



**EXHIBITION HALL**  
**ISSUE 2- OCT 2009**

# EXHIBITION HALL ISSUE 2- OCT., 2009

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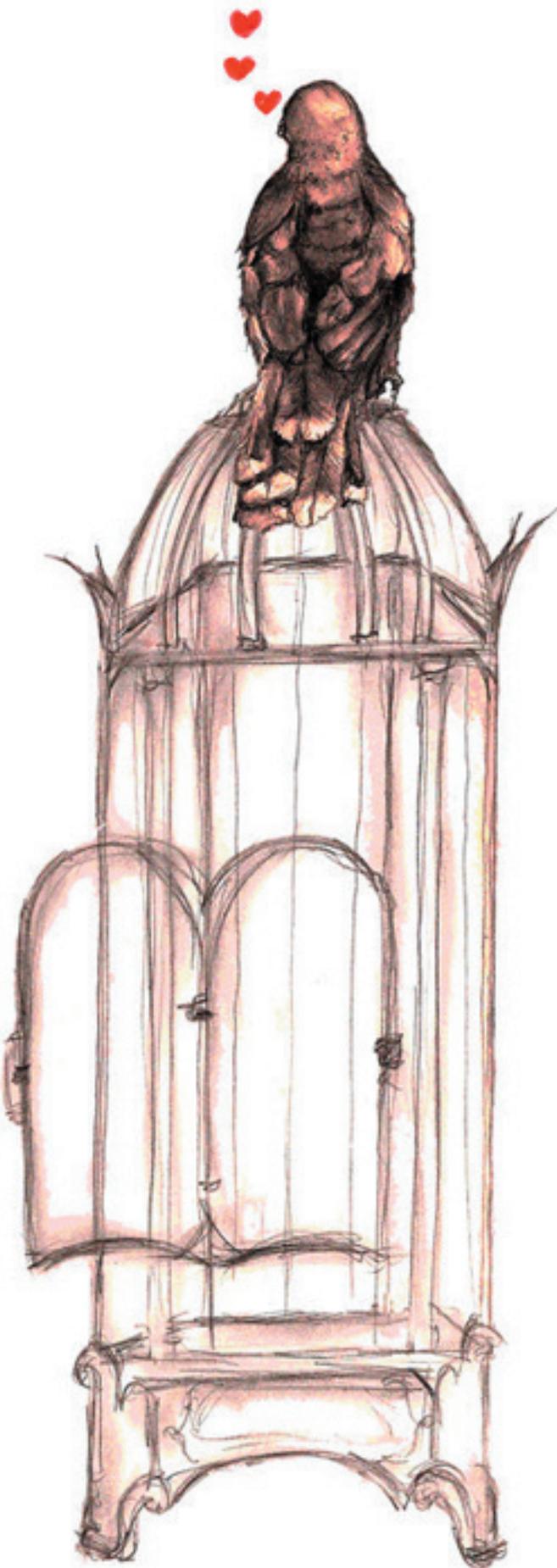
## Editorial

Let's start by saying how great the reaction to issue one was! There'll be a letter in the newest column, Vox-Haul & I, and some more that you'll read about in future issues. I've heard from folks in the US, UK, Australia and China! That's crazy! I'm proud to say that the team that we've managed to assemble is top-notch.

I've attended two different Steampunk events over the last month. The first one was hosted by Jean Martin, my co-editor on Science Fiction / San Francisco. It was a mighty good time, with folks like Jean, Tom Becker (SF/SF's Layout Guru), Andy Trembley, Kevin Roche (in his Tutback's Barista outfit), Chris Erichson (with Maltese Falcon), Phil and Kathe Gust (as the Carnovans), Merv and Judith and ever-so-many more. It was a good time, especially being surrounded by Egyptologist stuff at the Rosicrucian Museum. The place has Mummies, Babylonian, Mesopotamian and Egyptian artifacts, and ever so much more. I love the museum and hanging out there with all the good folks in costume (and with photographers) made it well-worth visiting. I especially like the Nile Catfish mummy. There's nothing cooler than mummified fish.

The second was also at a museum, History San Jose, during an Antique Car Drive-In. I love History San Jose, I have since it was San Jose History Park and I've been back a number of times over the last few years. That, and as a male, I love old cars. There were about a hundred old Fords and some other classics mixed in. My fave was the beautiful Stanley Steamer that was immaculately painted. The entire set-up was nice. I was there early and walked around, taking pictures of the various cars and houses (and the Light Tower which I still say they should rebuild!) and then found a few folks who were obviously dressed for the event. We ended up gathering and chatting and taking lots of photos. Well, no one took a photo of me, I was dressed in typical Chris fashion, but everyone else had many people taking their pictures. I had to leave early, but it was a fun scene and I'm glad I was there.

So, what does this say? Well, Steampunk has become a solid event theme for groups everywhere





these days, with Seattle, Toronto, the BArea, the Carolinas and London being focal points. There are so many groups that put on these events that it's almost impossible to keep these things straight. That's one thing that Exhibition Hall was founded to do: to give a location where folks can make their announcements to an audience around the world. It's always nice to have a place where you can go for knowledge of what's far away from you.

Plus, there's the added attraction of taking events that are already happening and making them more fun by having costumed groups of Steampunks show up and walk around, take photos and so on. It certainly adds flavor (and Photo Ops). There are many events where Steampunks are beautifully fitting. Antique Car Drive-ins, History Events, even movie openings are all places where costumed folks ain't always seen, but are always appreciated showing up, giving folks some more visual interest and something to get photos of.

Also, I've discovered a few more Stampunk-type zines. The first that came across my eyes was Steampunk Magazine ([www.steampunkmagazine.com](http://www.steampunkmagazine.com)) a couple of years ago and it's still a really good one. I was going to write an article for them about being trained to operate the Babbage Engine, but alas, I was never trained. The next one that came across my path was Gatehouse Gazette (<http://www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/tag/gazette>). It's a gorgeous zine, I mean absolutely beautiful. It's got a great list of contributors, too. These are both what would usually be called Semi-Prozines, but it's good to know that they're out there!

I'm pleased to say that we've got words from Howard Hendrix (it's a paper I heard him deliver at the Eaton Conference back in March), an interview with Mr. B, Gentleman Rhymer, a report from the Asylum Steampunk Convivial, some excellent photos from Dragon\*Con's Steampunk Fashion Show, reader's letters, a review from Mike Perschon of the just-released Soulless by Gail Carriager, news and notes, a look at Continuum, and more! It's a packed issue, and it's one that shows that we're well on our way!



# VOX-HAUL & I

**Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, Toronto**

Dear Chris and James and Ariane and Rina:

Another great team, putting together what looks like another great fanzine. Might as well put me down as a circulation manager, because I have been joining as many Steampunk Facebook groups as possible to let them know about this new publication. Perhaps Bill Burns would be able to tell you how many downloads there's been from eFanzines.com, and I hope there's been lots of correspondence going your way, or at least will be soon. To make it official, here are some comments on the first issue of Exhibition Hall.

I have heard of and seen steampunk magazines, but this is the first Steampunk fanzine that I know of, so let's set the trend, and get lots of people involved. There is lots of Steampunk fiction, but they are written in the Victorian style, which can be slow and wordy. As with many interests, let's let the fans talk among themselves; this is the way SF fanzines started in the first place, way back in the 1930s. I like the fact the Etsy sites are helping small-scale artisan jewelers make a decent living, and there are a couple of local Steampunk jewelers doing a great job with giving local fans excellent handicrafts to add to their costumes and everyday clothing, too.

**Some Victorian fiction really turns me off (pretty much anything from the period fo 1830-1850), but there's a lot of good Victorian Horror. And Little Dorritt. I love that book.**

I think what we all need is a central list of all Steampunk resources. A list of all Facebook, and LiveJournal pages, websites, books, movies, etc. This information is scattered everywhere, and needs to be gathered for all our benefit. Sorry,

I need to find employment; I'm just the idea guy in this instance. (Might also help people stage Steampunk conventions, too, with easier choices for guests, including authors and musicians.) (Ah, as I read Mike Perschon's article, I learn about the Steampunkopedia, check the link, and wow, there it is, at [Steampunk.republika.pl/opedia.html](http://Steampunk.republika.pl/opedia.html), just what I'd want to see. I will definitely bookmark that site.)

**There are several good resource pages, my favorite being really simple: The wikipedia article!**

As a science fiction reader and fan of 30 years and more, I would wonder out loud how many Steampunk fans know that the term was coined by K.W. Jeter in a Locus magazine interview? Probably few, but then, most modern fans wouldn't know of SF's long-ago origins, either. The more we know of its history, the more we can determine its future.

**I'm trying ot get a time to do an interview with Jeter to see where he stands on things. I'm hoping that I can run it before the end of the year. A lot of folks who end up naming movements end up totally rejecting them. Look at Damon Knight and the N3F or SFWA!**

My own costume...I haven't been a part of costuming fandom in more than 20 years, and putting together the parts of my current costume were a little difficult, because this was the first time I'd designed a costume myself. I usually do it with Yvonne, and we have done matching costumes before. When

I decided I wanted a Steampunk costume, I saw that others were adopting explorer costumes, and I didn't want to follow the trend. I remembered that one of the best things a costumer can do for him or



herself is to be realistic about their body shape. I am 5'4" tall, and weigh about 215 pounds, so I know I should never take on a costume or persona that would require someone tall and thin. I thought of the Victorian era and my own personal things I enjoy, and settled on being a railroad conductor, a character that doesn't rely on size or shape. Some parts were ordered special, others were purchased from a fine men's clothing store, and other parts came out of the closet or drawers at home, and based on some photos Googled up, I have a very comfortable conductor's costume, as you saw at the end of issue 1. (I'm the one on the left of the picture.) The best thing about this kind of costuming is that truly, you can do nothing wrong, and no one can tell you that. Your costume is your costume, your creation. (I shall not leave Yvonne out... she has always wanted to be a pilot, and had taken some lessons... she created her own costume for herself, an airship pilot/aeronaut. Army surplus stores are few and far between these days, but the one we know of in Toronto helped supply us both with goggles and a few other accoutrements for Yvonne's costume, like insignia and a silk scarf. I must supply you with a picture of Yvonne's costume as well.)

