



EIGHT

BEER CAT SCRATCHINGS



With only seven and a half feet between them, there's plenty of room for footnotes.

"As you do..."

Here's an interesting factoid. Most Americans don't go around inventing words¹ or making rhyming slang²³ or anagrams. Which makes Armistead Maupin pretty unusual⁴. On the other hand, they are pretty adept at making up meaningless acronyms; the pointlessness growing in direct proportion to the speaker's self-importance. One way to halt these people in their tracks is to start talking about TLAs⁵ or YAFAs⁶. As ever, the source of this fount of information was Ryan Johnson⁷, who has decided that he'd rather be sleepless in Seattle than hard up in Hackney. Which is probably just as well, as the latter would have made a pretty lousy film title⁸. To see him off in reasonable style, Hitch held a party for him, where several people attempted to add to his vocabulary. The word 'naff' was one he felt deserved to be made known across the pond. As regards particular colloquial

¹Like *runcible*, *mobled* or *coherent government policy*.

²Cor blimey guv, that's put me in a right two and eight. I think I'll go in the cream puff.

³Contrary to popular mythology, rhyming slang is not limited to Cockneys. While I'm at it, popular mythology has moved the Bow Bells a few miles down the road. (though with all the other church bells close by, it would have been pretty hard to hear anything much)

⁴"Hello, back issues? Can I have the last one, 'cos it seems to be referred to here..."

⁵Three Letter Acronym. Boy does it piss people off when they get jargon like that spouted back at them.

⁶Yet Another Acronym. Spelt like those yellow edible things called "Banafnas". "You mean Bananas... there's no 'F' in bananas!" Precisely.

⁷That's "Ryan with a K" to you.

⁸and since you ask, the former is a good film, though nothing at all to do with SF.

phrases, he was not too sure about one of them, and felt that, on balance, it was better left over here, as you do⁹.

Some things that should have been left well alone include a fair part of Hitch's record collection. Limiting the choice to mainly singles did at least exclude the William Shatner album. Besides, it is believed to be against the Geneva convention. If you've never heard it, then consider yourself very, very lucky¹⁰. However, this still left such rare gems as *Kinky Boots*, as sung by Patrick Macnee and Honor Blackman, and one about Marvin¹¹. To raise our spirits, we indulged in some classy stuff, like the Goons' *Ying Tong Song*.

Style Trial

Not surprisingly, a lot of people have been talking about *Red Dwarf*¹². Having taken the piss out of old SF films in the previous series, and a fair number of other genre films in the current one (Westerns, gumshoe detectives, James Bond and more), the writers clearly felt it was time to make a bold, yet sweeping statement, that would *really* test the sense of humour of the viewers. And so it came to pass that the Cat was turned into Dwayne dibbley, who looked "so geeky he wouldn't be allowed into a Science Fiction Convention". So what, I hear you say, that obviously doesn't affect me, does it? Although I do happen to know someone who fits that description...

⁹Yes, that one! All this intro just to explain the title!

¹⁰"You were lucky! We used to dream of being aurally tortured by *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* and *Mr. Tambourine Man* sung by an ex-StarFleet captain. Or, as was pointed out (frequently) in Ryan(with a "K")'s *Mystery Science Theater 3000* version of *Star Trek V*, "...but Captain Picard wouldn't have done that..."

¹¹"Life!... don't talk to me about..." yes, that one.

¹²That well known "of course it's nothing to do with science fiction, Mr Birt, so you can allow us a large special effects budget" comedy.

If the rest of the general population thought that they had been let off as mega-cool style dudes, then let us not forget that, seventies revival or no, flares, platforms and hairy chests are totally naff; always have been, always will be. Unless of course something major happens...

The press were clamouring round to see the previews of the masquerade, as there were rumours of a big clash of the costumes. And so it proved, as the pink flares worn by one person just failed to match the gold platforms of another...

MundaneCon 2030

What am I saying. It's already happening on all the major "fashion" shows; row upon row of daft, naff, self indulgent clothes¹³. Still, at least having all female models means that hairy chests aren't being posed for all and sundry. It was summed up thus: "They might as well staple a cat to their chest; they'd pull more women that way". Thank you Gail.

As if to prove that "SF" and "BBC" can sometimes be uttered in the same breath, and not just as a passing insult, *Doctor Who* has made a successful commando raid onto BBC1! Could this be the start of a renaissance? The start of something big, like programming budgets? Perhaps not. Besides, rumours abound that Spielberg, having resurrected one being from beyond time, is planning the big budget treatment for the local wandering Gallifrayan. This does not necessarily mean that it will be any *better*. Part of the reason that the original series worked so well was probably precisely because of the lack of funding. This then meant that the story had to be fairly strong to cover up the lack of sets. Ok, so there were some duff episodes, but then, to have survived 25 years did at least mean that the average had to be fairly good. Another reason that *Doctor Who* worked was because most of the characters could actually act¹⁴.

¹³It has been said that fashion is something so hideous that it has to be changed every six months...

¹⁴and realised their limitations, and didn't try to

Where is all this leading? Well, *Seaquest DSV*¹⁵ does not seem to be getting the rave reviews that you might expect from having the tax official at the end of *The Blues Brothers*' name on it¹⁶. This is probably for one of two reasons: (a) it's not very good, or (b)ITV's record on SF is a bit of an unknown quantity, with *The Tomorrow People* being the most notable, and an almost total dearth otherwise¹⁷. Because of the "brand loyalty" that many have for BBC or ITV, it may be that few are prepared to comment on it either way. Or maybe people are trying to compare it with its natural predecessors, and not on its own merits. After all, *ST:TNG* spent a while proving it was as good, or even better than the original; *Alien*³ was a reasonable film provided you didn't compare it with either of the first two¹⁸. On the other hand, *Highlander II* was crap by any measure...

Given all the trials and tribulations at the 'Ton over the past year, it is sometimes strange that they wanted to give up their nice little once a month earner at all. On the other hand, perhaps it isn't, given the following (overheard) comment from one of the bar staff:

"Tonight's a really poxy night, but it's not as bad as tomorrow"

"Oh? What's tomorrow?"

"Deaf and dumb night"

Come back Dwayne Dibbley... I think.



sing or direct films or become presenters on "911"

¹⁵or "Voyage to the Bottom of the Stingray"

¹⁶It was an in joke. Back when Spielberg was well known but little seen, he did the bit part at the end to see if anyone would recognise him. Few did
¹⁷I'll be kind, and not include *War of the Worlds* in this.

¹⁸Although you probably wouldn't have gone to see it at all if you'd never seen the first two...