



Six

BEER CAT SCRATCHINGS

Al & Al's Footnote Purrzine, with Ruddles and Tanglefoot



Strange Lights in the Sky¹

Now, this takes me back. An event designed to kindle the fires of all former students everywhere². That's right. The silly. The bizarre³. Now, this will probably be completely meaningless to all those who don't live within a narrow band centered on the Meridian, but, for the past few months, there have been strange Lights in the Sky⁴. Oh, all right then, it's a laser beam emanating from somewhere⁵. For a long time, we suspected that it was coming from the Greenwich Observatory, but we weren't sure. Indeed, the one other time I had tried looking for the source, I didn't find it. Last night, on the other hand, was perfect viewing weather. Pausing on the way to pick up Jim⁶, we proceeded down the beam, rather like moths to a flame⁷. With a bit of good navigation, we did indeed track it to the vicinity of the Royal Observatory⁸. Being still full of the silly mood, we

¹Like *Close Encounters*, only they don't move, they don't cause people to build piles of rocks in their living rooms, and there's no sign of Spielberg...

²What is he on about now? I wish he'd get on with it.

³Yup. Just when you thought that the Bizarre Slot had died out, you realise that Real Life is far, far stranger than any fiction.

⁴Actually, the Capitalisation is just for dramatic effect... or is it?...

⁵Why is he being so mystic about it? I mean, he wouldn't be telling us about it if he didn't already know about it.

⁶Well why not?

⁷Are moths really kamikaze? After all, flying into a candle flame is probably considered a noble end for a moth, whereas finding out that the "candle" turns out to be a light bulb can be a bit frustrating. After all, which moth wants to return to its peers saying "Well, of course, I knew it was a bulb all along, but I went for it anyway..."

⁸From the Isle of Dogs. Now is the time to disbelieve all the maps, as the Isle of Dogs is not north of the Meridian, but is off at an angle (away off to one side, like Gourock, as they say in Glasgow). Similarly, watching the weather map, most people think that the furthest west part of Great Britain is in

decided to cross the river⁹, and approach the beam from behind. In the end, we found it at the bottom of Greenwich Park. We were so close that we decided to walk under it, while looking up at it, to find the Meridian... "By my reckoning, it's just about...Here" "Excuse me" "Shh, I'm nearly under it" "Excuse me, I think it's exactly here", I said, pointing down at the line set into the pavement with *Prime Meridian* marked on it. Still, it's nice to know that the beam is accurate¹⁰.

In a global context, of course, all this is pretty small beer¹¹, although it is reassuring to know where you are¹². Which, in another global context, brings us round to U2's *Zooropa* tour¹³¹⁴. Allison's claim to real street cred is that she first saw them before they became mega famous, and got within six feet of Bono, and so we thought we'd try the same again. This did not go entirely to plan, as the great crush led us to call "Game Over" and head for the sidelines¹⁵. Still,

Cornwall, when it is really in Strathclyde (Scotland for the uninitiated). Indeed, Glasgow (also in Strathclyde), is further west than Plymouth. But then, the geography of the country is full of strange facts, like the Geographical Centre of London isn't in London (Charing Cross, in the City of Westminster, which is outside the City of London)

⁹South of the river, guv? Not likely!

¹⁰Which, by a series of rough calculations, proves that we live in the East — just! (one Second East of the Prime Meridian, or about 50 feet).

¹¹Except at the Great British Beer Festival, where there was manifestly Large Amounts of Beer...

¹²Corny link number 426. Really.

¹³See, I told you it was a corny link.

¹⁴If you can't see the link between this and anything remotely skiffy, then you clearly haven't seen the stage set up — it is like Radio Pirates, or rather TV Pirates writ large; the kind of effect that *Sega* and *Golden Wonder* can only dream of with their imitation style adverts...

¹⁵Actually, this says a lot about the bad management at Wembley (not to be confused with the stewards and marshals, who were generally very good). When we ordered tickets, many moons before, we were told that all the seats had gone, and it would be standing room only. Come back Pinnocchio! It turned out that "standing room" included sitting in any of the

the concert was truly *excellent*, and Bono failed to call up Princess Di, and the video confessionals were off the wall¹⁶. If you've been living on the planet Zog, then none of this will have made any sense...