***I can see the attraction to costuming, but much to the lovely & talented Linda's dismay, I just can't get into it. It's***

The attraction of Steampunk for me? The fact that this is a pretty harsh world, tough to make a living in, and we treat each other pretty badly. It's too fast, too loud, too complicated, too much... some yearn for a simpler, slower, more genteel world...the Steampunk universe is simpler, with the SFnal appeal of new technology, it is slower, and it is definitely more genteel. It has the excitement of new discovery, a very Victorian emotion, and there is the feeling that the world is just opening up. a feeling I think we miss in this modern day and age.

***I love the aesthetic, and even more so, the whackiness. Steampunk is a great platform for reference and comedy!***

Chris, I saw the webpage for Windycon, and I wish we could go! Time

and money never allow. We do look forward to Astronomicon...and, based on the huge Steampunk contingent at Dragoncon, we are thinking that if they have the same track of programming, or more, we might go to Atlanta next year. I never thought to go to Dragoncon, but one should never say never.

***Next year would be a good one for Dragoncon, especially since WorldCon's in Australia.***

Time to wind it up. Hope your weekend was a lot of fun, take care all, and I look forward to the next issue. I hope it was expand to something of even more value to all of us.

God Save the Queen!  
Yours, Lloyd Penney.

***And God preserve Her Majestic Dominion!  
And it's always good to have words from you, Mr Penney!***

***All Aboard!***



# REVIEWED: SOULLESS BY GAIL CARRIGER

Imagine if Kim Newman had a sense of humor when he wrote *Anno Dracula*, or that the *Underworld* film franchise had been produced by the BBC as part of their classics collection, or that your local chapter of *Vampire: The Masquerade* were comedy improv actors with overactive sex drives, and you begin to picture the world Gail Carriger introduces in her first novel *Soulless*.

*Soulless* is set in an alternate London where the monsters, not homosexuals have come out of the closet (although we get a wonderfully flamboyant vampire as well!), and have adjusted to nineteenth century life, becoming part of high society and government. Werewolves and vampires are as common in Carriger's Victorian England as top hats and corsets. While this idea is not particularly original given my earlier comparisons, it is how Carriger handles the supernaturals' assimilation into English society that makes for an interesting and amusing read.

Vampires and werewolves alike must abide by the rigid morality of Victoria's reign, as demonstrated when the heroine, Alexia Tarabotti, is attacked by a vampire who *didn't ask* before trying to drink her blood. How rude! The juxtaposition of these supernatural icons alongside a echoes of the comedy of manners is the source of Carriger's comedy. The narrative dances from a threat out of a Hammer horror film to Masterpiece Theatre in the blink of the reader's eye. When Alexia is warned to refuse

an invitation to a vampire hive out of concern for her safety, she replies, "I have already accepted Countess Nadasdy's invitation. It would churlish to refuse now." Later we learn that "Highland werewolves had a reputation for doing atrocious and highly unwarranted *things*, like wearing smoking jackets to the dinner table." Atrocious, indeed.

This tension between the dark gothic

world and proper high society is embodied in Alexia Tarabotti. While Alexia is painfully aware of social conventions, she constantly rails against them, likely due to her lack of a soul. This is not a spoiler: Alexia's condition is revealed early on. And while I would have preferred Carriger string that mystery out longer, revealing it later in the novel, it does not detract from the overall sense of enjoyment one can have in reading *Soulless*. Given her tension, Alexia provides the twenty-first century reader an accessible gateway to the London of Carriger's imagination. Her iconoclasm toward proper behavior

enables her to act and think in a fashion modern readers can identify with—after all, while Carriger's author-bio shows Jane Austen as an influence, Ms. Tarabotti is rather naughty when compared to Elinor Dashwood or Emma Woodhouse. For all its manners and monsters, it's a sexy yarn; had I been on the marketing team for this novel, I'd have recommended the cover lampoon those of bodice rippers.

Since I'm reviewing this for a 'zine



devoted to steampunk, I should answer if *Soulless* should be classified as steampunk. To that, I'll reply that it's as much steampunk as Powers' *Anubis Gates* is. There is science, but it's not concerned with steam, brass, or gears. However, as Powers noted at the 2009 Eaton conference, spiritualism was a sort of science at the end of the nineteenth century, and it is this science *Soulless* is largely concerned with. All that said, I think Carriger's estimation of "urban fantasy,"

albeit nineteenth century urban, is a better classifier.

There aren't any great messages or manifestos in *Soulless*. It's just good, undead and unclean fun: Carriger's bawdy, robust approach to Alexia's sexuality makes for a great antidote to the supposed abstinence agenda of the *Twilight* series. At the very least, Carriger's vampires have fangs, and the only ones who sparkle, do so because their waistcoat does.



# CONTINUUM 5: GALAXIES BY GASLIGHT



*Continuum 5: Galaxies by Gaslight was a Steampunk-themed convention that took place in Melbourne, Australia. The convention had one of the greatest programme books I'd ever seen, including a segment from Phil and Kaija Foglio. The event was, by all accounts, a serious success.*

*The following is a compilation of reactions and photos from the event. You can find more at <http://continuum5.blogspot.com/>. While Continuum 6 has a futuristic and not at all Steampunked theme, I'd highly recommend checking it out at [www](http://www)*

## Alisa Krasnostein

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting Narrelle Harris, who was such a great guest - I wasn't really at much of the con programming but I got to chat and hang a bit with her all the same. She must have been everywhere all the time! How exhausting! I got an industry development grant to go to Continuum 5 and it really was a working trip for me. I didn't get to much of the programming. Instead - I (think) I bought a book for the 2011 schedule, planned some major improvements to Asif!, met some writers I had not yet met in person, talked over with a few writers their Sprawl submissions, moved 29 kgs of books, chatted with a few people about Natcon 50 projects, and the Feminist Voices podcast and launched *A Book of Endings*. I also talked with a few people about details of things - where to send review copies, how different overseas awards work, bookstores to approach to carry TPP books.

## Narrelle Harris

Well, Continuum 5 has wound to its inevitable conclusion, and I'm sitting here

mucking about on the net when I ought to be in bed sleeping, cos man, I am exhausted!

I had a great time.

My Guest of Honour speech went well. I'm both relieved and pleased about that, because when I wrote it I feared it was a bit dumb. I was attempting to answer taht question I get asked from time to time - "where do you get your ideas?". A couple of people spoke to me later to thank me and said they found it useful, or entertaining (and I was going for at least one or the other) so that was lovely. Some people came to the reading I did from *The Opposite of Life*, and due to time constraints I had to leave them at a cliffhanger! One person said she bought it and went straight to the page I left it as so she could find out what happened next. heh heh. And then I spent ages talking to everyone who was kind enough to bring books for me to sign. Then I talked about fanfic on a panel with the charming Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and learned some things I didn't know, so that was valuable as well as fun.

I had a wonderful time. I talked a lot. A whole lot. I mean, seriously, I talked A LOT. About ... well, pretty much everything.

## M1k3y

An event six months in the planning that felt like it passed in the blink of an eye.

Let me try and reconstruct those days from what little was recorded in my long-term memory during a period of sleep deprivation, mixed with caffeine and adrenalin.

Looking back at my tweets from that time doesn't help, they were mostly cries of exhaustion and one that recalls a particularly painful panel.

Yes, panels.

There we are talking about Dollhouse. That was a fun one. In fact, I discovered that my many years of watching, talking about and ok, mostly ranting to people about the strengths and many weaknesses of tv shows have made me more than capable to doing exactly that in front of an audience.

The 'time travel in genre tv' panel was a lot of fun too. Discussion was hard though, since we were all in complete agreement on how great Moffat's eps of Doctor Who are, and that Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles kicks major ass. Then, much to my surprise, when I mention Lost everyone went quiet. Apparently the whole nerdcore tuned out at the same time, after the Polar Bear ep. There was only one guy in the audience who was actually still watching the show! Which left me the choice of giving a four season re-cap, or just moving on. I did get to work in a reference to the Another Cold Morning one-shot from Tranmetropolitan and compare that to Ripley's cryo-sleep in between Alien and Aliens.

Now, the first panel.. on the Apocalypse, well.. let's just call that one a learning experience. I could blame nerves, or the vodka'n'redbulls.. but, hey, it was my first panel ever, I survived. Valuable feedback from lizbt included such tips as 'look at the audience' and 'speak into the microphone'; which, you can clearly see from the photo above I did in subsequent panels.

The Climate Change panel, that was another kind of learning experience; and I'll just redact the rest of that.

Suffice to say, I am ready for future gigs now. From panel virgin to pro in three days. OK, not quite pro.. but I am confident. Yes. Look out!

Now, there were obviously other duties I had, like Guest Liaising.. to my credit I only mislaid them a few times. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Narrelle

M. Harris were fantastic. Sadly, committee duties meant that apart from escorting them to their panels and events, I didn't really get to see that much of them in action. Or any other panels really.

