinating topics in the air, and caught the Subway …

[The Lunarian/Futurian party] wasn't a whooping-it-up-last-man-on-the-ceiling-is-a-louse party, more of a talking, beer-drinking, moving around session, and it was ideal for moving from group to group getting to meet people. I think I talked with pretty well everyone there at one time or another, and generally enjoyed myself.
[August 31st]

Apart from affirming my intention, one day, to take up photography, [Don Ford's] slide session had the effect of arousing my thirst – I think it must have been the subliminal messages in the Eastercon shots which were the cause of this. So, as the show ended, I congratulated Don and headed for the Sky Room, the bar-room. Dick Schultz and Emile Greenleaf had a similar thought in mind, and we got beer, a table and sat talking for a while.
[September 2nd]

As the next programme item didn't seem quite ready to commence, and as I was feeling extremely thirsty, I decided to duck out for a quick beer. I was accompanied on this noble safari by Bob Pavlat, Ruth Kyle, Norm Metcalfe, and Marion Mallinger. We caught the elevator down to the lobby and visited the Harp and Crown Room. This was tastefully decored in Olde American, and the waiters wore the garb of the early settlers – not the *very* early settlers. It was quiet, pleasant, and a fine atmosphere in which to drink beer. …

Once again, parties were being held all over the place, and I got to talk and drink with some very pleasant people. I started the night off by going down to the Curties room with Buck and Juanita Coulson, where I had my first taste of 'Home Brew', and this was much superior to most of the American beer I sampled. Smooth, and almost (dare I use the word) 'warm' – rather like British 'mild' beer.
[September 3rd]

The business meeting which followed the banquet was lively and well attended, although it did (as convention business meetings usually do!) get itself a little fouled up. … A Proposal had been made to raise the registration fee to three dollars – Buz Busby said that Seattle had figured on two dollars – Dick Lupoff proposed that attendees pay $3, non-attendees $2 – Al Lewis put a counter-proposal to reduce the registration fee – and round about here, when James Taurasi was putting an amendment to Dick Lupoff's amendment of his first amendment, I ducked out for a quick beer.
[September 4th]

I was eager to meet my long-time correspondent and friend Dale R. Smith at last. I was quick to spot him, up top of the terminal

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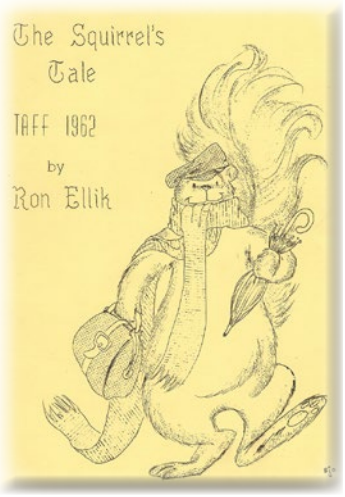
ERIC BENTCLIFFE *(continued)*

building, waving a cigar and a Union Jack … Dale suggested a beer whilst they unloaded the baggage from the aircraft, and we dived into a pleasant little bar to indulge in mutual toasts and pleasant lies to the effect that neither of us looked the least bit older than when we first exchanged photos!

… In the basement is the overflow of his collection, mainly the pulp magazines, and he had very thoughtfully placed my bed between the *Astounding* file and the *Startling* file. And here, also, he'd put several items for my attention: several cans of specially-warmed beer – teabags – the commission on my sale of the Smith/Haugsrud epic 'The Deities' to *Science Fantasy* – a letter from home – and several other letters which had been mailed to me care of Dale. It was quite a collection, and Dale left me to unpack and sort it all out while he went and warmed some more beer!
[September 14th]

I hadn't as yet had the chance to investigate LeRoy [Haugsrud]'s collection so we all trooped up the stairs to his interesting den, and LeRoy followed with several cans of beer. Here, again, were walls lined with SF and fantasy and a fine atmosphere for talk about SF and writing. Gordon [Dickson] entertained us with tales of his experiences with SF editors, of Horace Gold and his dislike of leaving his hotel room, of JWCjr and the time he spent a rather uncomfortable night at the Campbells' fine home due to being allergic to cats. We talked of stories we'd particularly enjoyed, and ones we hadn't, and had ourselves a really pleasant hour.

… I think it was around 5 o'clock … that we left LeRoy's home and drove out again to Golden Valley. There Vicki [Smith] made us welcome again, and I retired to change my shirt and freshen up while the beer cans were being opened. I think I probably drank more beer in America than I'd done previously throughout my life, but the strange thing was it seemed to have no effect on me – when you are already feeling on top of the world and thoroughly enjoying yourself it doesn't, I think, but merely helps to keep your tonsils moist for conversation. I'll be pleased to repeat the experiment any time if someone would like to observe this possible truism as an experiment, and providing they are willing to pay for the beer, of course!
[September 15th]



RON ELLIK
Eastbound, 1962

From ***The Squirrel's Tale: TAFF 1962*** (1969)

After the [Liverpool Group] meeting, Norman [Shorrock], Eddie [Jones], Stan Nuttall and I went to a night club. Eighteen months earlier, Parliament had legalized slot machines throughout the country, and night clubs had taken on a new life. Jeff Collins was interior decorator to this particular club, and Norman held a key. The interior was dark and moody, with a glass-brick dancing floor, small tables, and a torch-singer-and-combo at one end. Very Hollywood – but they served good stout and filling hamburgers. And it was fun playing slot machines with sixpences instead of dimes – it doesn't cost nearly as much.

After the pre-meeting drink, the Ackerman wine, and at least two stouts under *my* belt, Norman and I steered each other back to the ferry boat – running the last ten yards to follow an old British tradition invented by Dave Kyle. We talked about A. E. van Vogt all the way across the water and up to #2 Arnot Way, and at some late hour we found our way to our couches. I knew nothing till late the next morning.

Long after the sun, I rose, struggling off my back to take a cup of unbelievably black coffee from my host, who was wondering how I would fare that morning. He had heard somewhere that I don't drink. After my rest in Manchester, the night out had been a good way to shake me into convention condition …

Liz Humbie had tried to get root beer at the U.S. base near Harrogate; she had failed. She was abject, she was frightened, she was mortified – but I forgave her, because I was getting a bit scared that everywhere I went my hosts would have heard of my taste in soft drinks and stocked up on root beer. Fortunately I was guaranteed that her strongest efforts weren't good enough – and that cinched it.

So I wandered into Ella [Parker]'s and Ethel {Lindsay]'s room, and Ella leaped up, elbowed the Brag players out of the way, and opened one of two *cases* of Hire's Root Beer, in tins.

I was astonished.

The explanation was simple enough: Ajax Hoch, that sneaky American stationed at the same base, had civilian canteen privileges; Liz, as a British national, had none. He and Ella had contrived to surprise me and hadn't thought to tell Ron [Bennett, the convention chair] or Liz. Ella watched in glee as I chuga-lugged a can of brown carbonate, and then announced that, finally, she would let someone else try some. The room full of adventurous souls didn't exactly crush me in their press to this strange drink – especially when I told them it wasn't alcoholic – but my careful eye found about 50% favorable reaction among those who did try it. Ella, for instance, hates the stuff and insisted that I wasn't worth the trouble and should be made to drink all of it, right then; but Ian McAuley and George Locke rather liked it. Dave Barber says no respectable man would drink anything like that and try to play Brag. …

On our way back to Belfast we stopped at a pub and Ian and I imbibed some Irish-variety stout while James [White] and Walter [Willis] talked about teetotalism and I smirked into my glass about my reputation for teetotaling State-side. It had been a liquid trip to then – little did I know as I sat in an Irish pub that when I returned to California I would face the news that I had drunk Eddie Jones under the table in Liverpool and wenched and wined my way across the British Isles; but we swilled away at that innocent malt liquor and wound our way to the home of George All The Way Charters.

… the SF Club of London, with hangers-on and anyone else who walks by, plays the Globe on Thursday nights, and if we didn't hurry we'd miss seeing Ted Tubb sober! In plain fact things were already lively by the time we arrived. First off I was introduced to William Temple who posed politely for a photograph and then told me my lens cover was on. He blanketed embarrassment by buying me a mug of stout …

The Globe Tavern, which replaced the White Horse Inn as London's fan spot when Lew Mordecai the bartender changed jobs, was fairly packed with fans … The dinner (although I'd eaten at Ella's) was yards of fun, and a great interlude in the smoke-filled evening at the Globe. When we returned things were quieting, and by about midnight everyone was drifting off. For some reason I haven't the slightest memory of who was with Ella and me as we left the Globe – there were at least three others.

We walked past the old White Horse Inn, which I captured in perhaps the most beautiful picture of the trip, taken while slightly inebriated at one in the morning in a half-second exposure. And then we were in a coffee shop, while waiting for a bus (the Tube had closed long since) and I was drinking some incredibly black British coffee and the whole mob of us were talking about fans and conventions. I sure wish I knew who else was there.

ARTHUR THOMSON
Westbound, 1964

From ***Atom Abroad*** (1965)

The dinner of chicken, southern style, was excellent. Halfway through I was persuaded to throw aside my stuffy old British traditions of eating chicken with a knife and fork and seize hold of my chicken leg with my fingers. From dinner we went up to Dave and Katya [Hulan]'s apartment to sit, drink beer, and talk. I told Forry and Bob [Bloch] about the fabulous German con held earlier that year, where the hotel owner got drunk every night and the fans had to complain about being kept awake.
[Chapter 6: 'Party Line']

Early evening we drove out across the famous floating bridges on the Seattle lakes, to arrive back at the house for a late dinner and an evening's conversation and home brew drinking. Buz is the very devil with the home brew, especially if he sees you like it, like I did. My mug was never allowed to get below half full, though towards the end of the evening I was well above half full and feeling fine. We talked about fandom, the con, and the '65 [London] Worldcon.
[Chapter 10: 'The Puget Sound']

Fargo came up, and went past. During the day the look of the country had changed from mountains and green firs to flat dusty plains, then, as we got into Minnesota, to rolling hills and green fields, white-painted farms, and beer signs. By Sunday night we were well on the way to Minneapolis and St. Paul. I managed to grab a shave and wash at one of the stops and, apart from stiffness at sitting so long, felt okay. We rolled along, all through the night. Monday was a bad morning, After travelling so far the day before, Monday morning we seemed to be driving round, through, across and back across the country around Wisconsin Dells. Maybe the driver had friends in the area and was showing off his big shiny bus. We finally straightened out and reached Milwaukee, to run along the highway beside Lake Michigan past big breweries and bigger beer signs.
[Chapter 11: 'Travailing Man']

Wednesday morning I waited for Charlie and Marsha Brown to come round and take me off to the World's Fair. … I enjoyed the Fair. We wandered it most of the day, strolling around taking it easy and seeing what we wanted to see, which included most of the best pavilions and exhibitions and the reconstruction of a Belgium village, where we sat on the steps outside the town hall and ate huge waffles covered with strawberries and cream whilst we listened to a brass band playing its heart out in the square. A little later, when we were sampling some beer, the band finished playing and came past us, all the players speaking Belgium or Flemish…
[Chapter 12: 'Village Fayre']

TERRY CARR
Eastbound, 1965

From "Beyond the Mnemonic Statute of Limitations" (*Raffles* #8, ed. Larry Carmody & Stu Shiffman, 1984)

The night before the con we went pub-crawling with Arthur and Olive [Thomson], eventually running into several fan types (by plan, I think) in one of them. I remember standing foot on rail when Mike Moorcock introduced himself and insisted on buying me a pint even though he was in his scuffling days then. We talked about the time a few years before when he was scripting the British *Tarzan* comic book or some such and Tuckerized Dave Rike as one of the characters; Mike also mumbled and muttered, in that way he had even then, about London fan and pro factions – the New Wave was just getting started in 1965 – and I never did get straight just who hated whom or why, except that everyone seemed to hate Charles Platt. Plus ça change ...

Next day, Carol and I moved to the con hotel and got caught up in the hurly-burly of an

international Worldcon, meeting old friends from the States and new ones from England, and things went fast and furiously thereafter; it's all a blur in my memory and I think it was even at the time. As a recent TAFF winner wrote to me, it's a "pain in the ass, remembering the names of all these foreigners," and that difficulty must certainly be one reason many TAFF reports were never completed or often even begun.

… All this happened nearly twenty years ago, in a time few people remember and even those of us who took part in it find nearly mythic and recall it through a pint, stoutly.

STEVE STILES
Eastbound, 1968

Steve has nominated Teresa Cochran for the 2019 race

From ***Harrison Country*** (2007)

The accumulation of too many cigarettes had dried out the membranes of my mouth and tongue, and it was about this time that I made a great discovery: the bar was adjacent to the con hall. I discovered that I liked Guinness Stout. Moreover, you were allowed to carry drinks back into the hall to sip while listening to speakers …
[Chapter 3]

The Liverpool suite – a room shared by Eddie Jones and Norman Weedall – had its door open, and as I paused to lock my own door, Eddie called out to me to come on in.

Norman Weedall was stretched out upon his bed, a smile of bliss on his sleeping face. Eddie, however, seemed bright eyed and bushy tailed, despite the fact that he had retired to bed hours after I had. "Say," said Eddie, beaming, "care for a drink?" It seemed like a good idea; I'm not much of a drinker and it *was* 10 in the morning; but what the hell. I had heard that Liverpool fandom, and Norman Weedall in particular, made mighty fine brew.

(One of the educational benefits of my first trip to the United Kingdom was the discovery that beer could actually taste good, unlike the canned brews I had unfortunately sampled back home.)
[Chapter 4]

LEN & JUNE MOFFATT
Eastbound, 1973

From ***The Moffatt House Abroad: TAFF 1973*** (1974)

Len: That evening, June and I met Mervyn Barrett, and he took us to the Mille Pini, an Italian restaurant where the food was good, the zabaglione the best we've ever tasted, and the house wine excellent. Then he escorted us to the Sherlock Holmes Pub, where we tried their Barley Wine. It is a sort of sweetish beer. I didn't like it at first, but by the time I finished my glass I could see how a taste for it might be acquired …

From there we walked across the Thames on a railroad bridge that obligingly provided a walkway beside the tracks. We paused to admire the view downriver, with the city lights reflecting jewel-like in the calm surface of the water. Our destination was Mervyn's club, the National Film Theatre. We sat in the bar-lounge until closing, drinking lager (June had a gin-and-lime, which was as close as the bartender could come to a gin gimlet) … and talking of life in England and the States.
[Tuesday, April 17]

Len: … I still felt somewhat like the protagonist in a suspense novel – the kind that awaken by sheer effort of will and can't nudge hardly an inch without a large coffee transfusion. So, we had breakfast in our room before going down to see if the con was still there.

