

The Entzine #85
for D.A.P.P.E.R.
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Serpentine

Another rambling, meandering, last-minute scribble for what should be a festive opportunity of the centenary Dapper – I've left it to the very last again, have been 'busy' with some fine-weather outings, a couple of club magazines, a conrunning convention, and work. Nothing new in my life really, I'll continue cycling to work when the weather is good (this is actually where the panorama photo of the 'Hollandse IJssel' came from – the view I can see every day ... admittedly only doing so when the weather is fine and preferably not with a strong wind in my face), and usually enjoy keeping busy with the various sf-related time hogs, although recently I've found it harder to energetically start typing in the evenings instead of sweetly doing nothing with a nice cup of coffee in front of a tv screen. Must be the old age, no? Oh well, there's still books to read as well. (And you may thank the rainy weather this last weekend for me actually finishing this contrib instead of sitting lazily outside...)

By now I've managed to finish a continuing work-sponsored self-study Microsoft course (MCSA or sysadmin stuff) that was interesting only in getting to know the 'right way' to do computer configuration and administration while doing things rather different at work, and to meet the ideas on Windows Vista (mostly an enthusiastic sales pitch). I got away from passing the Vista exam to arrive at work to find a student with a Vista problem that I couldn't help, so that was direct confirmation of my scepticism about the usefulness of such courses – in fact I didn't really want to do the course to start with, but the boss insisted. It should be helpful to have the piece of paper in hand when reorganizations start again...

There was a minor family reunion that I enjoyed, as an aunt and uncle celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with a party boat trip down the IJssel (no not near my place, it's a different river, splitting off to the north from the Rhine near Arnhem). In my youth we were living near each other, and even when that family moved to Overijssel in the east we kept in touch, but we kind of lost contact when going to study in Rotterdam. Nice to see all of them again, especially the cousins and nieces and their families.



The semi official welcoming and presentation of presents to uncle Joop and aunt An by cousin Hans in the cabin to start the party, which offered lively chats and a nice banquet and some singing;



later on mostly the younger generation liked to hang out and chat on the sunny top deck of the party boat.



I've no real con report this time – at the moment only just gearing up towards Denvention – and the recent Conrunner event, organised by Steve Cooper, had mostly to do with how to run conventions – which had me following programme (and even in it) about instead of hanging out with a convention newsletter. Interesting items on treasure (or how to balance the books), honour (and treating your guests), programme (interest and feasibility), tech (hm, about the same), and planning... The Brits are thinking of yet another Worldcon and what would be necessary to bring that to a success in the next decade or so. Nice presentations from three possible site candidates, but a lot of questions still need to be answered. Even more scary, some Dutch think there's enough interest in this small country to try for such a thing in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the NCSF in 2015. I'm still unconvinced we can really do that, and in what way this will end up being 'interesting times'. I've learned enough to know I'm not a conrunner at all, I just like to help out when things have started.



on honouring guests:
Claire, James, Vince, Margaret



selling your convention:
Steve, Steve, Martin, John



on tech: Magician, Sparks, James

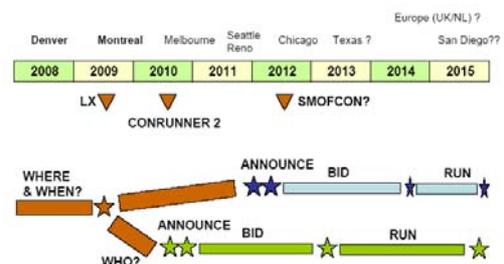


there's also time to relax at Vince's 30th fanniversary

as well as chatting at the bar and a joint restaurant trip and watching Dr Who and such, but if you really want to get down to business, there's a google discussion group EU1415



refreshing morning walk with Paul and Judith along the canal



there's something of a strict timeline even if just to decide whether you want to start this



Mailing Comments for #99

Slow Motion Irene: good to hear about enjoying yourself taking in some wonderful views and fine weather in between waiting for court decisions and reading books. An interesting reading selection again, of which I've only read *The Separation* (of course) – it's been a while since I read it, but I do think that the uncertainty about reality is fully intended (something along the lined of 'worlds apart, and time' comes to mind).

F.A.T. Annemarie: oh wow, you made that trip down the Danube sound like a real pleasure cruise, with lots of interestingly historical bits of old Europe. It's not really my kind of holidays, as I'm kind of uncurious about seeing the sights, but hearing you enthusiastically telling about the views and the cities makes me wonder, and also, it seems wonderfully relaxing too.

Dordrecht Kirsti: Good to hear your house project has resulted in a fine place to live now – sorry for not making it to your party, but I'm having enough trouble juggling time as it is, and I'm afraid I really do like some solitude too, to gather enough energy to get around enjoying myself at other meetings.