It's just like being the host of a party, you're so busy making sure everyone's having a good time, you barely get a chance to breath yourself.

The one panel I did manage to catch in full was Steampunk Fashion 101, with Cass from Wildilocks, and our DJ from the Ball, Omega. Good show, that was!

Little did I know the next day, slightly extra under the weather, but with a whole seven hours sleep, I had to fill in for a genuinely ill panellist – thankfully, like all cheap bonus eps, this was a clip show, and I just nodded, smiled and ran off my own list of 'greatest shows that never were' – Babylon Fields and Global Frequency FTW!

So, in summary, much XP was gained, a great time had and new allies made in the bid for total global domination.

## Cat Sparks

Well, I had a flipping awesome weekend in Melbourne. Rob and I kicked off by going to see the **Dali** exhibition just because we could. My overall con experience was pretty typical, spent hanging with buddies in the dealers room, the bar and in various eating establishments. The only panel I went to was the one I was on. I didn't plan it to be that way but you know how it is. Weekend highlights included catching up with Chuck M & family for dumplings, the launch of [deborahb](#)'s collection in a cute little bar called Cabinet and being invited to a stylish group dinner hosted by the ever generous Garth Nix in honour of Charles Brown.



Felicity Dowker

### Friday Night

So, tonight I checked out the [Continuum 5](#) opening ceremony, the Hitchhiker's Guide to Con Going panel, and the Chronos Awards ceremony. I saw a lot of people I've previously only "met" online or through their writing and editing, but I was too shy / too tired / too busy tonight to introduce myself, so I'll make that one of my many missions for tomorrow. I did run into a nice fellow I met previously at the MSFC Mini Con, so I wasn't a Nigel No Friends after all.

### Saturday

It's been a big day. I'll try to document what I can remember of it as best I can (my tired brain is riddled with blurry bits and wormholes)!

I arrived at 9am and headed for the dealers room to meet up with my fellow ASIM co-op members, Sue Bursztynski and Mark Farrugia. They had the ASIM table all set up and ready to go, so I contributed meaningfully by sticking a couple of posters to the wall before planting myself on my butt and getting down to the serious business of chit chatting. Subsequently, I missed the introductory sword fighting panel - bum. Actually, I missed quite a few morning panels as the time flew by and I tarried in the dealers room doing...I'm not exactly sure what. Talking poor Sue and Mark's ears off, I believe. Oh, I did also meet and chat with Gillian Polack, who helped us out at the ASIM table. I managed to mispronounce Gillian's name, which was a fabulous start, but she graciously forgave me. I loved Masques, a CSFG anthology (a few copies of which are available for purchase on the ASIM table

at Continuum 5, by the way), so it was great to be able to discuss it with Gillian face to face, albeit briefly. Oh, and Mark Smith Briggs wandered by the table, and we chatted. (See why it's all a bit of a blur?)

Eventually, it occurred to me that I might like to, oh, I don't know, go to a panel or two; so I settled in to hear George Ivanoff, Richard Harland, and Alison Goodman's panel "The Art of Expansion: From Short Story to Novel". It was excellent. I got a great deal out of it.

I bumped into the gorgeous Talie Helene in the toilets (as you do) and she introduced herself, though given another moment for my brain to chug over I would surely have recognised her under my own steam by her glorious long, dark hair. We had a brief chat before the line moved on. Then in the lobby as I was headed to the dealers room to grab my handbag for lunch, Eugene Gramelis introduced himself and we had a splendid chat. Rather too long a splendid chat, as my fellow ASIMites came and grabbed me for lunch and I had to cut it short. However, Eugene is on the Zom Rom Com panel with me tomorrow, so I'm sure we'll chat further then.

Sue and I hurried back to make the panel we were part of with Bruce Gillespie at 2pm: "Do We Need Small Press Publishers?". There was a pretty good turnout and, for my first ever panel, I don't think I sucked too severely. Sue and Bruce were great, of course. Lots of interesting questions and discussion and the hour flew by.

After that, more time spent in the dealers room, where Cat Sparks introduced herself as I purchased a book from the Twelfth Planet Press table. I made some sort of God-awful mumbling comment and I'm sure she thinks I'm a recently lobotomised mental institute escapee. I was a bit frazzled



by this point in the day and the brain-to-mouth connection was not functioning at its best. I was hoping to chat to Alisa Krasnostein (who I've seen from a distance several times) but managed to miss

her every time I had a spare second to look for her in the dealers room. There's always tomorrow. Oh, and I finally met Edwina Harvey, another ASIMite, who is so magnificently irreverent and funny.

It's been great to meet so many people. There's something gratifying about having people appear out of nowhere and call me by name and introduce themselves - it's exciting to be recognised and "known" by people I respect so much, and it's fabulous to be able to interact with them face to face. That's been the most worthwhile aspect of the con for me, really - that, catching up with my ASIM cohorts, and also the excellent panel I attended today. (So, yes, everything, really.)

### Sunday

I. Am. Exhausted. But very content.

After a particularly disorganised morning that culminated in me not arriving at the con until 10.35am (oops...oh well, it didn't really kick off until 10 this morning anyway, apparently), I helped Eds at the ASIM table while Sue went to a panel, and then I dashed off to listen to Narelle Harris' GOH speech. Anyone who has met Narelle will know that she is outgoing, funny, smart, and very easy to listen to - so her speech was predictably enjoyable, and I got a lot of helpful tips out of it, too. I managed to grab a couple of chats with Narelle throughout the con, and she signed my copy of *The Opposite of Life* this arvo, so I made the most of her presence! (She also recommended a quirky shop to me on either Lonsdale or Latrobe Street after we chatted about the Steampunk Fashions panel - apparently it sells weird sort of Victorian medical spooky stuff - but I can't remember the unusual name of the shop...if anyone has any idea what the name of the shop I'm referring to is, please fill me in!)

Oh, and Gillian was wandering handing out decadent truffles to all and sundry (you know, the ones shaped like little elephants?), including myself, and therefore I am now an even bigger fan. Nom nom nom, chocolate.

After Narelle's speech, it was time for the Zom Rom Com panel I was on with Rob Hood, Eugene Gramelis and Mark Smith Briggs. I thought a) I knew next to nothing about zombies, and b) I was completely devoid of anything to contribute, but as it turned out I knew rather a lot more than I thought I did, and I waffled on and had a fabulous time. Rob was, of course, excellent - knowledgeable, personable, and interesting - the sort of person that you can just never have enough time to chat with and explore all the topics you'd love to. I did bend his ear for a while in the dealers room later in the afternoon, but, as with everything at the con, there was always something else to rush off to all too soon. Eugene had to be the most well prepared panelist out of all of us, with lengthy, detailed notes and some excellent points (and some not-so-excellent zombie jokes to close the panel with - thanks Eugene!). Mark seemed a little under the weather and it all made sense when Rob informed us he was "very drunk last night". Tee hee. The hour shot by, the audience was involved, I had a blast. I could get used to this panel thing.

### CONTINUUM 5 BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Attendees- 149

Number of First-Time Attendees- 26

Number of Panels- 47

Number of Panelists-

Number of participants in

Costume Parade- ~35

Best Panel Title- Zom Rom Com

(about Zombie Romantic Comedy)



# INTERVIEW: MR. B GENTLEMAN RHYMER

*The world of Hip-Hops ain't nothing to sneeze at. It's a brutal world typically built around boastfulness and the quality of one's rhymes. How refreshing a voice like Mr B: Gentleman Rhymer is in that world.*

*The Man himself was kind enough to give us a chance to ask a few questions.*

**Let me start by saying that truly, Straight out of Surrey is a dope jam. Just had to get that off my chest.**

Thanks awfully old chap.

**OK, first question: you say on your MySpace that you spent the last decade bringing manners back to Popular Culture. How'd you start on that path?**

It all began many years ago with myself and my dear old friends the Schooner Boys ([www.myspace.com/schoonerboys](http://www.myspace.com/schoonerboys)). We began to create music, films and art with a far more civilised bent than the drivellers who surrounded us at the time. I myself have always been a keen advocate of hip-hop, so naturally wanted to teach that little genre some manners.

**I never saw a Banjolele until I came across the photos of you playing one. Where'd you discover one? And what other instruments do you play? And how about training: do you have any of that?**

The Banjolele is merely a ukulele with a banjo drum body. English music hall comedian and film star George Formby made them famous in England. I just found that they had a more amusing

timbre than the traditional guitar-shaped uke. I play many other instruments- the double bass, piano, trombone, guitar, kazoo...the list goes on. I don't, however believe in musical training. It's poppycock!

**Here's a fluff question that might just have an interesting answer: what vintage technology most captures your attention?**

One need look no further than the mind of H.G.Wells for imaginative technological ideas. For me though, his greatest creation would be Tono-Bungay, which is very much more an idea than a technology.

**OK, the inevitable influence question. What music most pushes and grips you to produce your own stuff? How do you synthesize your influences into your music?**

Public Enemy, Noel Coward, De La Soul, George Formby, Beastie Boys, Flanders and Swann, Grandmaster Flash, Tom Lehrer, Run DMC, the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band...the list is endless.

The music itself happens relatively naturally. With some beats, a banjolele and a rapier wit one cannot fail!