June: It was and, as usual, much of it was in the bar. … The far end of the bar was where they had placed the beer and lager kegs – of only academic interest to me, but Very Important to many others there, including Len.
[Sunday, April 22]

PETER WESTON
Westbound, 1974

From ***With Stars In My Eyes: my adventures in British fandom*** (NESFA Press, 2004)

That was the main thing I missed, *the bar*. The American fans didn't seem to drink – or rather, the hotel bar played a far less important role than it does at our Eastercons. Just a few months earlier, we had literally drunk the Tynecon hotel dry – did someone say 3,000 gallons? – and to us the bar was the focal point, the axis around which the convention revolves, a friendly, inexpensive place where you could sit and meet everyone, sooner or later. But Discon had no counterpart, and I thought this resulted in an odd vacuum at the heart of the convention, meaning you had to wander around aimlessly and hope you bumped into someone. Very hard on the feet!

There *was* a hotel bar, of course, a small, brightly-lit area just off the foyer, with stools and a thuggish-looking barman who continually polished glasses and supervised an enormous array of strange-looking bottles, serving things like Screwdrivers and Manhattans to Gordon Dickson and Jerry Pournelle and a few others affluent enough to afford them. On the second day I went in with Leigh [Edmonds – the DUFF delegate] and Valma [Brown] and ordered three beers, receiving a dirty look and three small, very expensive tins of very cold, very fizzy Budweiser, no draught beer being available. I didn't do that again! Later, we went out to a supermarket and bought a few six-packs of Michelob, which I smuggled up to my (freezing cold) room to accompany the duty-free whisky at room parties. However, I had to drink most of it myself, the American fans preferring to guzzle Coca-Cola, Dr Pepper and root beer.

PETER ROBERTS
Westbound, 1977

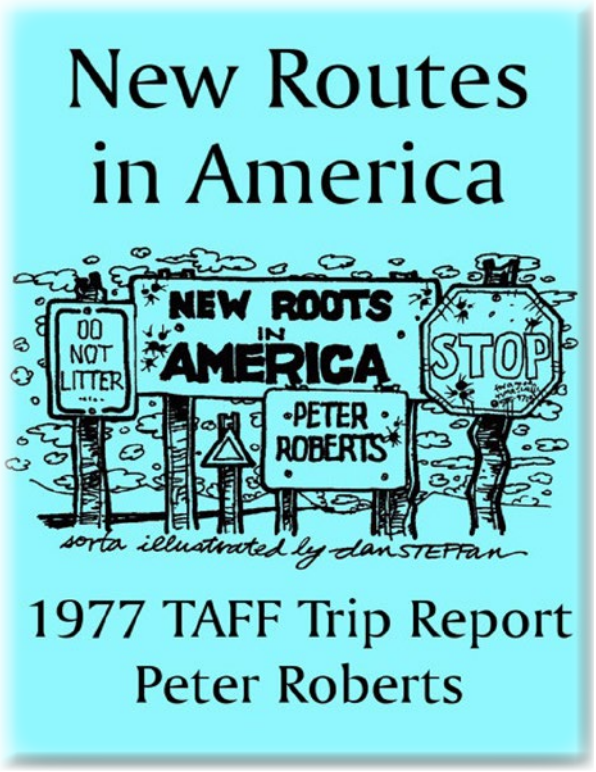
From ***New Routes in America***
(1999)

… we then went into a nearby bar, an event I'd been looking forward to. Unexpectedly the place looked like an average pub. I don't really know what I was expecting – something a bit more alien, I think. We went up to the bar to get drinks and Joyce [Scrivner] simply asked for 'four beers'. Astoundingly the barman seemed quite happy with such an abbreviated order and served us up four halves of lager without further question. No messing with brand, type or quantity of beer – you had a choice of half a pint of lager, half a pint of lager, or half a pint of lager. That was okay, as it happened, because an ice-cold lager was just about what I wanted. Luckily.
[Chapter 4: 'Capital Tour']

Rob [Jackson] and I met up again, went downstairs, and headed for the bar. We'd heard, of course, that American fans didn't use hotel bars, but we were sceptical and in any event, even if they didn't, we reckoned we could wreck that tradition fairly swiftly.

We came across Ted White and Dan Steffan on our way in … We all went inside and found the bar in darkness. I thought at first it was closed, but my eyes adjusted gradually and I caught up with the others as they groped their way to a table. Apart from the sepulchral lighting, it seemed okay and we chatted quite happily for a while. Dan bought me a couple of drinks … That's when Dan Steffan discovered he'd paid about £2.50 for the privilege of buying me two halves of lager.

Enough said. I told Dan I'd buy a return round if he ever visited Britain. In fact I offered him three or four rounds. Promises are cheap. And as for the SunCon, I resigned myself to American hotel tradition and subsisted on coffee, smuggled tins of beer, and room parties.



… back at Thursday, I was discovering that the daytime sobriety of American fans was not a myth and that whole roomfuls of fans were capable of not clutching drinks for minutes – even hours – at a time. Looking around the lobby I could only see one fan with a drink. And that, of course, was Pete Weston, veteran of previous U.S. conventions, who'd thoughtfully provided himself with a small stock of daytime lager. I helped him diminish the stock …

Monday was notable for several things. Firstly, there was a panel in the morning at which a handful of wide-awake Americans were treated to the sight of several bedraggled and hungover British fans who were ludicrously expected to discourse learnedly and wittily on the subject of British fandom. Few of the panellists could remember anything at all about British fandom. Most of us couldn't remember each other's names. Several thought they were still in bed.
[Chapter 7: 'SunCon and the Sea off Miami']

TERRY HUGHES
Eastbound, 1979

From "Chapter 1" (*Sticky Quarters* #13, ed. Brian Earl Brown, 1985)

I was staying at Harry Bell's house in Gateshead … so [Kev and Sue] Williams picked us up and took me off for a history lesson. I had made some sort of remark about how I was living in the Washington, D.C. area where there were plenty of buildings far older than anything I was used to in the American Midwest and they had just sort of snorted and said that bloody colonials don't even know what old is. This trio of Gannets were going to take me to see the Housesteads Roman Fort to give me the proper perspective on things.

The Roman ruins were in the upper part of Northumberland, near the border with Scotland which is a longer drive from Newcastle than it looks on the map, in part because of the nature of the British roadway system which, apart from the M series of highways, isn't really geared for speedy travel. Our journey took a bit longer also because we were going to stop at a pub for lunch along the way. Not just any pub, mind you, but a pub that none of the Gannets had been to before. Although there were a great many pubs between Newcastle and Housesteads Roman Fort, this was no easy proposition since they had made this journey before, which meant that there were few pubs along the way that they hadn't already sampled. Evidently this was a point of honor with them. It certainly made for an interesting trip since every time we neared a pub, we'd slow down and compare notes to see if anyone had been in the pub in question and invariably the answer was yes and we'd tool along until the next one. My ruse of calling out "There's one I haven't been to before!" must have been clumsy because they saw through it every time. Looking back on it, I think that rather than trying to find a "virgin" pub, they were actually trying to find the one pub in all of Northumberland where I could get hit in the head with a pool cue.

THE BIRTH OF THE BHEER FAIRY
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

In 1985, Minicon moved to the Radisson South Hotel in Bloomington, MN, a few years after I started attending the convention. The consuite was... remarkable. The main consuite took up half of the top floor of the hotel, with five connected bays and a bar stretching the length of the middle room. Two two-bedroom suites across the hall served as the smoking consuite. One was set up for conversation; the second was used for night-time music parties. I was into the music so you could find me in the second suite pretty much every night.

The room was always crowded. There were usually 40–50 fans listening to ten or more musicians playing guitars, fiddles, doumbeks, bodhráns, keyboards, and more. They sang some songs recognized as filk, but Minneapolis Music in those days was primarily folk and rock tunes by The Grateful Dead, The Byrds, Warren Zevon, Patti Smith, Stan Rogers, and the like mixed in with originals by Nate Bucklin, Bob Berlien, and other fans.

I have no memory of the first time I made my way across the hall to the Minicon bar and returned to the music circle with a few pitchers of beer and a stack of plastic cups. But it didn't take long for the musicians to annoint me with a new title: I was the Bheer Fairy. (Yes, Minneapolis fandom was quite taken with the silent fannish "h" and always used it when referring to beer during that era.) Instead of having to leave the music circle and wait at the bar one-by-one for a fresh cup

The pub looked innocent enough from the outside, in fact it looked most inviting in its country setting. Then again, a venus flytrap looks nice from the outside, too.

We each got a draft of the house lager and I think we each got a plowman's lunch, at least I know I did. A plowman's lunch consists of a hunk of bread, some cheese and some fresh vegetables (like celery and carrots) and makes for a perfect light midday snack. The pub was crowded and the only available table was in the room adjacent to the bar where the pool/billiards table was. A game was in progress but there was plenty of clearance by our table, or so I thought as I sat there, the one with his back to the pool table. Perhaps the British go through some training at an early age that instructs them never to turn their backs to someone holding a pool cue but, if so, these Gannets failed to pass this information along to me. Being from the States I wasn't used to having dining tables in the same room with pool tables. In the pool halls I've known the only seats were along the walls where no one could get behind you. For whatever reason my sense of self-preservation must have been napping because I took my suicide seat. About three bites into my meal I heard a grunt from behind me which might have been "Move!" but which didn't register with me. This was followed quickly by the butt-end of a pool cue smashing into the back of my head as one of the players yanked the cue back for his shot. When I turned around in my seat the guy wasn't even paying me any attention. I would have returned his greeting in a proper American fashion except that I hadn't brought either a .357 Magnum or a chainsaw with me. Instead of creating an international incident, I mumbled into my beer that I hoped he had missed his shot. Harry tried to assure me that this was a traditional British welcome given to all TAFF delegates but I refused to be hoodwinked. (Clubbed, yes. Hoodwinked, no.)

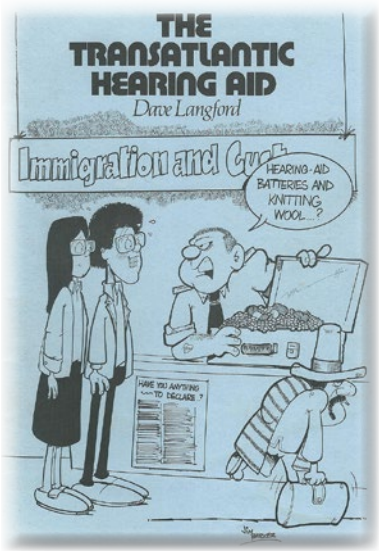
of beer, the Bheer Fairy ensured the muscians and others sitting in the most crowded part of the room could wet their whistle as needed. The music flowed a bit more smoothly until dawn lit the sky and we finally wandered down to breakfast or off to bed.

I liked the job title as well as the job itself, so kept on doing it the following year, and the years after that, too. It became at least somewhat official along the way; Minicon made Bheer Fairy badges for me for several years running. But it was mostly just something I did.

The best part of the self-created job came later, when other convention duties in the 1990s kept me from getting up to the music party until late one Saturday night. I walked in to find a younger fan I didn't recognize had taken on the job. She'd seen that it was a way to help out. It was a small thing, but one she'd seen was appreciated. She was helping the party flow smoothly, and was clearly both proud and happy in the role. Thank goodness I had the wisdom to say thanks and cheer her on as I poured a cup from the pitcher of beer and settled in to enjoy the music….

DAVE LANGFORD
Westbound, 1980

From ***The Trans-Atlantic Hearing Aid***
(1985)



We were visiting the U.S.A. to undergo Noreascon, the 1980 World SF Convention in Boston, our highly altruistic purpose being to test certain crackpot statements put about by a fellow called Columbus, and to find out whether it's possible to achieve the hallowed state of insobriety using only American beer. (It is, but there's a scientifically interesting time-reversal effect whereby said beer makes you ill *before* it makes you drunk.)
[Chapter 1: 'Travelling Hopefully']

A more homely note was struck when we re-entered the Sheraton lobby to learn from homely Greg Pickersgill that beer in the hotel bars cost five times as much as in shops outside. 'I was in this liquor store place,' said Greg, 'saying, "God this is cheap – that's *bloody* cheap," and the guy at the counter was saying "How do you *live* over there?" I wanted to give him my address – maybe he'd have sent me food parcels…'

At Greg's recommendation I stocked up with something called Michelob, which differed from most U.S. beers in almost having a taste. At $2.85 for six largish bottles, this nearly but not quite had me wailing 'How do I *live* over there?' (The last straw was the revelation that this was no cheap and nasty thirst-quencher, but a 'premier beer' of some distinction … I was carried out in strong hysterics.)

… With Friday evening's parties, Noreascon took on the semblance of a real convention. There were good points: the SFWA suite, object of popular hatred at Seacon '79, had been merged with the programme participants' watering-hole and was happily free of security fetishists checking credentials and fingerprints. There were not-so-good things, like the way this and most other parties were on the 22nd floor or thereabouts of one of the hotel's two towers; since the towers weren't linked above the fifth floor (improbable location of a swimming pool), and since the average TAFF emissary of 1980 had great difficulty remembering which tower he was supposed to be going up, this resulted in a great deal of extra travelling time. And there were bizarre scenes which stirred my British sense of wonder, like all those ice-filled bathtubs from which wild partygoers would snatch inexhaustible supplies of canned Coke, whilst a solitary six-pack of beer was denied fulfilment until some transatlantic sot arrived.
[Chapter 2: 'Vaster Than Empires and More Slow']

Lexington, where the first shot of the War of Independence was fired, left no impression upon the memory except as a singularly inappropriate setting for Selina [Lovett]'s query, 'Do you find everything here more spacious?' ('Yes,' said Martin [Hoare]. 'Agoraphobic is the word,' said Hazel. 'Your pizzas wouldn't go through our doorways,' I clarified.) We marvelled at the spacious land whose houses were all white and made of wood, defying such forces of British nature as wet rot, dry rot, death-watch, lyctus powder-post beetle, weevils and our favourite little friend *Anobium punctatum* or common furniture beetle, with all of which the British contingent had had intimate and embarrassing acquaintance.

