



THE NAVEL

ALL THE FLUFF THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

COLOPHON

Welcome to the Distributed Eastercon Newsletter. Newsletter staff can be distinguished because they're wearing 1972 Eastercon badges from Chessmancon, but broadly speaking, it's the *Plokta* cabal. We want your digital photos—look out for the Colour Supplement. Bring them on a memory stick to us (perhaps in the bar, or around the place). Take camera phone photos of funny things and email them to us at **locs@plokta.com** or picture send them to **xxxxxx xxxxxx**. We also want copy, preferably in plain text format—again, on a memory stick, or emailed from your smart phone to **locs@plokta.com**. Or send us text messages. If all else fails, drop bits of paper into the box in Ops. We aren't running a general printing facility—suggest you try one of the many Chester copy shops. We can arrange to print out single copies of convention related material.

Note that the Newsletter is not in the place marked 'Newsletter' in your Read Me. Instead, we're in the bar. All you'll find in the other room is the Programme Office and they don't know anything about the newsletter; please leave them alone.

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If you're not in the bar...

Programme News

Got a star on your badge? You're on programme! Don't forget to pick up your programme participant letter from Registration. You will need to go to Green Room before your item; they are lovely people who will soothe any last minute nerves, sort out last minute details, and, more importantly, give you that last minute drink. The Green Room is next to con registration.

The League of Fan Funds auction is Sunday night, at 10pm. Come along and buy cool tat. We've also got a dealers' room table where you can get all sorts of interesting stuff right now without bidding or waiting. Call it Buy It Now. Except without the outrageous shipping charge that purports to be from Surbiton but is actually from Hong Kong.

When the Dealers' Room is not enough:

Bookshops in Chester

Dr Plokta's mother, a Chester native, offers the following guide.

The Oxfam bookshop at 19 Bridge Street Row East will be closed on Good Friday, open 9:30 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, closed on Easter Sunday and open 11am to 4pm on Easter Monday. (Dr Plokta's mother will be working there for much of Saturday and Monday.) They've recently had a large donation of SF and there are about 8 shelves of interest,

THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT NAVELS NUMBER 1

90% are innies and 10% are outies (source:Wikipedia).

fact and fiction. There's a high-class remainder shop and a good second-hand one (with a lot of SF, occult and Arthurian material) side by side on the walls just east of the Northgate. The closest second-hand shop to the hotel, on the corner by the Watergate Street traffic lights, has SF only by accident. The other Oxfam shop, in Frodsham Street, has two shelves of SF. Ring for opening hours, which may not be the same as Bridge Street Row. There are three other charity shops in Frodsham Street, with little SF. The same applies to the two in Upper Northgate Street. There's another remainder shop near the top of the escalator from Pepper Street into the Grosvenor shopping centre. The only new bookshops are Waterstone's in Eastgate row South, and Smith's on Eastgate Street near the Eastgate.

Want to buy something else?

Shopping in Chester

Chester's two-storey shopping is often described as unique, but will be familiar to anyone who's used a shopping mall. Upper level shops are described as on

rows—if someone says a shop is on Watergate Street, it's ground level; if Watergate Street Row, it's the upper level.

The larger chain stores are mostly on Foregate Street or in the Grosvenor Precinct; Eastgate Street, Watergate Street, Northgate Street and Bridge Street have a more eclectic selection of shops.

John Dallman, official con Dirty Old Man, writing under the pen name of Gail Courtney, informs us that the Obligatory Eastercon Leather Sale is happening at Lakeland [*we thought they did PVC rather than leather—Ed*], the clothes shop on Bridge Street Row East.

Literary Corner:

Ian Fleming on Navels

“On the beaten stretch of sand below where James Bond was sitting, two golden girls in exciting bikinis packed up the game of Jokari which they had been so provocatively playing, and raced each other up the steps towards Bond's shelter. They flaunted their bodies at him, paused and chattered to see if he would respond, and, when he didn't, linked arms and sauntered on towards the town, leaving Bond wondering why it was that French girls had more prominent navels than any others. Was it that

French surgeons sought to add, even in this minute respect, to the future sex-appeal of girl babies?”

Feeling hungry?

Eating & Drinking

The con food in the main restaurant will be served between 5 and 9, not 5 and 7 as per ReadMe. Snacks are also being served in both the main bar and the con bar. Late night food (11pm - 1am) includes bacon and sausage baps and veggie faux-pigs. Vegan food is also available at the con—but you have to ask. Everything we've eaten so far has been yummy.

Contemplation set a new record when the bar stopped selling real ale on Thursday evening. Fans are requested to form a bucket chain between the Crowne Plaza and the Marston's Pedigree in the Olde Custom House in Bridge Street.

Eating out?

Restaurant Reviews

Raffles Oriental, 1-3 Eastgate Row, The Cross. Mediocre food, very lethargic service. £17.50 for all you can eat, and this does include crispy duck. The staff make every attempt to sell additional drinks and the food is very salty, hence your bill is likely to be a bit higher than planned. Go if you're very hungry and not too fussy.

Moules a GoGo produced a reasonable bowl of moules accompanied by the traditional frites and mayonnaise for a mere £6.95 (lunchtime price), though they too were a little slow. The availability of jugs of Belgian beer did make waiting more bearable.

Ruan Orchid, 14 Lower Bridge Street (at the top, on the right as you go downhill) - reasonably good but fairly pricey (we spent £100 for three people including desserts and tip) Thai restaurant. Note that the other Thai on Lower Bridge Street is closed for refurbishment.

Martin Easterbrook and Margaret Austin recommend the **Siam Restaurant** (Thai and Tep-panyaki) at 32 City Road.

Alison and Steven's favourite Chester restaurant from many years ago is **Francs**, 14 Cuppin Street. This venerable and cosy Chester bistro has had a bit of a facelift so no longer has a bicycle on the ceiling. Shame. Set lunches (up to about 6pm) are £6.95 or £8.95 for two courses; a la carte probably about £20 a head for two courses and drinks.

Got kids?

Bottle Dungeon

The Club Lounge on the 3rd floor is available to everybody—but especially intended for families. It's a comfy no-smoking lounge with a telly. Please don't leave kids alone in the room but obviously there's no problem with parents sorting out a suitable rota with their friends. NB: there's no loo in this room so you'll want to water your kids before you go.

Late Drinker?

A Better Key Card

Once the cash bar closes, you need a pink key card to buy drinks and charge them to your room. You didn't get this when you checked in. See reception before you're pissed to sort it out and arrange credit.

COMMITTEE INSTALLATION

CHRIS O'SHEA PROGRESS BAR

Currently stuck at 45%,
somewhere on the M6. ETA