**Some would classify you in with the Nerd-Core scene along with such varying acts as MC Chris, Sir Front-a-Lot and MC++. Others would put you in with the vein of Steampunk musicians such as The Unextraordinary Gentlemen and The Men Who Will Not Be Blamed for Nothing. Still others might totally unfairly say you're a novelty act like Weird Al. Where do you see yourself in the**



**spectrum of pigeon-holing? Do you reject the idea of musical compartmentalism?**

I have to say I'm not one for 'scenes'. I do enjoy dipping the old toes every now and again, but I do find it can rather restrict one creatively. Unless an awful lot of you care to join me in spreading Chap-Hop as a 'scene' across the globe, which is wholly possible. You must remember, should you wish to join, that I am your leader, so we'll have no dilly-dallying, crapulating or general nincompoopery! That's settled then.

**Every musician has a weird story about their fans. What's yours?**

I am lucky enough to have fans with immaculate manners. One did wet herself in my presence once though. Most unfortunate, but part of the job I suppose.

**And finally, what's next for Mr B Gentleman Rhymer and where can we get your glorious recordings?**

My debut Long-player 'Flattery not included' is available for [www.myspace.com/mrbthegentlemanrhymer](http://www.myspace.com/mrbthegentlemanrhymer) (although the link appears to be rather acting up at the mo).

As for the future of Mr.B...who knows? I shall be playing as many recitals as is humanly possible and recording my second long-player. Apart from that, it's cake and sherry as usual. Hurrah!

**Thanks for takin' the time to chat**  
Many thanks to you too sir.  
Pip-pip!



## **ART CREDITS**

**Cover by Hachiko**

<http://hachiko.deviantart.com/>

**Page 1 by Toastuh**

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**Pages 2 & 6 photos from Christopher J Garcia**

**Page 3 by Brad W. Foster**

**Page 4 by Taral Wayne**

**Page 5 Soulless Cover Design: Lauren Panepinto, Photo by Derek Caballero, Model: Donna Ricci**

**Page 7-10 photos from Cat Sparks**  
[www.catsparks.net](http://www.catsparks.net)

**Page 11-12 from Mr. B Gentleman Rhymer**  
[www.myspace.com/mrbthegentlemanrhymer](http://www.myspace.com/mrbthegentlemanrhymer)

**Page 13 Board Game Cover by Unknown Artist**

**Page 14 Steamhouse illustration by Leon Bennett**

**Page 15 is the original cover of Verne's legendary novel**

**Page 17 Alphonse de Neuville**

**Page 21-23 photos from Heather Luca**

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<http://www.planethelen.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Asylum09>

**Page 29- Kathleen Jennings**

<http://tanaudel.wordpress.com/>

# VERNE AMONG THE PUNKS

-OR-

## “IT’S NOT ALL JUST A VICTORIAN CLOCKWORK”

Let us imagine that, instead of wherever we may be, we are in fact sitting in overstuffed armchairs in the brass, oak, leather, port, brandy, and cigar-smoke environs of the palatial 53rd Thursday Club for the Advancement of Science and Society. Originally a gentleman’s establishment, it is perhaps not so very different from the Reform Club from which Phileas Fogg departs and to which he returns in Around the World in Eighty Days. The 53rd Thursday Club, however -- in recognition of the contribution of thinkers like Ada Lovelace and Mary Shelley -- will have long since admitted women to its ranks (something the actual Reform Club, filmic versions notwithstanding, did not do until 1981, which was at least the earliest such change by any of the old Pall Mall clubs in London, and considerably earlier than the older and more conservative club in opposition to which Reform was formed, Brooks’s Club, which did not admit women until the 1990s).

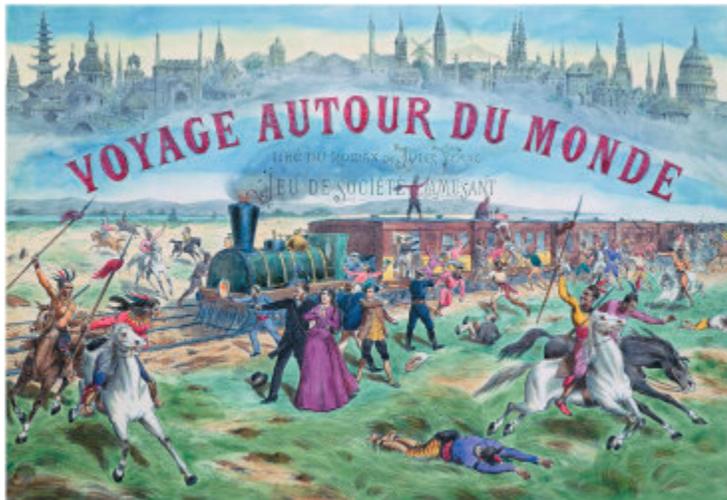
Founded by Jules Verne, the 53rd Thursday Club always and only meets for official business on the last day (Thursday) of every year which begins on a Thursday, and of every leap year which begins either on Wednesday or Thursday -- and thus in which a red-letter 53rd Thursday also occurs. The Club never meets for official business at any other time, but is always open as a social club for use by its members.

The officers and members of the 53rd Thursday Club (among whom have been such occasionally contentious luminaries as H.G. Wells, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mark Twain,

Nikola Tesla, and Madame Curie) do not find the official requirements of membership particularly burdensome. The odds that a given non-leap year will begin on a Thursday is only one in seven, while the odds that a leap year begins on either a Wednesday or Thursday is two in seven, but since leap years occur only once every four years, the circumstance that a leap year is also a fifty-third Thursday year occurs, by the odds, about once every fourteen years.

Given the calendrical and chronological rubric under which it meets, it comes as no surprise that the 53rd Thursday Club’s main conference room – in its roofed-atrium “saloon” – is presided over by a large and vastly intricate steam-powered, gear-driven simulacrum of the solar system as celestial chronometer. Dedicated to the study and advancement of knowledge concerning space and time, the Club’s activities and discussions range, in both its official and unofficial proceedings, from the more theoretical realms of mathematics and physics to more immediately practical advancements in energy and transportation.

I give you the preceding uchronian (if not necessarily utopian) scenario not because it echoes steampunk elements in The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen or The Five Fists of Science, or because I’m trying to hammer out an overall metaphor for science fiction generally which is steampunkish particularly, or even because the year in which I write this, 2009, is itself a 53rd Thursday year. Rather, I wish to highlight that, although the steampunk subgenre generally presents itself as clubby British Victorian, steampunk



is in fact a London gentleman's club founded by a French author, a British Victorianism puppeteered by a Frenchman, Phileas Fogg as created by Jules Verne.

If we get beyond its top-hat, goggle and waist-coat trappings to its steam and gear guts, we quickly see that steampunk moves by clockwork (even more so in its sub-sub-genre known as "clockpunk") and that it is particularly in its focus on steam engine time – on the gears running everything from pocket watches to locomotives to the cosmic clockwork – that steampunk is most distinctly Vernean in its memes, themes, and motifs.

One need look no further than the titles of his *Extraordinary Voyages* – summarizing phrases often imposed post facto by the publishing house -- to see evidence of Verne's obsession with clockwork, with time, time-keeping, and duration even in travels through space: *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (1863), *From the Earth to the Moon: Passage Direct in 97 hours and Twenty Minutes* (1865), *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), *Eight Hundred Leagues on the Amazon* (1881), even his *Paris in the Twentieth Century* (written in 1863, published in 1994). Steam power too is also everywhere in Verne, perhaps nowhere more prominently than in *The Steam House* (1880).

Gears and steam are significantly less prominent in the work of that other great "prototyper" or "early maker" of what will one day be called science fiction, namely the properly British and Victorian H.G. Wells. Further, Verne's clockwork spatiotemporal obsession precedes Wells's different version of that same obsession, whether in Wells's short story "The Chronic Argonauts" (1881) or novella *The Time Machine* (1895). In works as different as *Time Machine* and

"When the Sleeper Wakes", Wells is more concerned with spatiotemporal discontinuity, in contradistinction to the clockwork spatiotemporal continuity generally highlighted by Verne. Verne emphasizes travel-time while Wells focuses on time travel, but machines for measuring the time one has been on one's travels necessarily pre-date machines for travelling through the time so measured.

*Around the World in Eighty Days* is Verne's quintessential travel-time book. Its hero, Phileas Fogg – the cool, collected, cash-heavy, aloof, somewhat Aspergerish and OCD hero, simultaneously phlegmatic and engaged in a breakneck race – is a clockwork Victorian, a gentleman-cipher who is himself obsessed with time, odds, and mathematics, even before he sets out on his quest to conquer the world and its spaces.

Described as an "enigmatic figure about whom nothing was known, except that he was a thorough gentleman and one of the most handsome figures in the whole of high society" and as "a bewhiskered Byron, an impassive Byron, who might live for a thousand years without ever growing old" (Days 7) he is also said to be "the least communicative of men." (8) His days are utterly scheduled and invariant.

His "only pastimes," we are told, "were reading the newspapers and playing whist" -- a game he "played for playing's sake not so as to win," a game he found "perfectly suited his character" because it "was for him a challenge, a struggle against a difficulty, but one that required no action, no travel, and no fatigue." (Days 8-9) It is also a game the winnings from which he always gives to charity.