Boston and Cambridge, where the first shot of the War of Independence was by some oversight not fired, were overrun by our party that evening. Unerringly Martin's sixth sense led us through the Harvard Square district to something called the Oxford Ale House. In its olde-world cellar they served Bass at liquid

nitrogen temperature in fiddly eight-ounce glasses which once again didn't fit the image of a wider and more spacious land. 'What you mean is, everything here is more specious,' I suggested to Selina as the merest sip of beer converted my mouth to a cryonics chamber. We had to warm the glasses in our hands for long minutes, as though they contained a rare old frozen brandy. Perhaps Hazel found this soothing, while Selina's giggles couldn't be controlled.

'The difference between British and American fandom is mostly that you two British fans are sots,' Hazel deduced inexcusably and correctly. Martin and I made our excuses and promised to do more sightseeing.
[Chapter 6: 'Is There Life After Worldcon?']

STU SHIFFMAN
Eastbound, 1981

From Chapter 2: "Over Here – First Contact"
(*Raffles* #6, ed. Stu Shiffman & Larry Carmody, 1982)

All the pubs had those hand-painted signs that Americans know from films. Some were very detailed, like the sign that hung outside the Wellington Arms, and some simple or crude. … As predicted by Dave [Langford], Martin [Hoare] urged seizing the moment and getting to the pub for some serious activity. Goshwow, I thought, a genuine English publick house. I now remembered meeting Martin at a stateside convention and we discovered mutual friends like Teresa Minambres.

Off we went to the Pheasant, a short walk away. Its sign, of course, showed a pheasant. The building, of local stone, was covered with a sweeping banner advertising a giveaway game sponsored by some brewer or bottler or other. It seemed more appropriate to a McDonald's. The interior was panelled in wood and there was a large crowd around the bar. The sounds and textures of the voices swept over me. This type of atmosphere was strange. Nice Jewish boys shouldn't go to bars, y'know.

We found a corner table, and quickly covered it with filled glasses of a pleasant brew by the name of Director's. I only had a half-pint glass – being a half-pint type of person. I wasn't sure that my special pre-trip training with Larry Carmody had prepared me for a full pint of British beer.

… I surprised myself by drinking another half-pint of Director's that evening, and the Hoares by not being a boozing American. I explained that I was not from a drinking family, etc. Not in stereotype, sorry, sahibs and memsabs. Huzzah. Katie was very understanding and explained that none of the U.S.ers she'd ever met had confirmed the stereotype. I suppose that they were hoping to someday find one who did. Meanwhile, with Hazel abstaining, Dave, Martin and Katie consumed Mass Quantities. We discussed computer systems with Martin, his several cars including a London taxi, and British comedy vs. U.S. sitcoms in general – explaining why I like Monty Python and that Surreal Cosmic Bozo humor, Dave Allen and *Reginald Perrin*.

… We got back to the house eventually. We had to – they closed the pub.

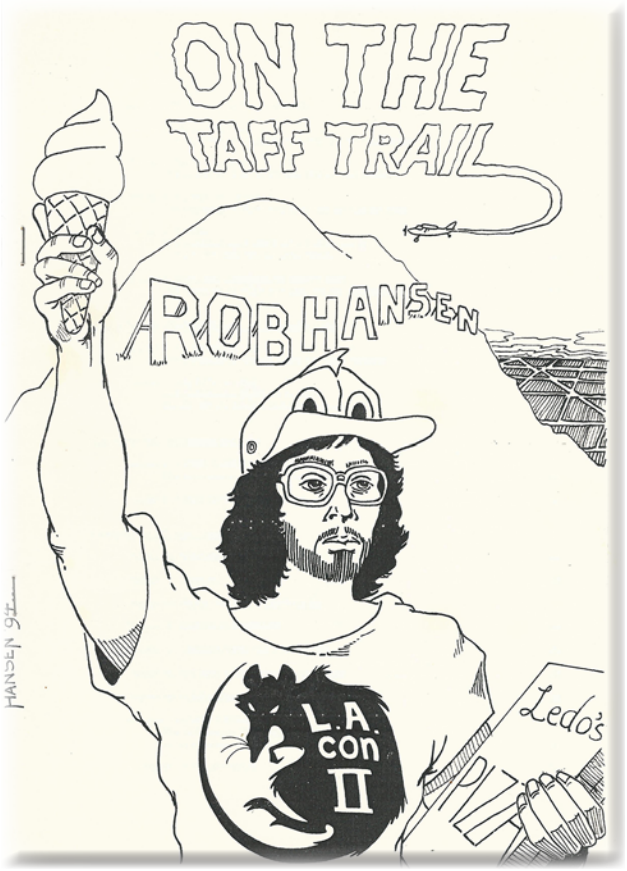
ROB HANSEN
Westbound, 1984

From ***On the TAFF Trail*** (1994)

It was Robbie Cantor, however, who saved my life. After fifteen hours of travel I was in dire need of a drink and, noticing the dismay with which I regarded the few cans of undrinkable American beer lost among the sea of soft drink provided for their guests, she produced a can of Canadian beer for me. As the cold nectar caressed the sides of my parched throat I thought that, truly, there could be no finer person in the world at that moment than this veritable Florence Nightingale of fandom.
[Chapter 2: 'First Contact']

continued >

ROB HANSEN
(continued)



For me the evening's partying started at 10.30 p.m., at the Britain in '87 bash. This was hosted by bidding committee members Chris Atkinson and Malcolm Edwards and was where most of the British contingent at L.A.con II were to be found. More importantly, this was the first time on my trip that I encountered drinkable beer (all imported, of course) and I fell on it with glee. Spike and Stu [Shiffman] seemed only marginally less gleeful as they grabbed up bottles of Pope's and Bass respectively. Hearing my accent as they and I argued the merits of the beers on offer, a strange Scots-American fan patriotically informed me that McEwan's Export was the finest beer brewed in Britain.

… When the beer ran out we grabbed Rich Coad and, moving on to the Australia in '85 party, we were deeply disappointed to discover that only Lite beer – which turned out to be unutterably foul – was available. What had the Australians come to, I wondered, shaking my head sadly. Leaving Spike and Stu to the tender mercies of our Antipodean cousins, Rich and I set off for the SFWA suite. We breezed in, soon to be joined by Jerry Kaufman, and chatted for a while to Joe and Gay Haldeman, who seemed pleasant enough. Once upon a time, when I was a young and wet-behind-the-ears SF reader, to have found myself in the SFWA suite at a World Science Fiction Convention in Los Angeles, surrounded by famous SF authors, would have been my idea of Heaven. But I was no longer that young reader and no longer capable of feeling a sense of wonder simply by being in the presence of writers whose works I'd read and admired. Sad, perhaps, but time continues to play its little jokes on us.

One of the beers I'd been hearing about since arriving in the U.S. was Coors, a beer seemingly regarded as a premier brew, so when I came across a six-pack of them cooling in the suite's ice-filled bath I naturally tried one. This was a mistake. Coors was without doubt the most undrinkable beer I sampled during my entire trip, and after a single gag-inducing swig I decided to cut out the middle-man by pouring the rest straight down the toilet. Resigned to being teetotal for the rest of my TAFF trip, I wandered out into the corridor … only to have Justin Ackroyd thrust a bottle of Irish Mist into my hand. I'm not normally a spirit drinker but this was wonderful stuff and I swigged at the bottle gratefully, putting my arm around Justin and telling him what a truly exemplary human being he was. There was some sort of party going on in the corridor so I joined it, drinking more of Justin's Irish Mist and loosening up so much that I was soon incapable of any movement at all. It was 2.30 a.m. the last time I looked at my watch, and after that all else is blank.

[Chapter 4: 'Spiked']

THE BEER CAN ASHTRAY
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

The setting? MagiCon, the 1992 Worldcon in Orlando. The Minneapolis in '73 suite on the 25th floor of the Peabody Hotel, to be specific. The time? Saturday night. Jack Targonski set the scene in his MagiCONation report published in *Idea* #7:

"The evening began with the Terry Garey/ Karen Schaffer/Don Fitch Garden Party, a very civilized gathering of people discussing the art of growing things. This went on for some time amid flowers borrowed from the hall lobby. Eventually, the Garden Party was to give way to the Viva Las Vegas Party. The transistion was seamless, with very few people noticing that the Las Vegas host had failed to show. We just kept as much beer chilled as possible and the party took on a life of its own."

The suite had an outdoor balcony but, unlike in Minnesota, it doesn't cool off at night in central Florida. At least, it doesn't in early September. The heat'n'humidity were dreadfully oppressive. But that didn't stop me from stepping out onto the balcony with a full can of Pig's Eye Pilsner, one of many that Minneapolis fans stuffed into the corners of their luggage so we could serve a local brew in the suite. I was hoping for a quick breather, a bit of a break from the non-stop reality of running the Fan Lounge by day and the Minneapolis in '73 suite at night. Well, actually both functions had at least some day and night-time hours over-lapping each other, but that's where all the scheduled hosts came in, keeping both areas running as I did whatever was most needed at any (and every) given moment. Hmmmm... and the next thing that needed doing was returning the plants and flowers our garden party hosts had liberated from the elevator lobby before the hotel noticed they'd gone walkabout. Or at least before they started looking for them….

While I was helping put the potted orchids back in place, Jack stepped out onto the balcony for a smoke. There was a solitary beer can on the ledge. How convenient.

You read the title of this piece, right? You know where this is going.

Jack assumed the can was empty, or at least abandoned. When I returned, I was quick to pick it up and quench my plant-moving thirst. "Nooooo!" he exclaimed, but I'd already taken a quick gulp.

While I didn't buy Jack's claim that it only proved that no good deed goes unpunished, he thoroughly redeemed himself the following weekend by bringing me an entire case of beer when he drove up from Chicago to ReinCONation Too. Twelve bottles of Harp and another 12 of Guinness, so I could even make my favorite half'n'halfs all weekend long. Such a fine, fine way to rinse that swig of ash-laden Pig's Eye Pilsner from my tastebuds.

But if he ever uses a Tree House can as an ashtray, it will take a full week's worth of half'n'halfs poured from Irish taps on the Emerald Isle to even start to make up for it!

LILIAN EDWARDS & CHRISTINA LAKE
Westbound, 1988

From 'Voodoo Jambalaya' by Christina
(*The Caprician 4*, ed. Lilian Edwards &
Christina Lake, 1989)

After that the only sensible option was to go to the Hugo losers party. It was at this party that I finally found one of those mythical bath tubs stuffed full with ice and beer that I'd heard so much about before I left for America. But the excitement of fumbling through the non- and marginally alcoholic for a bottle of Beck's soon palled and after the room became too crowded we went off to check out Lucy Huntzinger's party in the legendary room 1630 … Just as in the haze of memory one party blurs into another, so the downstairs Lucy party in room 1630 blurred into the more intimate Lucy post-party party upstairs. So intimate, in fact, that half the denizens of Lucy's room seemed to be asleep or at least pretending they'd like to be. Linda Pickersgill, Bill [Wagner] and I, plus a guy called Rusty who Linda knew from New Orleans fandom took the hint and left. Downstairs the lobby was curiously empty. Even the British official drinking team had gone to bed. 'Let's go off and find a bar,' said Linda the native, taking over. But New Orleans seemed to have gone to bed too. The evening crowds along Bourbon Street had evaporated to virtually nothing. Not surprising, since it was about four or five in the morning. Still it was 'adventure' – to be wandering around this foreign city in the middle of the night, revelling in the knowledge that I was a long way from home.

The all-night bar was fairly empty though there was still that edge of excitement that comes from late-night people. Rusty told us it was his thirty-seventh birthday; we clinked our bottles of Dixie's and tried to look celebratory, ignoring the fact that Bill kept falling asleep. But before we'd even got to the bottom of them, the all-night bar closed. Linda was philosophical. All-night might not quite mean *all* night, but we could always go to Cafe Du Monde. Cafe Du Monde really did stay open all night, though only the inside tables were in use. Cafe Du Monde is one of New Orleans's most famous tourist traps in the centre of the French Quarter, famous for its chicory coffee (what, no alcohol? I said when I first went there) and sugary doughnuts known as beignets. We took a few beignets to raise our blood sugar level and then went out to the banks of the Mississippi.

Sitting on the steps overlooking the silver grey of the river in the early morning light, just upstream from a dormant river boat was totally unreal. I'm actually *here*, I thought. On the *Mississippi*. In *New Orleans*. At six in the morning.

We sat there exchanging gossip, waiting for the sun to rise.

Also by Christina
(*Balloons Over Bristol 2*,
ed. Christina Lake &
Peter-Fred Thompson, 1988)

Up in the consuite, Mike Glicksohn is holding court, bottle of beer in one hand.

'How did you enjoy New Orleans?' he asks, astutely recognising me.

'Great,' I say.

This is clearly the wrong answer. 'Well, you're the only one who thinks so.'

'The con was badly organised,' I agree, 'but the parties were good.' I smile suggestively, and hope to be let off the hook. Mike starts making introductions, most of which, after five weeks training in meeting new people, I forget straight away.

Meanwhile, Catherine Crockett turns up and Glicksohn decides that an hour late could be a good time to open registration. We stay behind for a beer (not to be taken out of the consuite

under any circumstances – unless your name is Mike Glicksohn).

… All this free booze would never work at a British convention, I muse. It'd bankrupt the con committee in one night. There are also fresh vegetables to nibble, a box full of apples and a plate of ripe peaches (yum! No, I didn't eat them all). Lucky for them they got me as TAFF delegate, rather than champion Lambrusco-drinking artist Martin Tudor, I reflect.

I ask Taral how his DUFF campaign is going. 'What campaign?' he asks gloomily. He seems to be having his doubts. 'I'm no good at talking to people I don't know,' he explains. 'I mean, what do you say?'

'I don't know.'

He then spends ten minutes talking quite fluently about American/Canadian history. 'But that doesn't count. It's all right when you're interested in the subject.'

I decide that Taral would probably do all right in Australia, even if he doesn't drink lager.

MY FIRST BRITISH BEER
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

Pretty much the first thing I knew about Britfan attitudes toward Americans is that they thought we were all beer wimps. Not only didn't America have real beer that any respectable, beer-loving Britfan would find drinkable, Americans coming across the Pond were widely known to have no taste or tolerance for British brews.

I've liked beer ever since I was five years old and would crawl onto my Daddy's and Uncle Paul's laps and ask for sips when the two friends had escaped to the basement for some relaxed conversation. They never shoo'd me away and also never gave me enough to get me into trouble. When November of 1989 rolled around and I boarded a plane heading to Gatwick, I was confident I'd hold my own when it came to beer, that I was an American fan who would eagerly order a pint, and then another when I'd finished the first.