Rommeldam Dwight: While I've known about your reading foreign language books, the *Moonraker* in French came as a bit of a surprise. I can see that reading a book in the original language gives you something special, but reading an original English language novel in French? I don't think I'll ever do that – well, easy to say, me not reading French at all.

I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint you in not knowing all that much about Dutch population growth beyond a vague general knowledge. While it's true that Flevoland was lying unpopulated for some time, and population there must indeed be mostly in the few newly-built cities, I've really no idea on how that was planned – I seem to remember it was to be mostly farmland anyway.

Temper Fugit Martijn: I'm probably very time-challenged in stating that I liked spring, and I missed most of the cold weather by enjoying Easter indoors at the London Eastercon. Possibly I simply forget most of the bad weather (and don't have many pictures of that either, just taking along the camera on nice sunny days). Anyway, it's warm again now, while you've moved south for your holidays – hope it's still comfortable enough down there.

Commiserations on the flabbergasting work issues, and good look on the job hunt.

That's all for now,

Jan van't Ent

Oh, all right, except for the final bit (including the rightmost part of that circa 270° panorama picture) with the usual short remarks on what I read these months (and no, that's not even all of it, just the ones lying in a pile nearby just now, or that I happened to remember):



Some recently read books

Un Lun Dun – China Miéville

A nice, young adult flavoured read of a young girl and her friend entering a very different London with lots of strange things, or rather the known flotsam of our world that gets new life here – from broken umbrellas to flying doubledecker buses and much more – and all is not really what it seems, starting with the girl that's heralded as the prophesized saviour of the world.

Looking For Jake and other stories – China Miéville

This is more adult, possibly preferred by those looking for what they term the real Miéville writing or modern weird – the collection includes the award-winning novella *The Tain* with deadly creatures from behind the mirror having overrun our world.

Cowboy Angels – Paul McAuley

Picked up to read something recent by next Beneluxcons guest of honour, although described as a thriller, it's really sf, with travel between alternate worlds – but yes, the story is of former agents battling large, corrupt agencies.

Halting State – Charles Stross

This might be described as a near future mystery then, with cops called in to investigate a robbery ... by a bunch of orcs in a virtual world – it's mostly thriller-like though, with lots of high finance control struggles and mostly recognizable technology.

Execution Channel – Ken MacLeod

Yet another one of the near future thriller variety, this time with post cold war espionage and peace protestors, conspiracy theory and cover-ups, and in the end a rather surprising finale to explain all the events.

Fluke – Christopher Moore

For strangeness try a whale with 'help' written on its tail, orca people and those long lost at sea in a living place under the ocean, and a longing for pizza – and it almost makes sense in the end.

Echoes of an Alien Sky – James P. Hogan

Almost classic sf with interplanetary space travel and slightly new science theory, with mostly the usual plotting and bickering humans, this time coming from Venus to an idyllic but ruined Earth.

The Silver Ship and the Sea – Brenda Cooper

First book in a series featuring deliberately unadapted colonists struggling against planet and survivors of specifically gene-tailored people.

Odd and the Frost Giants – Neil Gaiman

A World Book Day novella that gives Gaimans take on something like a Norse saga with young castaway Odd meeting some displaced gods thrown out of Asgard by the Frost Giants, and how he could help them.

Undertow – Elizabeth Bear

An old-style colony world with some tech, indebted and under company control, and with alien inhabitants getting exploited – there's a lot of muddy waters and voodoo type magic here.

Nova Swing – M. John Harrison

Sort of linked to *Light* but no real sequel – it features that strange chasm in space, the Kefahuchi Tract, but more like a forbidden zone attracting adventurous tourists and reckless guides – it won the Clarke Award, so there must be something to it, but I got distracted to easily to be able to comprehend it.

Odyssey – Jack McDevitt

A story in the middle of a series about humanity travelling to nearby stars in a way resembling current NASA organization (with most of the same PR and funding problems) – it has a bit too much of a political tone to be likeable sf to me.

Moonsinger – Andre Norton

Actually an omnibus of *Moon of Three Rings* (a fantasy-like sf novel featuring body switchers on a non-technological world and space traders visiting the local market) and sequel *Exiles of the Stars* (with the same protagonists getting involved in more trade problems and alien mind control).

Magic Lost, Trouble Found – Lisa Shearin

Start of a fantasy series with bad girl Raine (thief and sorceress) getting involved with even worse powers (necromancers and power-hungry goblins) when a soul-eating amulet ends up in her hands.

Grimspace – Ann Aguirre

A jump ship pilot imprisoned for crashing her ship and possibly on the verge of burning out her talent of navigating grimspace anyway, gets broken out by a not too friendly gang of rogue fighters with their own agenda.

The Outback Stars – Sandra McDonald

A female lieutenant in a space trading outfit getting in over her head with smuggling gangs and a mysterious alien transport system.