On the day when his well-regulated daily orbit suddenly expands – Wednesday, October 2nd – Fogg has just fired his

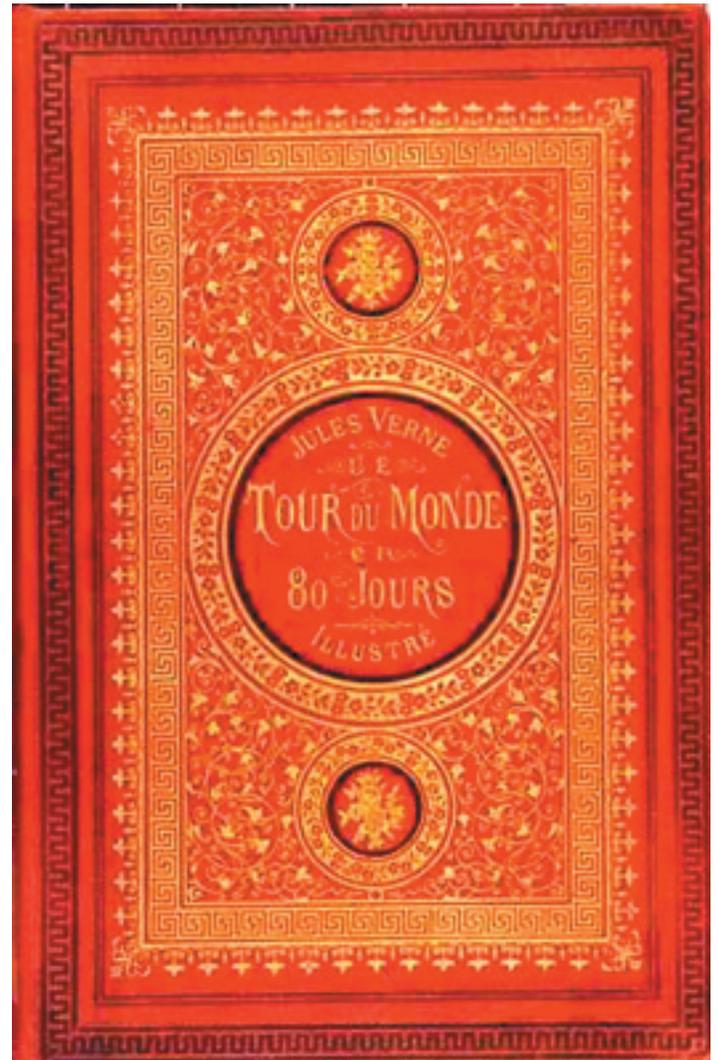


Tel était donc le train. (Page 79.)

sole domestic, James Forster, because “the fellow had made the mistake of bringing in [Fogg’s] shaving-water at eighty four degrees Fahrenheit rather than the statutory eighty six.” (10) Awaiting the arrival of Forster’s successor, Fogg is described as “seated squarely in his armchair, both feet together like a soldier on parade, hands firmly on knees, body erect, head held high,” steadily watching his clock, a “complicated apparatus that showed the hours, minutes, seconds, days, dates, and years.” (10) We are told that, in himself, “this gentleman gave the impression of being perfectly balanced in all his parts, weighted and poised, as flawless as a chronometer by Leroy or Earnshaw . . . precision personified” (12) Even his “well-organized and perfectly comprehensive” wardrobe is calendrical: each pair of trousers, shoes, vest, coat bearing “an order number. This number was marked on a register of incoming and outgoing items, showing the date on which each garment was to be worn, depending on the time of the year.” (14) The person whose job it is to lay out that calendrical wardrobe is the new domestic, Jean Passepartout, who, after a life of much wandering, many jobs, abundant spontaneity and chaos, is only too glad to settle in with the well-regulated, mechanical-industrial clockwork man his new master Phileas Fogg appears to be.

Then of course – because at the Reform Club’s whist table a discussion about a bank robbery leads in turn to a discussion about flight and hiding, and the world getting smaller, and how long it would take to circumnavigate the globe, and Fogg’s bet of 20,000 pound sterling with his fellow whist-players that he can go around the world “in eighty days or less, i.e. in 1920 hours, or 115,200 minutes” (20), as he himself describes it – all hell breaks loose, at least from Passepartout’s point of view.

From Fogg’s point of view, however, it does not seem to do so. I have belabored the opening chapters of the book here in order to emphasize how Fogg’s story is all about what chaoticians and complexity theorists have called sensitive dependence upon initial



conditions. Fogg himself, the epitome of order and mathematical certainty, believes in an utterly deterministic world. When he quietly but confidently declares in Chapter Three that “The unforeseen does not exist,” (20) this clockwork man shows himself to also be a Newtonian-Laplacian fantasy man of the highest order, fully in agreement with Pierre Simon de Laplace’s statement (in A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities) that a powerful enough intelligence – a brainy demon, or great clockwork computer, say – “would embrace in the same formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the lightest atom; for it, nothing would be uncertain, and the future, as the past, would be present to its eyes.” (Laplace 4). As Graham Collins notes in his article “Impossible Inferences,” in the March 2009 issue of Scientific American, give the computing demon “the exact positions and velocities of every particle in the universe

and it will compute every future state of the universe” (Collins 19) – the unforeseen does not exist.

Yet, in 1873 -- decades before Einsteinian relativity displaces the Newtonian notion of absolute space and time, before quantum theory and Heisenbergian uncertainty displace the Newtonian and Laplacian dreams of utterly controlled measurement processes, before Godel’s incompleteness theorem, Turing’s halting incomputabilities, and chaos and complexity theory all displace the Laplacian fantasy of linear-deterministic predictability – before any of that, Jules Verne, in Around the World in Eighty Days, conducts a novel-length thought experiment on what happens when a deterministic and determined clockwork man interacts with a nonlinear, chaotic, and messy world.

That “interacts” is, for much of the book, an overstatement about Fogg says much about the inadequacy of linearly deterministic approaches to the describing of that messy world he moves through. Although his “highly methodical travel-plan . . . included everything, and Mister Fogg always knew if he was ahead or behind,” he has very little curiosity about the space he is moving through, “being of that breed of Britons who have their servants do their sightseeing for them” (Days 34) -- a person “rarely seen on deck” who “made little effort to observe this Red Sea, so redolent in memories and the theatre of the opening scenes of human history.” (39) Later we are told Fogg “wasn’t travelling, he was describing a circumference,” and that he “constituted a heavy body moving in orbit around the terrestrial globe, following the rational laws of mechanics.”(48) Although his fellow passenger, Brigadier General Sir Francis Cromarty, “was an educated man, who would willingly have provided information about the customs, history, and political system of India if Phileas Fogg had been the sort of man to ask for it,” Phileas Fogg is not that sort of man, and “requested nothing.”(48)

Yet it is precisely here in India, specifically in Bundelkhand (also the home

province of Prince Dakkar/Captain Nemo), that clockwork Fogg begins to interact more with the world around him, specifically when he decides to rescue the young “white as a European,” (60) and English-educated Parsee woman Aouda from suttee-death on her (formerly aged and now recently deceased) husband’s funeral pyre. Turning to Cromarty, Fogg says,

“What about saving this woman?”

“Saving this woman, Mr. Fogg?” exclaimed the Brigadier-General.

“I’m still twelve hours ahead; I can use them that way.”

“I say, you do have a heart!”

“Sometimes,” he replied. “When I have the time.” (62)

This is that same brand of understated assertion we saw earlier attached to “The unforeseen does not exist.” Yet the rescue of Aouda is precisely something Fogg never indicates he has “foreseen”; it is, she is, the complexity in the heartbeat, the chaos that is not randomness, the Other not so otherly that the Self cannot recognize itself in it, the woman both exotic and domestic who proposes marriage to him, the “noble woman who risks all to save the man she owes everything to.” (195) If Fogg in his circumnavigation had not crossed India overland unnecessarily in the first place, he could not have saved her, and been saved by her when she suggested marriage -- with the result that Passepartout was sent to the Reverend Samuel Wilson’s, where was learned the error that determined and linearly deterministic Fogg had made by not taking into account the emergent property arising out of the interaction of abstract clockwork and actual world, namely that-

By heading toward the east, Phileas Fogg had gone toward the sun, and consequently his days were four minutes shorter for each degree of longitude covered in this direction. Now there are 360 degrees on the Earth’s circumference, and this 360, multiplied by 4 minutes, makes exactly 24 hours – in other words

the day gained *unconsciously*. . .  
And this was why, on that very same day, Saturday, and not Sunday as Mr. Fogg believed, [his colleagues] were waiting for him in the drawing-room of the Reform Club. (201; italics mine)

That “unconsciously” is intriguing, especially since, as William Butcher indicates in his Jules Verne: The Definitive Biography, this is one of the first uses of that term in popular fiction. (Butcher 226)

Along similar lines, Bruce Sterling suggests in his introduction to a 2004 edition of Around the World in Eighty Days that-

Verne always favors broken, fragmented characters. He divides them into operational trios of ‘Head, Heart, and Hand’ . . . Superego, Id, and Ego: a brainy overlord, a sentimental favorite, and some capable type who can get things done. (xiii)

Nonetheless, as apt as this idea may be, it is still not enough merely to say, as Sterling does, that “Aouda plays the Heart role.” (xiv) Aouda is not only the one who suggests the tying of the knot of marriage but also is herself the knot of Complexity in which Heart, Other, Anima, Emergent, and Unconscious are all tied together, and who -- in her domesticated-exotic yet unforeseeable self -- makes possible the tying off of the loose ends of the novel.

To win Aouda and all she represents Phileas Fogg “must give and hazard all he hath,” (2.9.21) as Bassanio also must do, to win Portia in Merchant of Venice – with the important distinction that, unlike Bassanio, Phileas Fogg doesn’t know until his journey is over what he was really hazarding for. The narrator tells us that-

So Phileas Fogg had won his bet. He had completed the journey round the world in 90 days. To do so, he had used every means of transport: steamship, train, carriage, yacht,

cargo vessel, sled, and elephant. In all this the eccentric gentleman had displayed his marvelous qualities of composure and precision. But what was the point? What had he gained from all this commotion? What had he got out of his journey? Nothing, comes the reply? Nothing, agreed, were in not for a lovely wife, who – however unlikely it may seem -- made him the happiest of men! (202)

Like Bassanio, Fogg, as a result of his circumnavigation experience, inverts the question of Matthew 16:26. For him, the issue becomes not what it will profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul, but rather the soul he will gain by losing, or at least hazarding, the whole world. And this is true not only for man but also for woman – for Aouda, who likewise “risks all.”