Imagine my eager anticipation and confidence, quickly followed by dismay, when Chuch Harris brought me my first pint of British lager after Chuch, his wife Sue, and I stopped at a pub just off the motorway on our trip from Gatwick to Daventry. That first sip was... tart. Sour. It tasted like the skankiest beer I'd ever had the misfortune to swallow. Worse, really.

I hoped the second sip would be better, or perhaps the third. No such luck.

About this time, Sue's face was making the same expressions mine was. Something was off with her shandy….

Yup. Mystery solved. Chuch accidentally switched our pints, probably not knowing which was which since he couldn't hear whatever the bartender said and he no doubt had other things drawing his attention than watching closely as the bartender prepared our drinks.

Sue and I traded glasses, then both thoroughly enjoyed the rest of their contents. *Whew*. American honor saved after all. Better yet, I learned on that trip just how much I adore a good pint of bitter. Thanks to the worldwide explosion of microbreweries, the beer in both countries has only gotten better and better and better in the decades since. Let's compare notes.

ROBERT LICHTMAN
Eastbound, 1989

From *Report in Progress*
(circulated privately, 1990)

March 30: Late morning, Chuch & Sue [Harris] drive me to Coventry. On the way we pass a small town where there are still functional stocks in the town square. This is in a town which has the old Roman road, Watling Street, as its main drag. At Coventry, we go to see the reconstructed Coventry cathedral. Most of the cathedral was bombed by the Germans during W.W.II. One of the parts they didn't get is a 320 foot tower. There's a circular staircase of some 185 steps inside the tower, much of it in near darkness. It costs £1 to make the climb, which I do with Sue; the view from the top is breathtaking. We look down and see Chuch sitting on a bench below, avidly eyeballing a young couple making out on the next bench. "Typical," says Sue. Afterwards, we go past the Lady Godiva statue (Coventry is where she took her famous ride), and I kid Chuch about climbing aboard the statue for a picture. Then off to a pub they know for lunch of quiche, chips, salad and a half-pint. Then Chuch & Sue drive me to the train station, where I catch a train to Leeds.

… Met at Skipton station by Mal and Hazel Ashworth, who immediately drive me out to a pub called the Craven Heifer in small village of Addingham. Spend the evening there visiting with Mal, Hazel and Don West, who is awaiting us there, trying local brews and enjoying the pub ambience. It's "drawing" night, which means that with every drink one buys one gets a number. At 10.15 they start calling the numbers. Winners pick a slip of paper from a glass, the slip stating the prize. The four of us won three of the twenty prizes that evening. Mal won a "Genius" pint glass, D. won a Guinness bottle opener and I won a deck of playing cards. Don later left the opener for me.

March 31: Mal, Hazel and I drive across the moors east to the ancient walled city of York, where we walk along a portion of the walls and then down into the narrow medieval streets, including one *very* narrow winding street called "The Shambles." We visit the open market and Yorkminster Cathedral. (York is second only to Canterbury in the Anglican religion and has its own archbishop.) As is becoming normal, Mal and Hazel also have a favorite pub and we go there for lunch. That evening, after dinner back in Skipton, we drive in to Leeds for a weekly gathering of locals at a hotel near the train station. Don West is there, as is the infamous Michael Ashley (not the one who did *History of the S.F. Pulps* but a new one) and various other Leeds fans to be listed in the Real Report. A good time is had by all.

DAN STEFFAN
Eastbound, 1995

From "Go West, Young Fan"
(*Apparatchik* #62, ed. Andy Hooper & Victor Gonzalez, 1996)

Visiting castles and prisons always gives me a powerful thirst. When I noticed the specks of white foam in the corners of Greg [Pickersgill]'s mouth I knew it was time for a beer. Everyone agreed and Catherine led the way down the hill from the ruins and took us down winding streets to an acceptable pub. Along the way we passed several other establishments that were rejected by our hosts.

"That one's a fucking shithole," said Gregory.

"Yuppie Wine Bar," said Catherine at the next.

"Wannabe Biker Bar," said Gregory about another.

We ended up in a pleasant, but mostly empty, pub in the midst of Haverfordwest's shopping district. The booths were comfortable and the drinks were cold. Greg and I gossiped and lied about everyone we could think of. I asked him what Chuck Connor's problem was and he asked me what was wrong with Guy Lillian. Gregory told me about Don West and I told

him about Andy Hooper. We talked about fanzines and fandom and all the great things that were going to get done just as soon as one of us won the lottery. I'm not sure what Lynn and Catherine were talking about, but it probably had something to do with what pathetic dreamers fanboys can be and how small our print-runs really are. You know, girl talk.

We moved on to another local bar after a short walk along the length of Haverfordwest's impressive Aquatic Shopping Cart Exhibit. It had been an unseasonably hot afternoon and we all welcomed the opportunity to get out of the sun. By this time any apprehensions we'd had about getting along with our hosts had disappeared. We had gotten through the awkward perfunctory conversations – and several pints of Guinness – and found that we still had plenty to talk about. In fact, we didn't shut up until we got back on the train the next morning.

… I met the entire membership of Haverfordwest fandom that night when we were joined by David Redd, noted author and third wheel. He arrived carrying an eight-pack of ale that never seemed to run dry. Before David had arrived we'd finished off a bottle of wine and many bottles of lager, but once he'd joined us the real drinking began. Empty bottles began piling up in the corners. At one point Catherine produced a bottle of locally-made mead for our consumption. It was astonishingly good. Usually I dislike overly sweet wines and liquors, but that bottle of honey mead went down like ambrosia. Periodically David would pull another bottle out of his eight-pack and offer it to one of us. Before long his feet became obscured by the pile of little green ale bottles, and yet there was always another lurking inside the box.

David talked about the reality of being a very slow writer while trying to raise a family and the necessity of having a job in the real world to make ends meet. I explained that it was much the same for would-be artists like myself. Between gulps of beer we discussed the frustrating way that working for a living interferes with Real Creativity. Catch-22. David talked eloquently about unfinished short stories and how they are like bouts of unrequited love. I talked drunkenly about unfinished comic strips and how they are like piles of expensive paper sitting in the corner gathering dust. Lynn looked at me like I was crazy, but handed me another beer anyway.

It was 4 a.m. when David took the last couple bottles of his ale and vanished into the night. Greg and I had been sprawled on the floor for several hours by that point, but continued our discourse whenever we made eye contact over the mountains of beer bottles.

We discussed how important it can be to separate a fan's creative endeavors from his often peculiar and sometimes offensive personality. We discussed Richard Bergeron's brilliance as a fan editor and fanzine packager in contrast to his more disappointing personality flaws. Greg talked about getting his copy of *Warhoon 28* long after the brouhaha known as Topic A had taken place. Despite all that distasteful unpleasantness, he was utterly astonished by the scope and quality of the book he held in his hands. It exhibited none of the bile and bias that, unfortunately, Richard Bergeron is known for today. It was a work filled with love and respect.

"What a fucking waste," Greg sighed. "What a loss to fandom."

"Yes," I agreed. "But you know what this means, don't you?"

"You mean?" Greg asked from somewhere behind a great pile of empties.

"Yes, that's right," I answered. "There's still hope for you and me."

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DAN STEFFAN *(continued)*

We exchanged many important theories about life that night, and if either of us had been able to remember them the next morning this would be a better world to live in.

We left the next day after a couple cups of coffee and about five hours of sleep. Before leaving I was granted access to Greg's fanzine preservation project, the Memory Hole, and allowed to liberate duplicate copies of many fine fanzines for my own collection. This kind of generosity made me appreciate Gregory and his love of fanzines all over again. His belief in the legitimate power of fanzine publishing inspired me and left me feeling, at the same time, like I was playing out of my league. I have yet to adequately repay him.

As we pulled out of the station for our return trip to London I turned to my wife and smiled with satisfaction. I could hardly believe our good luck. Haverfordwest fandom had welcomed us with open arms and drank with us until we were legless. No one screamed at anyone. No furniture was broken. No one pointed and laughed. No one vomited. No one was glad that we were leaving. It was hard to believe that we'd been in the U.K. for less than three days.

THE DRUNKEN BEER FAIRY
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

The scene: the Central Hotel, Glasgow. Intersection, the 1995 Worldcon, a few hours after the Hugo Awards ceremony. A half dozen or so of us left the hotel residents' bar and carried our drinks up to Dave Langford's room where we settled in along with the two Hugos he'd won that night. *Ansible* was named the best fanzine and Dave himself the best fan writer. We were a cheery lot.

All too soon, we were a cheery lot with empty glasses. I jumped up and proclaimed I would go back down to the bar for more, took everyone's orders, and all but skipped out of the room. Yep, I was cheery, all right. Cheery and feeling no pain.

The bartender gave me a tray to carry the drinks. I confess to sipping a bit from each to minimize sloshing. I drank a fair bit more from my own glass as I made my way through the hotel corridors toward Dave's room.

Hmmm. Problem. Dilemma. I remembered that Dave's room was on the left, a way down the hall. But had I thought to note the room number when leaving? Maybe, but if I had, I certainly didn't remember it by the time I returned carrying the tray of drinks, swaying a bit as I walked along wondering just which room was full of friends waiting for me to return with their drinks. I knocked on one door, then another. At 2 a.m., or maybe it was 2.30, or closer to 3. I tried listening before knocking, hoping to hear conversation, but the Central was an old hotel, built solidly. I walked a bit further, and tried yet again….

Yes, dear reader, I eventually knocked on Dave's door and the party continued with general thanks and continued cheer. I just wish I could apologize to those whose sleep I disturbed in the process.

MARTIN TUDOR
Westbound, 1996

Martin has nominated Teresa Cochran for the 2019 race

From ***Have Bag… Will Travel*** (1998)

Given that all the decent bars and pubs are way out of the centre of Vegas, Tom [Springer] apologised for the fact that the bar stagger would have to be restricted to the casino bars on Fremont Street – but he needn't have worried; they were great.

First was the Golden Nugget: a typical casino bar with the slot machines built into the counter. … It had a few interesting beers which we sampled, while Geri won some money on the slot machines and Art Widner won even more. … Then we moved off, taking our drinks with us, to the bar in the back of the Horseshoe Casino.

Neither Helena nor I could believe the number of people wandering around Fremont Street with drinks in their hands – a practice which is frowned upon in Britain; some places it's illegal. And the fact that none of the bars objected to your bringing in drinks from other bars – this simply wouldn't be allowed by any pub or bar back home.

The Horseshoe was decorated like a Wild West saloon and the bar was fantastic. An enormous wooden counter with no slot machines in it! Thick, red, velvety curtains were draped across the walls, and it had a decent selection of drinks and a friendly barman. Again we had a couple of drinks there before moving on – 'though I for one would happily have sat there for an hour or two chatting with Tom, as it was one of the few bars where you could hear yourself think, situated as it was beside the card tables with no slot machines nearby.

… On to Sassy Sally's which has got to be the noisiest, tackiest casino in Vegas. Above every bank of slot machines there is a T-shirt and shorts-clad young girl badgering you to come and play *their* machines – as you fight your way through to the bar. I'm not sure whether their air-conditioning was playing up or whether it was just the heat from the kitchen next to the bar, but it was uncomfortably hot in there. However, by way of recompense, it had the widest range of beers that we saw in any of the bars.

… we finished up at the Las Vegas Club casino bar, where Helena and Tammy [Funk] were delighted to discover 13 flavours of De Kuyper schnapps plus loads of bizarre flavoured liqueurs. As they ploughed through a selection of butterscotch, almond, and lord knows what else flavoured shots – washed down with $1.50 frozen cocktails such as Mudslides and Dreamsicles – I downed a number of glasses of the best beer I'd found yet: Rhino Chase Peach Wheat Beer. This was the Vegas Club's draught beer of the month, $1.25 a glass, and it was very cold, very tasty, and wonderfully refreshing.

As people were beginning to flag (we'd lost Art Widner back at the Golden Nugget) we headed back to the Four Queens. As we left the Vegas Club we were just in time for the next Fremont light show – this time the SF show. An enormous hatch stretches the length of the street, slamming shut; the sound of lift off; stars rushing by; planetfall with bizarre animals bounding past; the hatch slams shut again; lift off…
['Part Two: America']

ULRIKA O'BRIEN
Eastbound, 1998

From "Exit, Pursued by a Gael:
a TAFF Defense of Sorts"
(*Widening Gyre* #5,
ed. Ulrika O'Brien, 2000)

Evidently Ian Sorensen wants to get my goat. Everyone needs a hobby, I guess. This is not my goat. It isn't even my Croydonese drink order. But perhaps it will do as an answer to Ian, so he can move on to more exotic game. Mae Strelkov's sadly mutilated pet tapir, perhaps, or some of the more up-to-the-minute crotch-kicking Croydon coypus, or potoroos, or whatever funny animal they've taken to ordering drinks in now.

Ian only materializes to hector me once he's already drunk. Fade in: March, 1998. Corflu UK, Saturday night, the bar of the Leeds Griffin Hotel well after midnight. Despite the hour, it was still the first day of my TAFF trip, since I hadn't been to bed yet. Steven Cain warned me not to judge U.K. beer by what the Griffin served – the real ale had run out before Hal and I even got to Leeds. Still, even weak, flat lager isn't so bad, after six or seven. Or twelve. I lost count. The TAFF halo-effect had been channeling rounds my way at an alarming rate all evening. So okay, perhaps I was drunk, too.

Ed Cox doodle here

TOBES VALOIS
Westbound, 2002

From ***Tobes TAFF Ting***,
edited by Max (2005)

I nearly got in a fight in the bar in Philadelphia airport because I was reading SF instead of watching American football. Some guy took the piss out of me, so I very gently and politely told him to fuck off, and the bar man said, 'You know, there's never been a fight in here…'

Sue Mason: 'You didn't make a joke about American football being "just wussy rugby", did you?'

I was too busy waiting for my beer to warm up to bother.

… There was no bar in the convention centre, so I was very thirsty, and it made it hard to meet people. Because the convention centre didn't have a bar, the default bar was an 'Irish' bar by the party hotel. It wasn't too bad. Socially, it was comfy and roomy, with a good beer selection. I'd see the Irish lads there every night. It was the place to meet for people who wanted to drink: the Europeans.