Moving swiftly on, there now follows a series of meaningful connections¹⁷¹⁸. In no particular order, Ryan wants everyone to call him Ryan K Johnson, as he reckons that there are a lot of plain Ryan Johnsons around¹⁹²⁰. Meanwhile, Allison has rejoined the fold of TWP, and now has to come up with a contribution. Now, this predilection with the letter "K" is present in the title that Allison used for her previous TWP contributions²¹. Now, I was going to use it for the style of the numbers, but it didn't look too good, so I changed it. At the 'Ton, there were flyers for *Intersection*²², which gave as the theme **Space and Time**.

seats in the stadium. Compare and contrast with Ibrox, when Simple Minds were playing there — a pitch ticket meant exactly what it said, and there was a fixed limit on them. As a result, there was less feeling of overcrowding.

¹⁶The most memorable, broadcast in front of 72,000 fans was "I don't know why my girlfriend always runs a mile every time I mention anal sex — it's brilliant!" Spoken like a true fan, with no shame at all...

¹⁷They could, of course, be meaningless connections, but with Attitude...

¹⁸Probably slightly more meaningful than those used in the *Tab Clear* adverts (what a TV junkie! He's talking adverts again...)

¹⁹This is clearly the sign of an inflated ego, or is it watching too many bad SF films given the *Movie Science Theater 3000* treatment, like his *Star Trek 5* — which with the sarky voiceovers à la *Rocky Horror* turns it into a watchable film.

²⁰His next project is going to do the treatment on *Highlander II*... should be good for a giggle.

²¹Time to unravel the utterly confusing. Allison called her pieces **AN ENDANGERED SPECIMEN**, written in Glasgow-B style ('cos she comes from there). Now, this style is associated with Mackintosh (with a "K"). — that's Charles Rennie Mackintosh, not Jobs' and Wozniac's Macintosh. Confused? Tough! Read on anyway...

²²Which also has a Glasgow connection. I said that these were in no particular order. In fact, most of

The "six" in the title looks like something straight out of the Apollo programme, and has its own Space and Time themes²³²⁴.

Feedback, has been forthcoming, even if no-one can be bothered writing. "What happened to Boris in the logo?" — What's wrong with pictures of the real cats then?²⁵ "Ahh, you haven't reached critical mass on the footnotes, yet" — I have this time! And to all those who reckoned there should be one line of text with the rest footnotes, all I can say is "You're even sillier than I am"²⁶

Finally, a bizarre, out of context dialogue²⁷²⁸. "Don't give me gin" "In spaghetti bolognese? Well, I suppose that it would add a certain *je ne sais quoi* to it..." "Or even 'Jenever sais quoi'?"²⁹ Time to quit while I'm ahead...



them have links to each other... maybe.

²³Space (start of) — dateline 4th October, 1957, the Space Age started when *Sputnik 1* was launched; Time (lack of) — dateline 4th October, 1983, Richard Noble regained the World Land Speed Record in his car *Thrust 2*.

²⁴Despite this, some firms (notably American), still think that an American holds the record, as they use this vehicle, rather than the actual record holder, to signify how fast their product is... still, it's only 10 year old news.

²⁵Especially as I don't need to worry about copyright any more.

²⁶You could of course write your own perzine, and then you could style it any way you like...

²⁷And no, I can't be bothered naming the source or the context, but it does involve fans and food.

²⁸Actually, if I did say who it was, you'd think I was namedropping. You know the sort of thing — "As I was just saying to Socks, 'what is it like living in the White House?'". Actually, the current trend in Hollywood is to namedrop by using the middle name of the person (Hmm... what's Socks the Cat's middle name? The! ... doesn't quite have the same ring. Hope it doesn't catch on in fandom, as it's hard enough trying to catch some folk's *first* names.

²⁹Makes sense only if you know what Jenever is.

This has been the sixth edition of *Beer Cat Scratchings*, produced by Alasdair Hepburn and proof read by Allison Ewing. Ruddles is on the left, and Tanglefoot on the right. LoCs and other stuff can be sent to us at 123c Chobham Rd, Stratford, London, E15 1LX, if you actually read this far...©1993 for all the original bits, including the cat images... Thanks Jim