Just as Passepartout’s nickname and its meaning of “skeleton key” is appropriate



PHILEAS FOGG.

to his “Handy” role in the novel, and Detective Fix (the other “Hand”) is appropriately an embodiment of the idee fixe, it is not beyond the realm of the possible that “Phileas Fogg” is a tag name and a pun too: Phileas having its roots in the Greek word for “lover” and Fogg punning not only on the fact that the character is a Londoner but also on the French “brouillard/brume” or “vapeur” – fog, mist, haze, steam.

Fogg, in the early going, is not just the “lover of steam,” the Steam Man of the Prairie, but in fact the would-be Steam-master of the Planet. He is the original, archetypal steampunk who, initially, is in Laplacian-demonic rebellion not so much against the stodginess of his Reform Club fellows, but against the restraints of that messy physical universe – space, time, and chance themselves. “The unforeseen does not exist,” as he quietly but importantly tells us, early on – and his journey is initially intended to be a triumph of that will. He begins as a Don Quixote tilting (just as madly as that literary precursor, but ultimately more successfully) at the windmilling hands of the clock. Curiously, Fogg’s Sancho Panza, Passepartout – trickster-clown servant to Fogg the master of order -- refuses to alter the time on his pocket watch to match the changes in time zones through which he and his master pass. Passepartout thereby stubbornly insists on the arbitrariness and unreality of the “real time” which his master Fogg so firmly believes in – and so firmly believes he can best and control, until Fogg learns from Passepartout that, in keeping such careful track of minutes and hours, Fogg has lost a full day. (Curious too is the fact that the Mexican comic Cantinflas played both Passepartout and Sancho, very nearly back to back in his film career.)

Unlike Quixote, however, in the end Fogg gets his Dulcinea. He overcomes the “enchanters” and “obstacles” and “Fixes” by understanding in time his own delusions about time, his own errors in looking at the world – particularly in his ultimately realizing that not only does the unforeseen exist, but it is arguably what makes existence

meaningful. As the Handdara Foreteller Faxe (a professional “foreseer”) puts it to Genly Ai in Ursula LeGuin’s Left Hand of Darkness,

“The unknown, the unfortold, the unproven, that is what life is based on. If it were proven that there is no God there would be no religion. But also if it were proven that there is a God there would be no religion. . . What is known? What is sure, predictable, inevitable – the one certain thing you know concerning your future, and mine?”

“That we shall die.”

“Yes. There’s really only one question that can be answered, and we already know the answer. . . The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty: not knowing what comes next.” (71)

On the level of chronology, Fogg and his story manifest the unforeseen, arising as they do out of “a truly surrealist act, a spontaneous, senseless decision to personally conquer the world” (xiv) as Sterling puts it in his introduction. It is an irruption of a what-comes-next, post-Victorian future into a Victorian present, both as imagined by a French author – while much of steampunk, in contrast, is an irruption of the post-Victorian (and postmodern) present into a Victorian past, most often as imagined by American authors.

Both Around the World in 80 Days and steampunk more generally, to the extent that either or both are punkish, rebel essentially against a frustrating present. Verne’s book generally expresses a yearning for an improved very-near-future to be achieved through a fuller human control of energies and complexities, both cultural and natural, Steampunk expresses a yearning for an improved past, a nostalgia for a more human scale in the energies we now control, the complexities we now recognize.

Yet so many works of both Verne and his steampunk descendants are always really only about the present: every yesterday’s tomorrow and every tomorrow’s yesterday is

always really only today. Verne's Around the World in 80 Days and the stories of so many of his literary descendants dwell in the tension between linear determinism and complexity, in the awareness that all our systems of knowledge, all our inference devices and difference engines must ultimately fail to fully capture the meaning of the world. At the deepest levels, such stories confront the paradox that we have been post-human for as long as we've been human – ever since we made that first tool or spoke that first word.

Phileas Fogg appeals to us because he is us. He may be different from us in degree – richer from some unknown source, more obsessed, perhaps -- but he is not different from us in kind. Our daily adventure too is racing against the clock. Fogg, with his daily recording of his itinerary and schedule, with his pocket almanac and “red-bound copy of ‘Bradshaw’s Continental Railway Steam Transit and General Guide’” is the harbinger of who we are – with our Blackberries, iPhones, and travel blogs -- and the world in which we increasingly live.

Based on his travels, Fogg would no doubt be at least a charter member in that 53rd Thursday Club (founded by Verne) with which I began this discussion. The novel in which Fogg occurs, and his creator too, have already been so apotheosized, appropriately in our day: In 2007, a hotels group based in Barcelona proposed the construction of a Galactic Suites Hotel, an orbiting resort which would offer its guests the opportunity to go “around the world in eighty minutes” and featured, as part of its proposed accommodations, something called a “Jules Verne package.”

Perhaps the ultimate apotheosis of Jules Verne thus far, however, may be that “Jules Verne” is the name of the European Space Agency ATV (automated transfer vehicle), an orbital cargo freighter which uses the world's most advanced space autopilot system. On the last day of March 2008 (according to Stephen Clark's post on the Spaceflight Now website, entitled “Jules Verne Practices Close Approach to Space Station”), the robotic spacecraft Jules Verne

--which oddly resembles an X-wing fighter from Star Wars -- “hit all its marks on time” as it traveled to the International Space Station and performed, as NASA and ESA officials put it, “like clockwork.”

The Phileas Fogg of the beginning of Around the World in Eighty Days would be proud of that. The Phileas Fogg of the end of Around the World in Eighty Days, however – the Phileas Fogg who has come to realize his need for the exotic Otherness of Aouda and the trickster-Otherness of Passepartout and Detective Fix, the Phileas Fogg that has come to realize his predictions about the world are fundamentally constrained by himself being a part of the world he is predicting – that Phileas Fogg would be even more impressed if he hadn't foreseen it.

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# STEAMCON

Possibly the biggest Steampunk happening this October is Steamcon in Seattle. It's the third major convention dedicated solely to the world of Steampunk. I was lucky enough to attend the first and the second was last month (and we'll be having coverage in the next issue). Steamcon looks to be the biggest of them so far.

The Guests of Honor are a fantastic bunch and I'm so glad I'll get to be there to see them. First, one of the LA Dream Team, the group that KW Jeter referred to as the Steampunks in 1987, Mr. Tim Powers will be the Writer GoH. While most of his work would be better classified as Urban Fantasy (especially his works like *Earthquake Weather* and *Expiration Date*) but *The Anubis Gates* is a Steampunk classic which if you haven't read it, you must go out and read it now. We'll still be here when you get back.

The Artist GoH is Paul Guinan. He's the creator of *Boilerplate: The Mechanical Marvel of the Nineteenth Century!* An entire book dedicated to *Boilerplate* will be released on October First, the same date as Gail Carriger's *Soulless*. A big day for Steampunks, no?

The Music Guests of Honor are Abney Park. They have been a very popular act at cons around the world, and they played *Steam-Powered* last year to great acclaim. They're a fine band and I'm excited to see them again.

Those aren't the only guests. There's an art show whose list of contributors reads

like a who's who of Steampunk art. Data-mancer will be there with the magnificent mods he's so well-know for. There's also Molly Michelle Friedrich (porkshanks.deviantart.com), Jeff Sturgeon, Gemma Woodhouse (www.gempunk.com) and many more. It's an awesome list of folks and I'll certainly be in there when I get a chance.

There's also more music. Unwoman, a San Francisco-based cellist, will be there.



You must go and find her stuff at [www.unwoman.com](http://www.unwoman.com). Well worth seeking out. Also playing will be Vernian Process, a great band also out of SF (and whose keyboardist works with me at the Computer History Museum. It'll make for some great performances.

I also know that several panelists will be there. I'll be talking about Babbage and Victorian invention, Mike Perschon will be there

and one of his talks will be about Steampunking your RPG. I know that Jay Lake will be there. I've heard that there are going to be several other writers there, which is always a good thing.

The Seattle Airport Marriott, the hotel up and behind the Hilton where the 2005 NASFiC took place. It's a nice place. They tore down my favorite hotel at SeaTac, the Radisson, but there are still some fantastic hotels in the area.

If you can make it, come out to the con. You can get more info at <http://www.steamcon.com/>. Weekend memberships are \$40 and room nights are \$109.00.

## SEATTLE: OCT 23-25

BY CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA

# DRAGON\*CON FASHION SHOW



SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2009





# STEAMPUNK FASHION SHOW





THE SHOW ALSO  
FEATURED A  
PERFORMANCE FROM  
SYRENS OF THE SOUTH



# COMMITTED TO THE ASYLUM: A CONVENTION REPORT

The Asylum the first UK National Steampunk Convivial held in Lincoln between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September in the Year of our Lord 2009 AD. Held at the Lawn a former 19<sup>th</sup> Century Lunatic Asylum it brought 400 + persons of the Steampunk persuasion into the same place at the same time.

It came about when I, Mr Peter Harrow, Esq posted on the Brass Goggles Steampunk Forum a thread asking if anyone was interested in putting together a UK National Steampunk Convivial. A chap by the name of Major Tinker replied, and the rest is, as they say, alternate history.