… Nigel [Rowe] took me to a lot of bars. Lots of bars and pizza and some fantastic jazz music. Blues, jazz, that kind of thing. We went down one night and drank lots of Guinness and listened to some wonderful things. I was in Chicago for two days, two nights. That was as much as they could stand. Then I went to Toronto.

Max: 'Pete Young, who travels a lot because of his work, was sitting in a bar once, reading SF, and the waiter came up to him and said, "Oh, did you go to the Worldcon? I met your TAFF delegate there!"'
['TAFF Ting Transcript']

THE BEER THAT GOT AWAY
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

Thanks to Emma Bull, Fred Levy Haskell, Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Walter Willis, Don Fitch, the sensibilities of Bruce Pelz and Robbie Cantor, and countless magical moments along the way, I wound up running the fan lounge at L.A.con III in 1996.

On Saturday afternoon of that Worldcon, Doug Faunt and I went on a remarkable shopping trip. We spent nearly $500 donated by Tor Books and another couple of hundred from the fan lounge budget stocking up for the rest of the weekend. In specific, we were shopping for alien food to serve at the book release party for *The White Papers* by Worldcon Guest of Honor James White, which was scheduled for the next afternoon.

Doug and I soon had three carts full of food and drink, but a stand-alone display of hazelnut beer caught my eye. Now, I don't usually care for flavored beers, and nut brown ales don't do a thing for me. But the concept caught my fancy. I was short enough on sleep that I made room for not one six-pack, but two.

Doug and I did the shopping; Tor, NESFA, and L.A.con III were the party hosts. The sushi intermixed with gummi worms was… memorable, as were the many other platters of alien foodstuffs Claire Eddy, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, and Ulrika O'Brien created Sunday morning.

That night in the fan lounge, Randy Byers found the remaining hazelnut brew. I remember the smile of happy astonishment on his face. He was soon searching through the filled, iced serving tureens for another bottle. I snagged one myself. Damn, that hazelnut beer was good. I only wish I remembered what it was!

RANDY BYERS
Eastbound, 2003

From ***Alternative Pants*** (2011)
(an account of a trip to Europe –
and Canada – in 2010,
rather than Randy's TAFF trip)

Geri got me caught up on the latest news and gossip as we drove the night highway. At her house in Toad Woods she settled me into a recliner in the living room, put a bottle of Smuttynose Pumpkin Ale in my hand, turned out the lights and turned on the stars. She'd picked up a Laser Stars Projector, which projects green pin points of light against a cloudy blue background that looks uncannily like a star field. Geri always has the best toys! She said that if we could fit it in the car, it was coming with us to SFContario. …

We had spent some time earlier in the day getting the room ready for the All Worldcons All the Time Beer Tasting party, but it was now time to really get serious. … The organization for the beer tasting party was epic. We had done the best we could to get beers from all the cities represented by the Worldcons and Worldcon bids that had agreed to participate. We then organized all of these groups of beers in chronological order of when the Worldcons were held or were scheduled or bidding to be held, starting with the earliest one. (Geri later decided we should have started with the bids and gone backwards in time, partly because we didn't make it through all the beer/Worldcons, and one goal of the party was to let the upcoming Worldcons and bids promote themselves.) Furthermore, Pat [Virzi] had created poster-size handwritten lists of all the beer under their respective Worldcons in the

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RANDY BYERS *(continued)*

chronological order we would be opening the bottles. As part of the same process, I had put all the groups of bottles in that same order on the shelves we had built. We acquired ice for the cooler that Geri had brought from Toad Woods, and I started icing down the bottles we would be serving first.

… it was pretty dark in the room, where we had turned off most of the lights so the Laser Stars Projector could work its nebulous star-field magic in one corner of the room. It gave the party a nice air of poetic mystery. Geri is a fricking genius, I tell you!

The format of the beer tasting was that we would call out the name of the Worldcon, open the bottles of beer associated with it, then have people tell us which beer they wanted to try. We would pour a small sample of the beer into a small cup. If they wanted to try other beers currently open, they could come back with the cup. Typically we wouldn't finish all the bottles in a group, and we set them aside. People could ask for a sample of the beers that had been set aside as well, but they couldn't ask us to open bottles that hadn't been opened yet. There were a couple of other parties that night, and some people didn't like the fact that they only got a small taste of each of our beers, so they didn't stick around. There was also one group of young Torontans who loved beer and were ecstatic at the opportunity to try a bunch of beer they had never seen before. We had a few clunkers in the line-up (what's this, Wells Banana Bread Beer representing a British Worldcon? Can't get away from the stuff!), but mostly we had a lot of great craft beer. So this group stayed at our party almost the whole time and kept coming back for more, trying almost every bottle opened. Lots of other folks drifted between the parties, so there was an ebb and flow to ours as people came and went in waves.

Murray Moore started out as our pourer, but he left after an hour and I took over for the rest of the night, with Pat helping in various ways, as she always does. I can't remember when we shut down, but it was no earlier than 2 or 3 a.m. I had been sampling everything myself, starting with an amazing little bottle of 1987 vintage, 150th anniversary, Thomas Hardy Ale that Deb Geisler and Mike Benveniste had contributed to the party, which Geri and I tasted with Patrick [Nielsen Hayden] before anybody else showed up. Pure nectar! By the end of the party I wasn't feeling much pain, and I kept teasing a cute girl from Boston named Val about how she was drinking homeopathic quantities of beer. She kept telling me I was pouring too much, so I finally let her pour her own. Hard to believe that you can pour only two molecules of beer at a time, but she was capable of it, at least to my drunken eyes.

Good times. Long gone was the alienation I'd been feeling the night before. Geri's great party idea had played out beautifully, which it always seems to do. She's good at the whole party thing, and she had played the role of party host of honor to the hilt. We did some cleaning up after the last of our guests left, emptying bottles and clearing a path to the bathroom. It was time to turn the stars off.

JAMES BACON
Westbound, 2004

James is chairing Dublin 2019, the destination Worldcon for the 2019 race

From ***Worldconomicon*** (2005)

Peter [Weston] is a good sort and we get on very well. I had seen him at Albacon previously and had heard Tobes make mention of a room party that Peter had invited him to. It was good to meet Peter. He was surprised when I was announced as the TAFF winner that he didn't have a clue who I was; it's a large community, I suppose, but he was a bit miffed with himself as he felt he had let things slip. We made up for this

slippage by sipping beer and diet Pepsi. He told me his Rat Fan story for the first time at this stage.
['1st September. Wednesday. Noreascon 4, pre-con.']

… we went down to Tor Books to meet Moshe Feder, who was taking me out for a few beers over Brooklyn way, and to see a view of the bridge. I met Teresa and Patrick Nielsen Hayden, which was brill since I missed them the day previous. Moshe allowed me to steal some books! So I stole *Underland* by Mick Farren, which was excellent. In fairness it did have Nazi flying saucers from an Antarctic underground base, so maybe I am biased.

From here we went over to Brooklyn and Moshe suggested going to a pizza place, which sounded really good and now, since the conversation was turning good, an excellent idea.

Moshe took me to a real American bar and I enjoyed very engaging conversation about fandom, most of which is interesting to me because it is a very different viewpoint. … I imagine that some U.S. fans would find the likes of 'Aliens Stole My Handbag' and some of the other conventions I've been involved with horrendous and an enema to science fiction fandom.
['9th September. Thursday. New York.']

I dump the bags, one of which I have broken – my Mum's to add worse luck – and I then sit at the bar and buy a beer. I make some phone calls, and all seems better. Ted [White] is already aware of my [lack of hire car] situation, and then I speak to Ted myself and agree to meet him here later.

I sit alone. Soon, oh maybe about 30 seconds later, the barman introduces me to two local schoolteachers, who are having their Friday afternoon beer, as they seem to want to know about 'English' beers, allegedly. I chat, and the two are joined by two more, and then most of the rest abandon their table and come over and join our circle. They are impressed with my knowledge of almost everything, which is concerning as I know fuck all. As the evening goes by, some depart to their homes.

After a while Ted arrives, and I greet him. We decide to head back to his place, and I say goodbye to the teachers. They ask about my friend and I tell them, while Ted is struggling with my bag, that he is a renowned SF author and editor of both books and, more importantly, magazines like *Heavy Metal*. They look on in awe. Of course in France heavy metal is known as métal hurlant. They are in wonderment.
['10th September. Friday. New York to Washington: Trousercon.']

SUZANNE TOMPKINS
Eastbound, 2005

From ***Jerry's Suzle's 2005 TAFF Trip Report***
by Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins (2009)

Jerry: The Fan Lounge, along with the meeting rooms one either side, were in the lower level of the Moat House (the Argyll Rooms), just off a small lobby. The lobby doubled as a snack bar, which in Britain means it serves not only food but also drink – strong drink. Over the weekend I had beer, whiskey and liqueur (Glayva, I think) there. The beer was special. The convention had arranged with

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SUZANNE TOMPKINS *(continued)*

a Glasgow brewery to bring in barrels of Real Ale. They had half a dozen different varieties from pale ale to thick, dark stout. (I fell in love with the Red Middy.)

Suzle: Actually, this entire Moat House fan area was really a small con within Worldcon, deftly run by the Plokta cabal and friends. With the large lobby bar/lounge, two meeting rooms and fan lounge to boot, one could just stay there and attend a great con if only the entire rest of the Worldcon weren't just next-door at the S.E.C.C. This was quite the best place to hang out, find friends and not-yet-known-to-us fans, and I decided right away that this was where I should spend my time as the "TAFF Delegate." While I was not as successful as I'd have liked at meeting new folks during the con, we did find old friends there, and one of my favorite bits of the trip was lounging about for a while with Dave Langford and Greg Pickersgill that first afternoon of the con, sharing some of that very good beer.

CHRIS GARCIA
Eastbound, 2008

Chris has nominated Sarah Gulde for the 2019 race

From ***Rockets Across The Waters*** (2008)

This was the day of Mexican food. It's as simple as that. I'd often heard stories from the returning wounded of Mexican food as it existed in the U.K., but seldom did I believe. In fact, I largely did not believe the tales I was told. Tacos made of meat that had been stewed with beer. The use of pancakes instead of tortillas. The failure to recognize that the enchilada and the burrito are significantly different sorts of beasts. This was an important day, my friend. This was the day when I found out if the truth was THE TRUTH.

… Mark [Plummer] had wanted to take me to El Sombrero, a place with a great name, but alas, they were not open on Sunday. Go figure. The place we did come to had a real TGIFridays vibe, which made me think I was in for a disaster that would make for good storytelling when I got back to lunch at work in a couple of weeks. … The place had some real-looking memorabilia on the walls, including several sombreros. Maybe not enough, but it was a start. There was no Virgin Mary altar, which is a good way to judge where to eat in California. Find the Mary and you've found authentico. … This was a strange place. They put a hyphen in chimichangas: chimi-changas. Strange. They described tortillas as tortilla pancakes. Very strange. They had no burrito on the menu. That one got me the most. We went around and picked our appetizers and mains and that was good stuff. I had a nacho and beer meat chili (though they spelled it chilli, which was weird) for starters followed by the chicken enchilada.

STEVE GREEN
Westbound, 2009

Steve has nominated Michael Lowrey for the 2019 race

From 'LV Confidential' (*BEAM #3*, ed. Nic Farey)

I woke to a gentle but insistent rapping on my bedroom door, opening my eyes in time to see a slice of daylight frame Nic Farey's leering visage: 'Coffee, tea... or hair of the dog?'

This was my first full day in Las Vegas and I had a sneaking suspicion opening it with alcohol wouldn't be the wisest move. Best leave that to the second drink. Better still, leave both for a couple of hours and catch up on my sleep: three weeks and five cities into my TAFF trip, I was beginning to feel more than a little burned out even before Bobbie Farey and I decided to chat until 6 in the a.m.

I'd flown in from San Francisco the previous morning, the first eastward stage of my tour. As Nic drove me back to his and Bobbie's place in Cape Cod Drive, I mentioned the massive billboard advertising machine guns which had been the second thing I'd spotted after my arrival at McCarran International (the first, appropriately, was a row of *Star Wars*-themed one-armed bandits); he recalled a store in Edgewater, Maryland, which bore the simple banner Liquor Bait Ammo (I imagined a typical conversation: 'Hey, Earl, wanna get drunk and shoot some fish?').

Cape Cod Drive is located in the Sunrise Manor neighbourhood of Clark County, on the eastern side of Las Vegas. Apparently, it's close to a geological fault line named for the nearby Frenchman Mountain, but – like my stay in California – this section of my journey would thankfully remain free of seismic shifts.

In more welcome proximity – just a couple of blocks away – was the Aces & Ales pub on South Nellis Boulevard, formerly part of a chain but bought out by partners Ryan Johnson and Keri Kelli earlier that year to become an oasis for fans of 'craft beers'. I'd barely dropped off my luggage before Nic was suggesting he and I go show the locals how pool should really be played, which immediately indicated he had no conception of just how inept I am at any game involving balls, sticks, racquets or, to be frank, scoring.

I was far more in my element downing a bottle of Rogue Hazelnut Brown (6.2%) and chatting with Lindsay, one of the two charming barstaff on duty. Before too long, I'd switched to the Lost Coast Brewery's 8-Ball Stout (6.3%), Nic was off demonstrating his skills with a cue and I was learning from Bobbie how she and Ann bonded over a lengthy chat one Novacon. I never knew: even now, my wife continues to surprise me. By the time Nic returned from his match, Bobbie was telling me about her ambitions to write a series of children's detective stories featuring 'The Cranberry Twins', I'd worked my way up to Arrogant Bastard (one of the pub's most popular brews and a hefty 7.1%) and it was time for the three of us to head into Glitter Central.

ANNE & BRIAN GRAY
Eastbound, 2010

From "Anne and Brian Trip Through Corflu" by Brian with interjections from Anne (*Argentus* #10, ed. Steven H. Silver, 2010)

With the important work of choosing a Guest of Honor completed (all due congratulations to Mme. Mary Kay Kare, randomly selected with utmost care from a list of attendees dumped in the bottom of one of those very stately hats), the con began in earnest, demonstrated by almost everyone decamping to The Bar to partake in the special con ale (a kindred spirit to which we would find at Eastercon in two weeks).

… As you may have noticed in the report to date, I make specific mention of the non-mythical but yet-nebulous location "The Bar" with some frequency and import. I admit, I was gathering a significant pile of evidence to advance a new hypothesis: that most English conventioneering takes place (*drum roll please*) in The Bar. Yes, a shocking and groundbreaking advance in the philosophy of modern fandom, I know. I cannot truly take credit for it, as there is evidence that this trend has been observed by BritFandom before, but simply not widely reported. Luckily, I had Eastercon Odyssey ahead of me during which to gather more data.

(Anne notes that this information is, in fact, recorded deep in the arcane vaults of SMOFdom, as this significantly affects how con-runners negotiate with the hosting hotels. At British conventions, attendees may carry their drinks into con panels, as they were purchased exclusively at the hotel bar at a negotiated price and not provided by the con-supplied con-suite. Sneaky SMOFs.)

CANADIAN MOTHERS AND THEIR SONS
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

Back in the 1980s, long before the craft beer explosion in America, the good beer came from Canada. Brador was my first fave; it was *so* much better than the Pabst Blue Ribbon that I drank otherwise. But Brador was hard to come by, and O'Keefe's Extra Old Stock soon replaced it in my affections. Every time I drove up to Winnipeg, I stopped at the beer store on the way into town to pick up a 12-pack or two of O'Keefe's, then usually another to bring back to the States on my way home.

Knowing this, my friend Don Bindas gave me a framed O'Keefe's poster as a Christmas present in 1986. His mother was dubious, explaining to him, "But she's a girl; she won't want that." Don told her I loved O'Keefe's, and would like the poster. "Are you *sure*?" she asked. Yes, he was sure. His mother pushed on, suggesting that he at least pick out a second, more appropriate gift since she was certain I'd be bewildered at best by the heroic image of a bottle of beer. This Canadian mother was worried her still-unmarried son would never find true love if he kept treating women the same as his male friends.

Maybe that's why I've always had a fondness for Canadian men.

I loved the poster. Don has been happily married for decades. And there's now an abundance of fabulous beer readily available throughout the United States. That doesn't stop me from enjoying a bottle or two of Unibroue when the opportunity arises.

JOHN COXON
Westbound, 2011

From 'Awesome in Canada, Awesome All The Time' (*Banana Wings* #48, ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 2011)

The First Thursday meeting is held in what is billed as an 'English Pub', the Foxes Den[1]. Now, being English and also being a rather big fan of pubs, I was a little curious to know what Canada considers the English pub to be. It turns out that the answer is actually pretty close to the reality of an English chain pub, which I suppose is technically still an English pub, so they get marks on that front. The number of mirrors on the wall with Guinness ads on the front was also comforting, and the burger I ordered tasted rather nicely of burger, so I was, broadly speaking, feeling happy and at home.

The point at which they rather lost me is conveyed in what I can tell will become one of my oft-used anecdotes from the trip: I finished my first beer, a microbrew from somewhere in the area, and the waitress asked whether I'd like another beer. 'Sure,' I said, before realising I couldn't see a menu. I decided, therefore, to say, 'I like beer, and I'm new around here; surprise me!' She brought back a pint of Guinness: I confess, this was a surprise – but not necessarily for the right reasons.

[1] Not to be confused with the male strip club, which is called the Foxxes Den and comes up in a Google search for 'Foxes Den Toronto'. Although now I'm aware that there is one of those, I am somewhat disappointed I didn't go to both and do a sort of 'spot the difference' feature on the two!

From 'John Coxon Does Seattle'
(*Chunga* #18, ed. Andy Hooper,
Randy Byers & carl juarez, 2011)

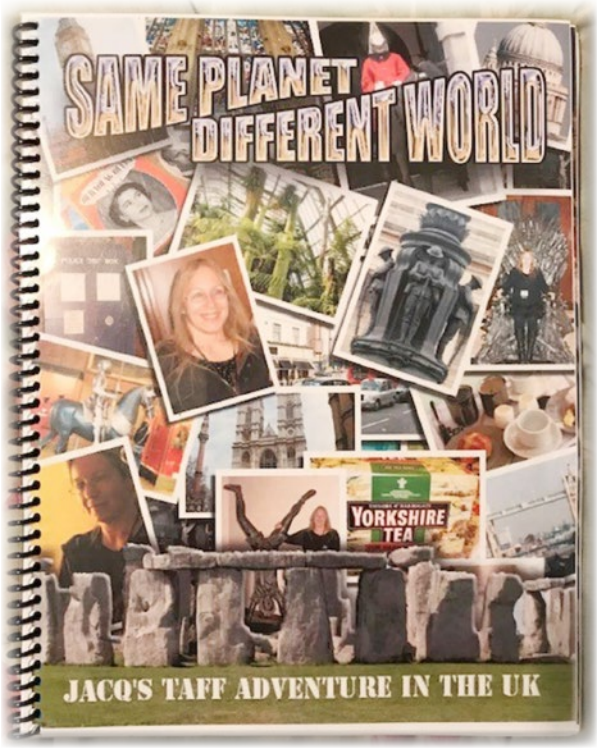
I had timed my visit to Seattle well, since I successfully managed to intersect with a pub meeting whilst I was there, and I feel that's a very important fixture of any local fan group. Even better was the fact that, it being Seattle, it felt as much like an English pub as anywhere in America can, so it was kinda nice to sit down and enjoy it; the only difference between it and a British pub meeting was that it started in the mid-afternoon and finished in the early evening (this suited me down to the ground, due to being tired and needing to pack and whatnot).The beer was good and it flowed freely; nobody had told the barmaid that we were coming, or that we'd be there in such large numbers, but she managed with aplomb and friendliness, which was awesome of her. There were various snacks on the table, since the bar in question (the Pig and Whistle) offered cheap eats at happy hour and a kind soul had decided to order them for the table. They were awesome, and I wound up having a few beers and a sandwich amongst the fantastic conversation and company that were available. I remember a couple of fairly long conversations, including a very engaging one with John D. Berry at the bar (I like being at the bar).

From 'An Englishman at an
American Worldcon (part 2)'
(*Science Fiction/San Francisco* #122,
ed. Jean Martin & España Sheriff, 2011)

The real highlight of the [Hugo losers] party, though, came as it was winding down somewhat (or at least, that's how I remember it). I was chatting to the bartender, as I ordered another couple of drinks for me and Crystal [Huff], and I asked for a bottle of a San Francisco beer (Anchor Steam Beer, as I recall). I didn't quite have enough money for the round, so he let me off a few cents, which I appreciated. As he handed it over, he made some comment about how he didn't like it all that much. I replied by saying that it wasn't the best beer in the world, but you can't get real English ales in the U.S., and expected that to be the end of the discussion.

However, he responded by agreeing with me (which I wasn't expecting, given the American accent) and told me that he'd spent a bit of time in Leicester, and he'd had a good beer there called Tiger from a brewery called Everards. I responded, slightly bewildered, saying that I had just graduated from the University of Leicester and that I knew both the brewery and beer well; in fact, it's one of my favourite examples of a proper bitter. His face lit up, and he said, 'We used to drink at a pretty weird pub just near the university. I think it was called the Old Horse?' The Old Horse is my local.

Now, this may not apply in the States – it might be a British thing, I don't know. But when you meet a man who shares your local (and by 'local' we mean 'favourite pub'), that practically makes you family. When it's five thousand miles from home and you can't find a decent ale to save your life, that makes that bond a little stronger. Finding out that he used to frequent the same fast food place as me after having nights out in the Horse sealed the deal, and pretty soon I was arranging a whip round the inhabitants of the bar to give the bloke a tip that was worth more than the drinks order I'd just placed.



JACQ MONAHAN
Eastbound, 2012

Jacq has nominated Teresa Cochran for the 2019 race

From ***Same Planet, Different World*** (2017)

As the day slowly faded into dusk, we arrived at a pub with the elegant name of Water Rats, to a performance by the Donutsh, featuring Sandra Bond, one of my nominators. I am a teetotaler who can tolerate alcohol on a limited basis so the first half of my trip was spent ordering club soda or seltzer water, much to the bemused or bewildered reactions of my hosts.

Ever polite, none of them burst into laughter; they didn't have to. David [Hodson] didn't even think there'd be a charge for such a non-drink, the poor dear. There was a charge all right but the sentiments that accompanied it were more on the order of what a waste or are you daft? Or how did we lose the colonies to these twits? Nevertheless, I remained alcohol-free until Birmingham.
['I See London']

Even at a pub full of foaming pints I wanted tea, and could have had it but for a misunderstanding that led instead to the discovery of… cider. Cue angelic music and heavenly rays descending on a filled half-pint glass of the stuff. I insisted on calling it hard cider as Americans will, and need to for differentiation from the stuff children can swallow.

Steve reminded me each time that there was "no such thing as hard cider; there is only cider." Like my own personal Yoda, Mr. Green was telling me his version of "Do or do not. There is no try." The (British) Empire Strikes Back. In fact, the silliest question I ever asked Steve in Birmingham was if he had a pint glass, a question that was repeated scores of decibels louder than it was asked by my dear host. … I bonded with this group immediately and envied Steve the chance to gather with them so frequently.
['Birmingham on Wry']

The first day of the con was also a First Thursday and time for the Tun, an informal meeting and decades-long tradition now held in the lower level of the Melton Mowbray in London. The expansive room took up the entire floor. Tun: a large cask for holding liquids, especially wine, ale, or beer; or, in this case, a large room for holding fans trying to hold their liquids, especially wine, ale, or beer.

… I met the current TAFF administrator, John Coxon, and promptly gained 100 pounds – a gift from the fan fund – then lost another 30 buying everyone within earshot a drink. A scribbled drink order note that made it back home with me from that night said, simply, "Stella, Stella, Lowenbrau" like something a defiant, ripped T-shirted Stanley Kowalski would scream on a dark night somewhere in New Orleans. …

I confidently ordered a cider that I could not finish …
['Eastercon – Olympus 2012']

JIM MOWATT
Westbound, 2013

From ***Wherever I Lay My Hat*** (2018)

Catherine [Crockett] threw me out of the car and went off to do a little light parking. I wandered in [to The Only Cafe], sat down, and got out my ancient technology (pen and paper) to do some note taking. It looked a little odd to me. There was much evidence of coffee but I saw no beer. Now I'm not adverse to coffee, but I was hoping for beer. Maybe there would be beer later, or perhaps there was a secret stash of beer under the counter. I would leave myself in the lap of the hosts and see what transpired. Catherine emerged sometime later from the back of the room. How did she do this? I would have seen her come through the door. 'I have found them,' she exclaimed. 'They are in the beer bit.' Through the black curtain we went, and there indeed was 'the beer bit'. This was an exact copy of the other side of the curtain but this room had a bar festooned with beer possibilities. I liked this bit. Of course we then realised that there were far too many of us to find a table that would fit us in this side of the café, and so did some major manoeuvring of furniture and colonised a chunk of the coffee section.

… I drank many fine beers that evening. There were IPAs and Pale Ales, most of which were very tasty indeed. I had been assured that there were now many excellent craft beers on the North American continent, but somehow hadn't quite believed it.
['Toronto']

Almost everything on the menu has cheese on it. There's cheese, cheese, cheese and salad or cheese, cheese, cheese, cheese and fish. I go for cheese, cheese and meatloaf which doesn't have too much cheese on it (I'm not allergic to it or anything; I just don't like cheese. I reckon it tastes far too yellow). There's beer and I order an IPA. Randy [Byers] goes for the local favourite, Manny's. I am concerned when his beer arrives and urge him to send it back. It's a diabolical cloudy thing that will surely give him the runs. He assures me that this perception is a British thing and that cloudy beer is drunk by many here with only rare outbreaks of runny tummy. He drinks it all and seems okay so I order that one next time. The IPA I drank first was waaaay too hoppy for my tastes; Manny's is much more acceptable.
['Seattle']

Carrie and I were starting to get hungry now, so our kindly hosts [Jacq Monahan and John Wesley Hardin] detoured to find a town that contained food and beer. This was Boulder City, where the Boulder Dam Brewing Company supplied us with some fine ales. They were very proud of their ales and talked at length about the joy that these glasses of liquid would bring us. What they brought Carrie at first was a large degree of consternation. The glasses looked frozen and were ice cold to the touch. They had been kept in the fridge which further chilled the beer to a considerable degree. This seemed anathema to real ale drinkers such as ourselves, as it is an article of faith that beer should be served at a high enough temperature that you can actually taste it. Maybe this is why very hoppy beers seem to have become so popular throughout the United States; the beer can be served cold and the hops can still be tasted even at very low temperatures.
['Las Vegas']

CURT PHILLIPS
Eastbound, 2014

From "There Was a Tear, and
Some Beer, in Reading"
(*Chunga* #24, ed. Andy Hooper,
Randy Byers & carl juarez, 2016)

I wound up spending a lot of time with fans in pubs during those two weeks, and buying the TAFF delegate a drink or a meal seemed to be the thing to do. I had to actually insist on stepping in to buy a group of fans a round of drinks one afternoon after they'd all taken turns buying rounds themselves. And I could – and probably will – write a whole separate article on drinking in England. You see, I don't drink, usually. Just don't like the taste of beer and never have developed the habit of drinking it in America. But in England one doesn't generally go out to a restaurant, one goes out to a pub, and pubs mean drinking. Well, I didn't have to worry about driving anywhere, so I determined to try a taste of a tall glass of beer that was placed in front of me on my second day in Reading. You know what? I rather liked it. Beer in England is a far superior thing when compared to that found in America. The taste just isn't even in the same league, and I can't understand why American beer brewers can't be bothered to travel to England to learn how to do it properly. Money – no doubt – is at the heart of it.

JOHN PURCELL
Eastbound, 2017

From "I See London"
(*Banana Wings* #69,
ed. Claire Brialey &
Mark Plummer, 2018)

That night's London TAFF meet-up, in the upper room of the Lyceum Tavern on The Strand, was well attended. … The meet-up very quickly turned into a large-scale fannish variant of musical chairs as people shifted from table to table every ten to fifteen minutes. Actually, this is a great idea because it gives everyone a chance to sit next to the TAFF delegate and converse. It took me a while, but eventually I began to remember other people's names to match their faces. … The drinks kept coming and the conversations kept going as people kept shifting from table to table, and going to the bar after checking for other necessary refills. The meet-up was loud, busy, funny, and delightful, making time fly. The fannish rabble was eventually chased out at 10 p.m. and everybody headed homeward. All in all, Thursday had been a very emotional day, but so worth it. The fan meet-up at the Lyceum was the perfect cap off; a warm glow infused us during the ride back to Croydon.