The Major (in civilian life John Naylor), runs a television production company Timetarts, with his good lady wife Karen (Lady Elsie on Brass Goggles, or Matron to us impertinent upstarts at The Asylum who deserve a good slap) and a host of other persons of good cheer. He also manages and stages events and was clearly someone WHO CAN GET THINGS DONE, vital in a community such as Steampunk with very few people with any experience of running such a thing as a Convention.

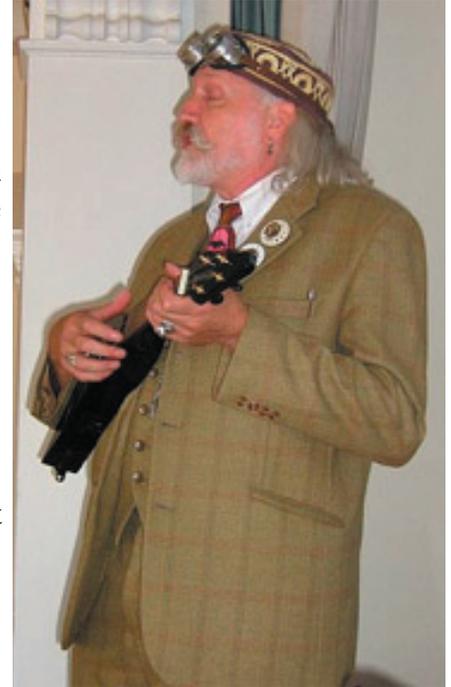
Having myself started into the homestretch of organising LX2009, with Mr James Bacon as my Co-Chair, engaging in another sizeable convention was something which led people to question my sanity... again.



I tried to get people interested with a couple of steampunk items at Redemption and I had opened up a thread on Brass Goggles about which Steampunk author people would like to meet, and one name which kept popping

up was that of Mr Robert Rankin. As it happened I had some brief acquaintance with the gentleman and so approached him at Picocon. He admired the antique lasergun systemcane I had built, which won him over in my estimation as not only a gentleman, but one of taste and decorum.

With tentative arrangements in place I made the introductions between Robert and Raygun and the Major and Lady Elsie, fearful that they wouldn't strike it off. I shouldn't have worried, they got on like a house on fire (people running about screaming and calling the emergency services). They are currently all ukeleilying together (if this is the correct term).



LX 2009 came and contained much Steampunk goodness thanks to our GoH Mr Tim Powers, and the Major and Lady Elsie came and helped on a couple of steampunk programme items getting to see how science fiction did its conventions, and yet they were still undaunted. Whilst the Major and Lady Elsie also did a Ghostfire gig that same evening and graciously accepted their offer to play at the Asylum, I twisted the arm of Toby Frost, he of the chronicles of Space Captain Smith to commit to the Asylum. I then got Doctor Emma King PhD interested in doing a few 'mad science' items for us at The Asylum, having graciously just avoided blowing up LX2009.

Promotion of the Asylum began in earnest, initially low key. We were slightly worried about numbers, could we reach break even? was there the demand?. As it turned out there was indeed the demand.... with Brass Knobs on !!! Break even point

got broken in record time and the initial 250 member estimate was eventually capped at around the 400 mark instead.

Other programme items such as the snuff tasting were arranged and largesse provided by Forbidden Planet (bags), the Pax Britannia line of steampunk books from Rebellion, and the Steampunk Chap Magazine for the goody bags. I had previously seduced the Major and Lady Elsie to the charms of Crabbe's Alcoholic Ginger Beer, and they then proceeded to corrupt the entire Con to its presence by laying it on at Charlotte House and arranging for coupons for it (and other alcohol) in the goody bags.

We finalised a programme, made all our props and costumes, girded our loins, and set out to Lincoln.

First time for me in Lincoln on the Friday, and I was immediately charmed by the place, registered and got to walk around it a little bit in my best tweed three piece suit, suffering slightly from the glorious weather. I pitied the poor steampunk explorer in full kit including pith helmet and goggles I greeted at the bottom of Steep Hill (an inaccurate description unless pre-fixed with 'Exceedingly') dragging a large case behind him.

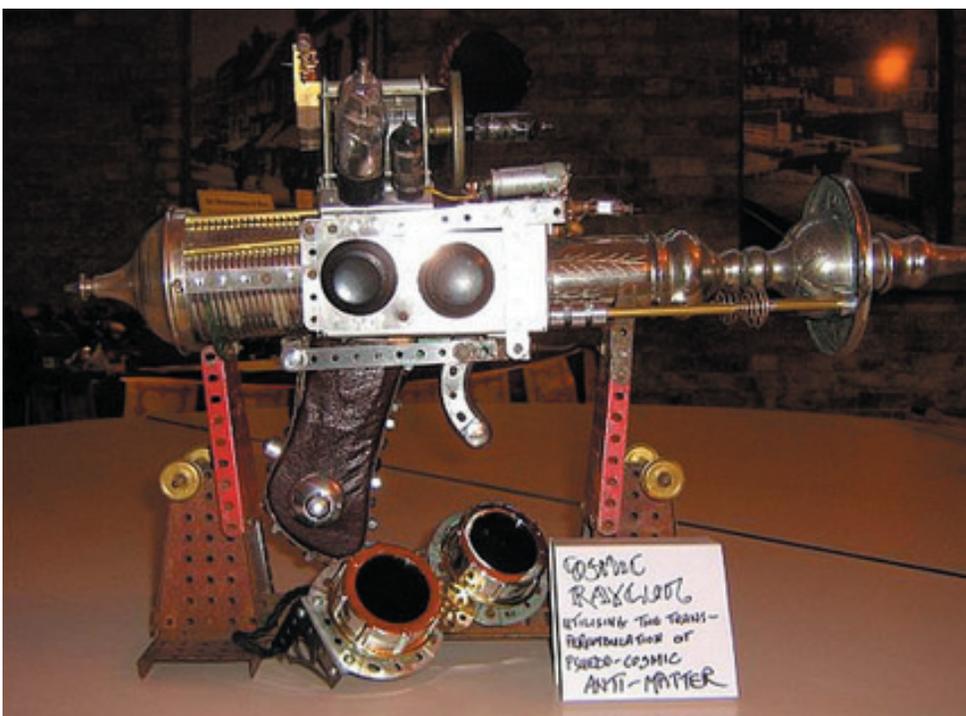
Back to the Victoria Inn (God Bless Her!) in the evening we had Lady Raygun

on the steel drum, and Mr Andrew O'Neil giving an informative and improving lecture on steampunk to general amusement and hilarity. A succession of other musical acts were also on for our edification, a barbecue, and free Pimms. Myself, Toby Frost, Robert and Cardinal Cox had arranged a rota to get four free Pimms each time with a different one of us going up each time claiming it was our first round. Sadly we only did this twice before the Pimms ran out. Throughout the night more and more elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen joined the party, much to the bemusement of the locals, especially as we started to outnumber them and they started to look anachronistic.

Up bright and early for the start on the Saturday in the Lawns itself, setting up a little SF Outreach stall with my Martian Walker Sculpture and Steampunk Trunk, and a big jar of Victorian boiled sweets including Fruit Drops, Acid Drops, Uncle Joes Mintballs, Humbugs and Black Bullets purchased from Goodies Traditional Sweet Shop the day before on Steep Hill. We had the usual teething problems with tech, the back-up Magic Lantern causing problems (at least no one had left the lens cap on) for Dr King's lectures. The said lectures resulted in several small explosions, interspersed with a flavoured snuff taking which then resulted

in several other small explosions.

The Bizarre Eclectica lived up to its name, and despite my resolve I gave in and purchased a dark green top hat which nicely matched my green tweed suit, and brown leather and brass Halcyon Motor Cycle Goggles. An innovation was to have a dance workshop in the same room. Heresy! But it worked splendidly and the traders enjoyed it as much as the whirling participants. I also got to speak to the Chap Magazines representative the lovely





Fiona.

My remaining duties for the day included judging the contraptions contest (as I was only exhibiting and not taking part), which had some fine examples of the prop and gadget makes art and whimsy. The 'Molecular Condenser' gave me a real chuckle as it was presented with a small T-Rex in a birdcage beside it (no T-Rex were apparently harmed in the making of the exhibit, it was apparently subsequently enlarged and returned to the Cretaceous period).

I was also roped in to Judge the Masquerade when Robert stepped up and compered the show in his normal shy and retiring manner, leaving me with Raygun, Lady Elsie, and Steamblast Mary (with pointy stick!). The standard of costume was terrifically high, and that was just the audience, the 15 entries (and two latecomers) were just stunning, but Corporal Grease in full uniform including leather and brass pith helmet, glowing respirator and brass boots was a true winner.

Evening brought a change of clothing and this meant my Burgundy Velvet Smoking Jacket got an airing. I had brought my Tesla Cane made for LX, which included a working plasma ball as the cane head. It was a real hit with the ladies (and one or two gentlemen) fondling, by glowing purple head.

A stunning evening was had and for which I was duly stunned by a big piece of gold metal. The Victorian Steampunk Society, organisers of The Asylum inducted me as a Fellow of the Society, for my contribution to Steampunk, in helping the Major and Lady Elsie and the rest of the Society in making the Asylum real, rather than just some Opium dream.

I was one of two Fellows inducted in 2009, the other being none other than the inaugural Fellow himself, the now Commodore Robert Rankin. Fellowship allows its holders free membership to the Asylum for life, with two new members to be inducted each subsequent year. Robert had double cause to celebrate as he was awarded the Jules Verne award in the Contraptions competition in the Ingenuity category for his Raygun (the Meccano one, not Rachel). Unaccustomed as he is to wearing bling, the Commodore bravely displayed his medals to the world as did I. It is a true honour and one I hope to live up to in years to come.