JOHAN ANGLEMARK
Westbound, 2018

From *Westward Hi!*,
Johan's blog of his trip

In the evening, there was a pub meeting at The Only Cafe, which proved to be a great little place with an extensive selection of craft beers on tap, even though it was hard to get them to grasp the idea of a small beer; neither Peter Watts nor I succeeded. … there was a number of Toronto fans, both people I have met before and people I got the opportunity to meet for the first time yesterday.

… we took the subway (mostly) to the Black Creek Pioneer Village, which is an open air heritage museum of English Canada in the 1850s. We sampled a few beers from their brewery, operated on 19th century principles, and looked at the houses they had gathered there. A very Skansen-like experience for a Swede. My favourite was the printshop.

TERESA COCHRAN
TAFF **candidate, 2019**

From *BEAM* #3 (ed. Nic Farey);
this piece is also reprinted
in the collection
Tee Is For TAFFzine

No Fake Beer For Me

When I was quite a small child, my mother would sometimes give me a taste of her beer-and-tomato-juice concoction, hoping I wouldn't like it. I didn't. (I did like coffee from the time I was barely walking, but that's another story.) I remember throwing beer cans into the trash and hating the stale smell of commercial American beer remnants that seeped out of the cans.

I didn't really start drinking in earnest till I was fully in my twenties. I made a comment to someone while I was living in Berkeley, Calif. about hating beer. The reply, which I continued to hear a number of times from various friends, was: "Oh, well, you haven't tried real beer, then." I didn't believe them for months, at least, but finally decided to try stout in an Irish pub. No, I don't mess around when I decide to do something. I took one sip and my whole beer-drinking attitude changed.

In Berkeley, I used to walk to a wonderful little cafe/pub, which was actually in the bordering town of Albany, on Solano Avenue, called Schmidt's Tobacco and Trading Company. It is laid out like an old house, and the proprietor, John, sells coffee drinks, beer, wine, port, sherry, and rolling and pipe tobacco. (This is the place I learned to smoke a pipe, too.) The Pub, as the regulars call it, would be a wonderfully fannish place. The regulars are pretty much all eccentric in some way or other. There's the man who tap-dances idly while waiting in line, the avid chess-players, and the impromptu lending library with many back issues of SF magazines. There used to be a regular there who had a bookstore across the street, and would tell folks that he'd be over at the Pub if they wanted to buy something. He died at one of the infrequent parties that were held there. He was dancing with a young lady and dropped on the spot with a heart attack. His hat stayed in the Pub in a place of honor for years afterward. It may still be there.

The Pub was the place that nurtured me while I learned the vices of smoking and drinking. In this context, I got to try Old Peculier, Belgian beers (which remain my favorites to this day), various cigars, sherry and port (which I detest), and red wine (right up there with a good chewable beer for me). In the Eighties, microbrews were becoming a fad. I prayed to Bacchus that they would not go away like so many fads, because I loved them. Berkeley has several, including Bison and Pyramid. Bison has a seasonal double-chocolate stout that is to die for. Pyramid has apricot and raspberry ales, which are quite pleasant, unless you get hung over drinking them. Oofff. Yes, yes, I found out the hard way. In Southern Nevada, there are some mid-level regional breweries that haven't impressed me much, mostly because I like very dark beer, and if it has hops in it, it needs a corresponding amount of malts to make me happy. Some of the "dark lagers" are acceptable. They look and taste more like porters than lagers. The Boulder City Brewing Company outside of Vegas is quite decent, though. Sometimes James and I will actually take a bus out there and have a few.

I've definitely come a long way from my beer-hating days. The neat thing about liking the beers I like is that none of my friends seem indifferent to them. I get two kinds of responses: "Yummy!" or "You like that stuff?" I either get to share it with others who really appreciate them, or I don't have to worry about the nay-sayers drinking all my beer. So here's a toast to good toasty, malty beer, or whatever you may be drinking. Cheers!

SARAH GULDE
TAFF candidate, 2019

Hi! My name is Sarah Gulde, I'm from Portland, Oregon, and I'm running to be the TAFF delegate to Dublin 2019. I have something terrible to tell you: I had to mostly give up beer a few years ago. But if you ever met Cranky Sarah after my blood sugar crashed from the maltose, you'd thank me!

I do make a few exceptions, though. One is for pumpkin beers in the fall. I usually find myself in Seattle once or twice that time of year, and I try to make time to visit one of the Elysian locations. They are quite wonderful about offering 4 oz pours, so you can try several of their pumpkin offerings! I don't think I've had any I didn't like, although their Imperial Pumpkin Ale is both a favorite and one I can get my hands on in Portland. You can probably get their Night Owl in other parts of the U.S., as it seems to be the most popular and it's also terrific.

The big exception, though, is Star Trek beers! I once drove all the way to Federal Way, WA because it was the last place in the Pacific Northwest I could buy Klingon Warnog. If you've never tried it, it's a delicious Roggen Dunkel Ale with a strong dose of cloves. Exactly what you'd expect a Klingon to drink before battle!

Even the packaging is impressive. I had tried one at the Raygun Lounge, a Seattle gaming pub, so I knew what to look for. Even so, it took a while to find because it was hiding on the "Last Call" shelf. There were five four-packs left and I'm so glad I bought them all because I haven't seen it anywhere since! (I still have a few in the fridge if you want to try one.)

The other Star Trek beer I really like is Profit Motive, which was brewed for the 25th anniversary of *Deep Space Nine* last year. (My endorsement of this beer has nothing to do with *DS9* being my favorite Trek. NOTHING.) It's a golden ale, my second favorite kind of beer after pumpkin, and it's wonderfully sweet and smooth. And although it's a "hopped up golden ale," it isn't super hoppy like an IPA. And I love the station on the label! It would be perfect to order at Quark's.

The only Star Trek beer I've had so far that I didn't care for was Symbiosis, an American Pale Wheat Ale brewed for the 30th anniversary of *The Next Generation* in 2017. It was pretty flat and boring. It's no longer being brewed but don't worry, you didn't miss anything.

If I win the TAFF race, I'm really looking forward to trying Guinness at the source! Maybe you'll try it with me?

MICHAEL LOWREY
TAFF candidate, 2019

"I'm From Milwaukee, and I Ought to Know!"[2]

In its heyday, Milwaukee was America's Brew City, Beertown, Brewtown, etc.: for a good chunk of the 20th century, most of the beer made in the U.S. was the lagers brewed by Schlitz, Pabst, Miller or Blatz, based somewhere between two blocks and three miles from my house. I live in the neighborhood called Brewer's Hill, up the street from the old Schlitz plant, one door off a street formerly named Beers Street. I've been to more than one baseball game at Miller Park (that's Miller as in Miller Brewing Company) and cheered on our Milwaukee Brewers. I belong to the Brewery Credit Union, used to work in an office in the old Schlitz Bottle House, and one of my three unions (UAW) includes Brewery Workers Local 9.

So I've gotta have some good beer stories, right?

Actually, no. I hate the stuff.

I first tasted beer (well, technically it was cold duck) at the age of eight or so, when I grabbed an unlabelled bottle left over from a grown-up party the night before, thinking it was grape juice. I spewed it out: "Who drinks this crap?" It was bitter, tasted of rot, and had the nasty overtone I would learn over my next two decades to identify as alcohol.

I come from a working-class childhood, and beer was omnipresent among adults and my peers, many of whom were glad to share and some of whom genuinely wanted to share one of life's pleasures with me, if they could just figure out how.

But my opinion has never changed. The finest wines and the cheapest plonk? Spoiled fruit juice, with that nasty alcohol taint. Brandy, whiskey, rum, gin: variations on lab chemicals, lighter fluid and embalming fluid, some more caustic than others. Liqueurs, sake, perry, mead, hard ciders? Spoiled foodstuffs, haunted by that same alcohol taint.

And beers: lagers, stouts, porters, ales, malts, near-beers and all the variations: they all taste like pond water to me, with various combinations of rotting vegetation and bitter herbs in the mix. Sorry, I'm just Mother Nature's natural-born teetotaler.

Now mind you, I *want* to like beer. Here in Milwaukee, it's practically a patriotic duty. Beer has that folksy proletarian tradition as the people's choice, what regular guys and their regular gals drink (yes, my gal Cicatrice likes beer fine, as it happens). It's the drink of the working stiff, not management; I can't count the number of union gatherings I've been in where I was the only one at the bar or the table without a beer in front of me. It has all the good folk (and filk) songs, and the clever quotes from folks like Ben Franklin. I can even imagine what kind of beer I'd *like* to like: something quirky, dark and complex but substantial, like a Guinness ad if not a modern mass-produced Guinness. That's the kind of root beers I like, and I'll guzzle those by the gallon. But whatever my friends offer me (and some have been trying for forty-mumble years to find something alcoholic Mike will drink; you'd be amazed at the weird stuff fandom can come up with), my tastebuds still shout, "Who drinks this crap?"

So, if you run into Orange Mike at a con, here in the States or on the other side of The Water, don't offer me a Leopard Lager, a Shires Ale, a Shotz beer (yeah, I know where in Milwaukee the Shotz plant was), or even a Romulan ale.

But I'll always welcome an Irn Bru, especially if it's your shout.

[2] This was the slogan of a 1950s ad campaign by Valentin Blatz Brewing. Slick stars of stage, screen and concert hall, race car drivers, business executives, even housewives, waved a foamy glass of Blatz, and explained that just as Milwaukee beer was of course the finest produced in America, Blatz in turn was "Milwaukee's finest beer."

MY PLACE
by Geri Sullivan (TAFF candidate, 2019)

This is an update of a piece originally published as part of Geri's booklet accompanying her beer tasting at Corflu 35 (2018) in memory of Randy Byers

Back when I lived at Toad Hall in Minneapolis, there was a neighborhood bar all of a tenth of a mile away. I never stepped inside.

I'd go to bars to hear bands I knew, especially bands that friends formed. There was always beer in my fridge, but I rarely drank it other than when there was a party going on. Okay, there were a lot of parties, but still….

So when I moved to Massachusetts in 2004, it's no surprise that I didn't become a regular at Tedore's, the bar in Wales known for having good pizza. Likewise, I never went into the Wales Country Lounge until Jack Targonski expressed interest while visiting.

You know you live in a small town when one of the two bars goes out of business. Tedore's did that more than ten years ago. The Wales Country Lounge is now the Wales Irish Pub. I've been a half-dozen times or so, though mostly for wakes, community fundraisers, and the like.

Given my history, you'll understand why I'm more than a tad bewildered (though thoroughly happy) that in the process of picking up beers for a tasting at Corflu, I came to have a place I've never had before, a place I never knew I wanted or was looking for.

Tree House is my place.

It's odd. I've known about Tree House ever since June 2011, when three friends were brewing beer in Brimfield when a tornado blew through town. Tree House opened for business a year later. In 2014 they moved to Monson, just 4.2 miles from my home at Toad Woods. I never went. I'd check their On-Tap webpage from time to time, but never chanced on a day when they were offering one of their darker brews. My loss.

In April 2017, my friend Local Susan[3] took me to Westview Farm Creamery for ice cream and to feed the goats. Westview is just a half-mile from the Monson Tree House location; we passed it on the way.

Local Susan doesn't drink, but she'd been to Tree House to get beer for her son-in-law, Chad. She had a good supply on hand and gave me a dozen cans to share with friends coming to Balticon when I was Fan Guest of Honor there. It was ever so kind of her, and Jim Mann particularly liked the hazy juice bombs Tree House is so well known for. I started watching the On-Tap page a bit more closely over the summer, but still missed their darker offerings.

Based on Jim's enjoyment of the brews I brought to Balticon, he and Laurie scheduled an overnight at Toad Woods in September. Tree House had moved to their new brewery in Charleton by then and I met the Manns there. They'd just made their way through the line and were picking up their pours when I arrived. I didn't buy anything that day – no dark beers in cans and my work schedule was such that even a pour wasn't a good idea. I enjoyed a sip of Laurie's, and enjoyed the Tree House location even more. We were outdoors under the pavilion on a beautiful fall day. What a comfortably glorious place!

The rest of the fall sped by and it took a surprise from the Croydon Fishlifters combined with a favor for Jim to finally introduce me to the full Tree House experience. After Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey contributed a selection of

3 I refer to Susan Hubbell as Local Susan to differentiate her from Susan Levy Haskell, who has been my "default" Susan for 30 years or thereabouts. It's still weird having two default Susans in my life. Totally wonderful, too.

Oregon beers to the Thanksgiving Dinner I organized for Randy Byers' family, they had Tree House send me a gift card along with a note that I also deserved some beer for my efforts. Jim asked if I could pick up some cans for him in anticipation of seeing each other at Smofcon. That's how it came to be that I stopped at Tree House on Wednesday, November 29, 2017.

I used Claire and Mark's gift card for my first pour as well as a few cans to share with friends at Smofcon. I chose Old Man, an ESB. It was only fitting, given the source of the gift card. (Croydon, of course; I have yet to think of that Mark as an old man.) Oh, yes, I liked it, indeed.

While sipping away, I struck up a conversation with a guy sitting across the long, indoor picnic table from me. He was from Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts for business. "How did you hear about Tree House?" I asked.

He looked at me as if I were from another planet, then paused before incredulously explaining, "Everyone who is serious about beer knows about Tree House."

Oh. My neo stripes were not just showing, they were flashing neon bright. Thankfully, I soon redeemed myself by knowledgeably holding up my end of the conversation as we continued talking about various beers we each favored, the usefulness of Beer Advocate, and similar subjects. He soon knew I wasn't a bumbling tourist; I was someone who recognizes and appreciates a good beer. I was just new to Tree House.

That first experience illuminated one of the three key factors that have since turned Tree House into my place: it's immensely easy to fall into conversation with strangers there. The common love of beer that draws us there provides the starting point. Dozens of conversations since have proven that, while also demonstrating that it doesn't limit us. We go on to talk about anything and everything. Beer and brewery recommendations, yes, but also where we live, places we've been, places we hope to go, our families, pets, jobs, and interests.

In my experience, Tree House is simply filled with friendly people. Yes, the male-to-female ratio distinctly leans male and some of those men fall into what I think of as "beer bros," but the overwhelming majority of men are as happy to talk with comfort, interest, and respect with women they meet at the brewery as they are with any friends they came with. It adds a lot to the welcoming vibe of the place.

That vibe is set by the entire Tree House crew. Long before I knew anyone working there, I was struck by how genuinely happy they were even after dealing with a long day of non-stop customers who had each been standing in line for an hour or more. How relaxed they are as they handle each transaction with efficiency and grace. It's a hard balance to strike, and Tree House gets it right time and time again.