The remainder of the Saturday evening is a bit hazy after this but the hauntingly beautiful Ghostfire Waltz composed specially for the Asylum stands out.

A hung over Sunday was spent largely in the company of Robert and Raygun, after the Raffle, the proceeds split between Brass

Goggles and Help For Heroes (I donated a signed Tim powers First edition, and the Major had got Alchemy to donate BIG TIME), hunting through antique shops (I found a genuine black on black embroidered antique Nepalese Cap from Katmandu, perfect to go with both my smoking jackets). Luncheon was eating the multiverses best

pie at Browns Pie Shop, and ice-cream at the ice cream parlour. Walking around town with similarly elegant companions, seeing the sites, and being seen by the tourists, leading to a dead Dog in Charlotte House that evening rounded off quite the perfect steampunk weekend.



## TORONTO STEAMPUNK SOCIETY EVENTS

### ***October 3rd - 4th: Nuit Blanche with the Toronto Steampunk Society***

From Dusk to Dawn, experience the city transformed by more than 550 artists for Toronto's fourth annual sunset to sunrise celebration of contemporary art.

### ***October 10th - Fort Fright with the Toronto Steampunk Society***

Join members of the Toronto Steampunk Society and the Ottawa Steampunk Society at Fort Henry in Kingston for a night of ghoulish terrors as we get ourselves in the mood for the horror of the holiday.

***For more information, check out the Facebook group at***

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1657860316#/events.php?oid=22444561659&v m=all>

# DRESSING THE PART

## AN INTERVIEW WITH GAIL CARRIGER

A few days ago, I had the great good fortune to speak with and interview Steampunk author Gail Carriger on the topic of... well, what else? "Dressing the part"!

Gail has been an intrinsic part of the Steampunk movement in the San Francisco Bay Area, and was a guest speaker at the 2008 California Steampunk Convention. A delightful conversationalist, Ms. Carriger had this to share with our readers:

**Ariane Wolfe:** What defines Steampunk Fashion to you? How do (or do) you see fashion defining the Steampunk movement?

**Gail Carriger:** Steampunk fashion tends to be an amalgamation of Victorian fashion with metallic industrial detailing (usually brass) and modern gothic overtones. I've defined it in the past as the lovechild of Hot Topic and a BBC costume drama. I do believe that the attire of steampunk is hugely relevant to the movement as a whole. It's one of the things that sets Steampunk apart from other SFF subgenres. The fashion melds a clear aesthetic with that intrinsically steampunk sense of creativity and community. It's true that some people are more into the literature and others more into the craftsmanship side of Steampunk, but even those folks usually nod in the fashion direction with a vest, or a pair of goggles, or a newsboy cap.

**AW:** Where should one begin? With the Character or with the Clothing?

**Ms. Carriger:** I began with the clothing, but that's because I'm not much of an actor and I really just enjoy the style. Also I incorporate steampunk into my everyday life as well as wearing full on costumes

to larger events. This means I like separates and small details, like jewelry, that I can mix with "normal" garb. Starting with a character might work better for those who are planning on attending a faire or convention, or those who aren't inveterate shoppers.

Character or Clothing also depends on ones approach to making a costume piece. I visit vintage, army surplus, and thrift stores where I find things and then modify them to become steampunk. Most of the time these pieces then dictate the finished outfit and character. But if you are the kind of person who can work from a pattern then you have the luxury of choosing where to go from the start and thus may want to have a character in mind.

**AW:** What do you see as the relationship between Character and Costume?

**Ms. Carriger:** This relationship often emerges in the kinetic or mechanical aspect of a costume. Someone will come up with an

awesome motorized arm, or a great mad scientist doctor self-folding kit, and suddenly a character will emerge from that one detail.

I think it's important not to become too carried away by character when still in the planning stage. I've known people who look endlessly for the perfect piece of costuming, yet they could have something wonderful if they were more flexible. As much as the clothing should adapt to your character, it is possible for the character to adapt to a new clothing discovery as well.

**AW:** What is your best advice for someone just getting started with steampunk



fashion and characterization?

**Ms. Carriger:** Be open to the possibilities. One of my most commented upon pieces is a corset I tore apart and covered in buttons, paper clips, and brass spoons. Yes, spoons. People love to see the silly and the unexpected. Shop in a different area of the thrift store. For example, women's vests sometimes also fit men and are usually more Victorian looking. The bric-a-brac section often has bendable bits of metal. Buttons can be changed, pockets can be added, sleeves removed. When you're costuming, try to train your mind to see what a piece of clothing *could* be, rather than what it is. Also keep your eyes open at places like Target, Kohls, or JC Penny. Steampunk turns up unexpectedly everywhere.

I also suggest watching a costume movie from the time period you are interested in, and then extrapolating. If you're fascinated by the Austen dandy driving a high flyer, how would that character dress if he were driving an ornithopter? How would the engineer of a train differ from the engineer in a dirigible? How about Gaskell's doctor who has to treat steam burns instead of cholera? If the lady is cross-dressing, why is she doing so? Does she have a profession that requires greater mobility? Is she riding the latest and greatest steam powered bicycle? What would have had to carry about her person if she were?

Lastly, there are certainly elements not well represented yet in the Steampunk world: minors, maids, footmen, drivers, hostlers, postmen, sailors, clerks, foreign dignitaries, cooks. Yet if we imagine a Victorian world where steam power dominates, these people are its cogs.

**AW:** I recall you leading a panel last year at the California Steampunk Convention on "Thrifting and Modding clothes for Steampunk" - could you speak a bit about that?

**Ms. Carriger:** I can do one better. I have a blog entry with detailed notes and pictures from the panel as well as some links and other tips on thrifting. (<http://gailcarriger.livejournal.com/64302.html>) Also you can check out the shop section of my webpage, it has a list of Steampunk and Victorian vendors online. (<http://www.gailcarriger.com/shop.php>) Even if you don't have the funds to buy, you can get some great ideas on what to look for while you're out thrifting.



**AW:** Beyond the perhaps de rigeur goggles, what item or items, if any, do you see as quintessentially "Steampunk"?

**Ms. Carriger:** Some kind of hat or hair ornament is pretty common, anything from an embellish band to a tiny top hat or a massive a modified eyepiece. Vests, corsets, kilted up skirts, knickerbockers, and boots tend to abound. Deconstructed clocks, gears, leather bands, metal buttons, and military detailing are common as well. The color template leans in favor of brass and brown, although goth wear is still there with it's black and silver. I always enjoy costumes that really adopt the Victorian delight in bright colors and the expansion of British trade that brought with it vibrant Indian muslins and patterned Chinese silks, but they remain comparatively rare.

**AW:** What resources can you recommend to readers wanting to become more involved with the fashion side of Steampunk?

**Ms. Carriger:** The Steampunk fashion group on flickr has over a thousand images that will certainly inspire (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/Steampunkfashion/>). There are a number of thriving LiveJournal communities as well. I like

steamfashion best (<http://community.livejournal.com/steamfashion/>), the posts are monitored to prevent off-topic advertising, and it is comprised of a really helpful group of people, always supportive and willing to answer questions or concerns. I also suggest la Mode Illustrée (<http://community.livejournal.com/lamodeillustrée/>), which is wonderful for those of us interested in the actual attire of the day. Just going on to Google Images and typing in “Steampunk fashion” yields up some amazing results. And in spring of 2008 Ralph Lauren put some seriously great turn of the century style starter pieces down the runway. It’s definitely worth checking out (<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/complete/S2008RTW-RLAUREN/?viewall=true>).

You are invited to visit [Gail’s Virtual Home \(www.gailcarriger.com\)](http://www.gailcarriger.com). Alternatively, pick your poison: Friend or follow Gail on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Livejournal](#), or [Blogspot](#). Options, options –so many options! Or join [The Parasol Protectorate](#) facebook group and take over the world one sip of tea at a time. You can also play the [Alexia paper-doll dress up game](#).

**Ms. Carriger’s debut novel, [Soulless](#)** hits bookstore shelves both brick and virtual at the same time as this issue of the Exhibition Hall zine ~ October 1, 2009.

ISSUE THREE DUE OUT NOVEMBER FIRST FEATURING A WINDYCON PREVIEW, INTERVIEW WITH THE MEN WHO WILL NOT BE BLAMED FOR NOTHING, REPORTAGE ON CLOCKWORK CALIPHATE, STEAMCON, A LOOK AT THE WORK OF RICHARD LUPOFF AND STEVE STILES AND MUCH MORE! DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS; OCT. 21ST

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A community gathering and fundraiser  
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This promises to be an unforgettably decadent evening of sumptuous Moroccan feasting and delightful entertainments in grand Ottoman Empire style. Tickets are \$50 each and all proceeds will be used to produce the Nova Albion Steampunk Exhibition, (formerly the California Steampunk Convention), returning to the San Francisco Bay Area March 12th to the 14th, 2010. Enjoy:

- ~ FIVE-COURSE MOROCCAN DINNER ~
- ~ STEAMPUNK ARTISANS’ RAFFLE ~
- ~ THE CLOCKWORK CALIPH ~
- ~ EXOTIC BELLY DANCERS ~
- ~ THE BRUNOS BAND ~

**A limited number of tickets are still available at:** <http://www.steampunkexhibition.com/caliphate>

Steampunk, Victorian and Ottoman Empire attire ~ and any interpretation thereof ~ are greatly encouraged but not required.