In addition to my fellow customers and the outstanding staff, I love Tree House for the beer. It took the tasting at Corflu to discover that I actually like a few of the New England hazy IPAs they're so well-known for. But their dark beers? OMG, their dark beers. Especially their stouts. On December 23, 2017, I introduced Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden and Lydy Nickerson to Saturday pours at Tree House. Hold Onto Sunshine and Somewhere, Something Incredible is Waiting to Be Known were both on the draft list and I enjoyed sharing sips of each as well as the two lighter brews we chose.

continued >

MY PLACE *(continued)*

Earlier that week, I'd scored three bottles of the Christmas 2017 release of Double Shot. I enjoyed serving them at Toad Woods Christmas and was happy to take the last bottle to Middleton for New Year's. Yum. In January, Moment of Clarity joined the draft list and I was completely hooked. Moment of Clarity came as a surprise. It's so much a dessert stout that dropping a scoop of ice cream into a pint would seem totally normal and fitting. Moment of Clarity stretched my taste in stouts in a new direction; I was thrilled when they brewed another batch and canned it in early summer.

I set out for Tree House a few times in January and February, picking up cans to share with friends at Boskone. I was waiting for Corflu to draw nearer before stocking up on fresh beers for the tasting.

In early March, I wore a Tree House hoodie when I joined Randy Byers' family at La Push. I enjoyed talking with Randy's nephew Cody about Tree House, and about Block 15, the microbrewery Cody works at in Corvallis, Oregon. On that Saturday afternoon, Cody opened a bottle of Figgy Pudding (Block 15's Christmas brew) after we spread Randy's ashes at First Beach. Cody told me how he'd dipped a moisture swab into Figgy Pudding when he visited Randy in the hospice, and how Randy sucked so hard on that swab, clearly enjoying every last drop. It was the last beer Randy tasted. I so wish he'd been there at Corflu 35. So said we all….

At the end of March, Susan Levy Haskell arrived after visiting her daughter Gavi in New Haven. As we discussed plans, I told her about Tree House and the Corflu beer tasting. It meant that on any given day I might need to fit in a trip to the brewery. Little did either of us know or expect that the following week, we'd make a point of going every single day they were open!

It started when I became aware Tree House had silently released Impermanence: a milk stout brewed with coffee, chocolate, and… maple syrup? Oh, yes, count me so there. I vowed to return every day until it was sold out. That took up Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Susan came along and bought most of two cases of other beers along with the daily allowance of Impermanence.

Susan thought we wouldn't need to go Friday; I said I'd wait to see what they released that day. We now both knew the way; either one of us could go on our own if the other wanted to stay at Toad Woods. And I'd just joined the information-rich Facebook group "Tree House Brew Co: Line Updates." Tens of thousands of Tree House fans use the group for updates on what's dropped and what's kicked as well as how busy Tree House is. Through the group, we tell each other how short or long the lines are from moment to moment as each day progresses.

Sure enough, Friday's drop instantly changed Susan's mind. Single Shot, brewed for the first time with Sumatra Mandheling. Another milk stout, this one focusing on a coffee that Fred A. Levy Haskell introduced me to back in the early 1980s when I first learned to drink coffee by slowly sipping small amounts of it while sitting on the blue sofa in his living room and talking, talking, talking with each other. After my enjoyment of the Christmas Double Shot, I was more than a tad excited at the chance to buy Single Shot.

I checked the Line Updates group just as we were setting out. OMG, there was a silent release of That's What She Said, *another* milk stout and one I already knew I love for its sheer smoothness. Two stouts in one day from this amazing but usually IPA-focused brewery!

Friday night, Susan said, "Tomorrow, I need to go down to the basement, and get my beer. And I need to go out to the garage, and get my beer. And I need to go to the refrigerator, and

get my beer. Because I'm leaving Sunday, and I *really* don't want to forget my beer." We went back Saturday for that day's allotment of the two stouts. We stayed to enjoy not just one but two pours, making a day of it. Food trucks come to the brewery on Saturdays, and there's live music in the afternoon. It was the perfect end to Susan's visit; she headed back to Minneapolis the next morning and mutual friends there enjoyed the Tree House beers she carried with her when she left Toad Woods.

There are so many more stories I want to share from that magical week, and from the weeks that followed. Staffers were getting to know my name, and vice versa: Sam, Lauren, Meg, and more. When customers ask to buy a case of glassware, their radar goes on alert. Is this someone looking to make a quick and tidy profit reselling it? When I asked for a case of tasting glasses, the clerk went to check with one of the more senior line workers. He came over, saw me, and immediately responded knowingly: "Oh, it's you. It's fine." Every visit adds to the story, strengthens the cloth of belonging we're all working together to weave. It's like the best of fandom in that regard.

Yes, the lines at Tree House can be ridiculously long. Even when they have eight or nine stations open rapidly filling orders, it's easy to spend an hour or more waiting to buy beer. One time I did so, it was to buy two cans of Very Hazy, the day's limit. And I didn't even like IPAs; those were so I could share them with my fellow Corfluvians. I did stay for a 12 ounce pour of Impermanence, so that day's trip wasn't all about immediate sacrifice for a later benefit. Only twice (so far) have I stood in any of the truly long lines, the ones where the wait is 1.5–2 hours. Heck, until they released King Julius the last week of April, I had yet to stand in a line stretching past the third light pole in the upper parking lot. Sometimes the line is over twice that long. Really.

But I've also arrived 25 minutes before closing, walked directly inside, stood behind a single customer, bought the beer I was there for, and been back out the door two minutes later. More than once. Thanks to the Facebook group, I judge line lengths and crowd trends from home and time my trips accordingly.

The thing about the line is that I *always* have interesting conversations with people standing nearby. I've learned about their favorite Tree House brews; noted the reverence and enthusiasm with which we all remembered Moment of Clarity; picked up a wealth of recommendations for other breweries worth exploring near and far; met and usually enjoyed the company of their dogs; learned about their jobs, families, friends, and grad school plans; shared information about the day's offerings beyond that found on Tree House's On-Tap page; done each other favors; and just plain shared the joy of the day, all while inching forward, sometimes with surprising and ever-so-welcome speed, other times not.

For the past six years, every time Tree House has increased capacity to meet demand, the demand has increased even more. They're riding a tiger by the tail, or as Kathy Mar's song goes, they're "drinking up the river before they drown." But they're doing so with care, grace, and style. I love Tree House for the beer, the people, and –

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MY PLACE *(continued)*

most of all – for the sensibilities seeing them through the multitude of challenges as they grow.

Co-founder and master brewer Nathan Lanier ended a 2016 interview published in Paste Magazine by saying, "To anyone reading, thank you for drinking our beer. Your support has enabled us to sustain a place of joy for many people, both in work and in life."

When I decided to bring their beers to share with friends at Corflu 35, I had no idea Tree House would turn into a place of joy for me, too.

I wondered what would happen after Corflu, when I no longer had the tasting to buy for. As it's turning out, Tree House is becoming more and more my place with every passing month. I helped them kick off June celebrations of their sixth anniversary by molding chocolate robots, dinosaurs, and stars for an all-staff treat and enjoyed all of the special pours left over from the Saturday evening anniversary parties they hosted. (I was among the 30,000+ entries they received for tickets, but not among the 600 lucky winners attending them.)

At the end of June, I took a cooler of Tree House beers to Joe Siclari & Edie Stern's annual summer party. In July, friends joined me under the Tree House pavilion for my Beatles Birthday birthday picnic. ("Will you still need me, will you still feed me...?")

There weren't any more weeks where I went to Tree House every day, but it was a rare week when I wasn't there at least once through the summer and fall. That led to knowing more and more staffers by name, and vice versa. First Kimmy and then Sam friended me on Facebook. Soon the whole Tree House staff was cheering me on as I went on my first job interview in 28 years and ended up landing a better position than the one I applied for. The job ran through the winter, affecting how often I could easily stop by. But that didn't stop me from keeping a close eye on the new line of dark beers Tree House is brewing these days. I Will Not Be Afraid leapt easily to my top three list when it came out in September; I've given up trying to rank them more specifically than that. A few weeks later, Nervous Energy made quite the impression.

As much as I like drinking Tree House beers, I like sharing them even more. So I bring a few cans and bottles to friends' homes, to dinners and parties. The Traveling TAFF Party with Treats hosted tastings at Boskone, and is doing the same at Heliosphere in Tarrytown, NY, in early April, and at Minicon in Minneapolis, MN, as the TAFF race closes Easter weekend. Then we'll do it again at Corflu in Rockville, MD, in early May. I welcome all opportunities to visit Tree House between now and then, and beyond!

MORE TAFF TRIP REPORT READING
Readily available TAFF trip reports and where to find them

Report	Ansible	Fanac	NA	CB
Ken Bulmer (westbound, 1955): *TAFF Tales* (1998)	✓			
Robert A. Madle (eastbound, 1957): *A Fake Fan in London* (1976)		✓		
Ron Bennett (westbound, 1958): *Colonial Excursion* (1961)		✓		
Don Ford (eastbound, 1960): *TAFF Baedecker* (1960/61)		✓		
Ron Ellik (eastbound, 1962): *The Squirrel's Tale* (1969)		✓		
Ethel Lindsay (westbound, 1962): *The Lindsay Report* (1963)		✓		
Arthur Thomson (eastbound, 1964): *Atom Abroad* (1965)		✓		
Steve Stiles (eastbound, 1968): *Harrison Country* (2007)			✓	✓
Peter Roberts (westbound, 1977): *New Routes in America* (1999)	✓			
Dave Langford (westbound, 1980): *The Trans-Atlantic Hearing Aid* (1985)	✓			✓
Rob Hansen (westbound, 1984): *On the TAFF Trail* (1994)	✓			✓
Martin Tudor (westbound, 1996): *Have Bag, Will Travel* (1998)				✓
James Bacon (westbound, 2004): *Worldconomicon* (2005)	✓*			✓
Chris Garcia (eastbound, 2008): *Rockets Across The Waters* (2008)	✓*			
Jacq Monahan (eastbound, 2012): *Same Planet, Different World* (2017)			✓	
Jim Mowatt (westbound, 2013): *Wherever I Lay My Hat* (2018)	✓*		✓	✓
TAFF Trip Report Anthology (collected extracts from incomplete reports, ed. Dave Langford)	✓			

Ansible = ebook (various formats; asterisked reports available only as PDF) available from Ansible Editions – free but donation to TAFF appreciated: taff.org.uk/ebooks.php

Fanac = online scans available at fanac.org – free but donation to TAFF appreciated: fanac.org/fan_funds/trip_reports.html

NA = paper copy available from John Purcell, the North American TAFF administrator: email and then PayPal to 2017taff2019@gmail.com

CB = paper copies available from Claire Brialey (for cost of postage; any donation to TAFF appreciated): contact claire.fishlifter@gmail.com or 59 Shirley Road, Croydon CR0 7ES, UK

A full list of all the past TAFF races, trips and associated publications can be found at Dave Langford's Unofficial TAFF pages: taff.org.uk/taffhist.html

More reports will be added to Ansible's free ebooks page and at fanac.org soon; keep checking for news!

All Worldcons, All the Time Bheer Tasting at SFContario — Bheer List

Beers marked in **bold print** were truly outstanding, as judged by the tasters at the party.

Torcon I (1948)

Sleeman Honey Brown Lager
Sleeman Cream Ale
Sleeman Original Draught
Sleeman Light
Alexander Keith's IPA

Detention (1959)

Upper Canada Dark Ale
Upper Canada Lager

Noreascon (1971)

Wachusetts Black Shack Porter
Wachusetts Milk Stout
KK

Aussiecon One, 3 & 4 (1975, 1999, & 2010)

Coopers Brewery Sparkling Ale
Coopers Brewer Lager

Noreascon 2 & 3 (1980, 1989)

Smuttynose Pumpkin Ale
Samuel Adams Honey Porter
BBC "Shabadoo" Black & Tan Ale
Fisherman's Imperial Pumpkin Stout
Old Brown Dog Ale
BBC "Dean's Beans" Coffeehouse Porter

ConFiction (1990)

Heineken

MagiCon (1992)

Red Stripe

L.A. con III (1996)

Stone Smoked Porter
The Brewery Orchard White
Schlitz

BucConeer (1998)

Flying Dog Porter
Flying Dog Amber Lager

Torcon III (2003)

Muskoka Dark Ale
Muskoka Hefeweissbier
Muskoka Cream Ale
Waterloo Wheat
Waterloo Dark

Noreascon 4 (2004)

Wachusetts Larry IPA
Harpoon Pott's Landbier
Opa-Opa Porter
BBC Steel Rail Extra Pale Ale
and…
Thomas Hardy's Ale, 150th Anniversary (bottled in 1987)

Interaction (2005)

Williams Brothers Fraoch Heather Ale
Williams Brothers Ebulum Elderberry Black Ale
Williams Brothers Alba Scots Pine Ale
Williams Brothers Grozet Gooseberry & Wheat Ale

Nippon (2007)

Jubilation Ale

Anticipation (2009)

Tremblay Biere Blonde Lager
Maudite

Renovation (2011)

Sierra Nevada Pale Ale

Chicon 7 (2012)

Demolition
Sofie
Bourbon County Stout

London in 2014 bid

Wells Banana Bread Beer
EB
Old Speckled Hen
Ridgeway Bitter
Fullers 1845
Holy Grail Ale
Guinness 250
Hen's Tooth
Double Chocolate Stout

Kansas City in 2016 bid

Long Strange Tripel
Double Wide IPA

New York in 2017 bid

Brooklyn Local 1

New Zealand in 2020 bid

Steinlager

Minneapolis in '73 & Minneapolis in 2073 bids

plus the Time Travel Worldcon
Hopping Frog Double Pumpkin Ale
Okocim
Lomza
Weihenstephaner
Hiver Fantome
Salzburger Stiegl
Wernesgruner
Pilser Urquell
Green's Amber Ale – gluten free

Non-Alcoholic

Ginger Beer
Old Tyme
Sarana
Ginger People
Goya
Jamaican
Reed's
Barritt's
Gosling's Diet

Root Beer

IBC Diet
IBC Regular
Boylan
Jones
Saranac

More Yums!

Texas in 2013 served homemade candied pecans
The Geneva Convention (2008) served wonderful chocolates

The following Worldcons and bids were also hosts, but we didn't find representative brews for them, alas:
Discon I (1963)
Discon 2 (1974)
Exploratory committee for Seattle in 2015