

*First
Progress
Report*



Corflu

CONCORDE

**Corflu Concorde (Corflu 38),
The Mercure Holland House Hotel,
Redcliffe Hill, Bristol BS1 6SQ**

26th-28th March 2021

(currently booked date: subject to change)

ORGANISING TEAM

Rob Jackson, Chair & Hotel Liaison
Keith Freeman, Memberships and Treasurer
Sandra Bond, Publications
Nic Farey, FAAn Award Administrator
Bill Burns, Webmaster
Ian Millsted, Local Agent
Pat Virzi, US Agent

To be agreed (volunteers welcome): Programme; Virtual Corflu; Auction; Tech Ops

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Attending memberships are now £50.00 or \$60.00 till 31 December 2020. We originally planned to review these rates at the end of November, but because of the uncertainty caused by COVID-19 we have decided to delay any rate rise till at least the end of 2020. Rates may well rise thereafter, so join early!

Supporting memberships will be £15.00 or \$20.00 throughout.

UK or rest of the world: Payments via PayPal (£ sterling) to jacksonshambrook@uwclub.net; or by post in £ sterling cheques payable to Rob Jackson, Chinthay, Nightingale Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8UH, UK.

Email: concorde@corflu.org (personal address robjackson60@gmail.com).

USA: Payments in US\$ via PayPal to Pat Virzi at <https://paypal.me/PatVirzi>.

Please send your postal and email address details with payment.

Advance information (Progress Reports and other details) will be sent by email unless specifically requested. Publications at the convention will be printed and mailed by post to those who do not attend. Personal information will be held on computer but shared with no other agency.

Front cover: clip art by kind courtesy of John Purcell's ferreting skills

WELCOME!

Rob Jackson

Welcome to Corflu Concorde! This is the first publication about the con since the bid to hold the next Corflu in Bristol was officially ratified at Corflu Heatwave in College Station early this year. In holding Corflu Heatwave in mid-March, we only just got in under the wire of lockdown. Since then, the COVID pandemic has flooded the world and left us with a completely changed worldview. Things have changed so radically that Corflu Heatwave feels more like six years than six months ago.

This is rather a strange Progress Report, as there are so many uncertainties caused by COVID that it is more accurate to say we are standing at a crossroads wondering which way events will permit us to go. But as the con's Chairman, it is my job to read the signs, and perhaps even write the directions on the signposts.

The areas of progress include an organising team (only a few roles still to be filled), a really encouraging number of you signed up as members, a hotel who are very helpful (and willing to be pragmatic should circumstances force us to change the date), and a clear plan for the FAAn Awards. Another major plus, born out of necessity as a result of the COVID crisis, has been the massive development of expertise in video conferencing which may allow us to have an even livelier virtual Corflu as a support for the real thing.

A real convention – but when?

And a real, in person, event is what it certainly will be. The next Corflu will definitely be in Bristol, not an online-only event. The big question, posed by the exigencies and uncertainties of the COVID pandemic's restrictions on travel and social gatherings, is – when?

What we want, of course, is for Corflu to be the gathering of fanzine fans, historically from the US, the UK, Canada or Australia that it has already become. Perhaps we could also do with more fanzine fans from other parts of the world – especially non-Anglophone fans – who should become more part of the Corflu community.

As people need to decide about their travel plans and hotel bookings with a reasonable amount of notice, a decision needs to be made about this. The factors likely to influence a decision are mainly to do with medical risks of travel, and the political decisions made as a result. **If** it seems likely that by late March 2021 UK regulations will permit us to hold gatherings of up to 100 people, and people from North America are allowed to fly to the UK without quarantining themselves for a fortnight, then there is No Problem. We are Full Speed Ahead for **Plan A, a traditional Corflu on the date we have already set. (Stop press, late September: the most recent UK Government guidance is cautious about any significant relaxation of restrictions on socialising for up to 6 months, so Plan A is only likely if the pandemic eases up a lot.)**

However, with the pandemic being as unpredictable as it is, we can't be sure how well travel will have recovered by then. So far (as of mid-September 2020), we have at least as many US/Canadian members signed up to attend as UK ones. British (and perhaps European) fans can make travel plans nearer the time with less hassle, and the grapevine does twitch with word of British fans and groups who definitely intend to be at the con; but the strong US and Canadian interest means it would be grossly unfair to hold the con at a time when Americans are unlikely to be able to travel freely to attend. So we need the viral pandemic to have receded, through widely available and effective vaccinations, herd immunity or whatever other mechanism.

If the risk hasn't receded by March but seems more likely to have done so by the early summer, then **Plan B is to delay the 2021 Corflu till May or June** when Transatlantic travel can happen. A con somewhere near the middle of the year would still work!

If we are to go ahead with the original date, we must be definite by around Christmas this year as to whether it is safe to do so. This is to allow all of us to make plans and book – both for us to travel, and for the hotel to have final confirmation that we are not going to need to alter the date.

More of a worst-case scenario is Plan C, which is what happens if we are still locked into social distancing and mainly virtual communication – as we have been since the pandemic really hit. I am open to alternative views, but the feeling I get from most of us is that we all do still want a Corflu in Bristol, whenever we can hold it successfully.

So the **plan C I would suggest is to put the Bristol Corflu back a full year**, and the subsequent schedule would also slip back a year. (There are current plans from Ulrika O'Brien and others to hold an event somewhere in the Pacific Northwest, almost certainly Vancouver rather than Seattle, and then Tommy Ferguson and friends to host one in Belfast in commemoration of Irish Fandom. These are currently pencilled in for 2022 and 2023 but might have to be 2023 and 2024. See pages 11 and 12 for news!)

Progress Report 2 will be published by Sunday December 20th at the latest, in which the choice between these three options will be made public. By then we should know where we are with a vaccine and other medical developments worldwide (not to mention what has happened in the US Presidential election, which might have an effect on the mind-set of a lot of us!).

FAAn Award timings

I'm very pleased that Nic Farey is administering the FAAns this coming year (for work published in 2020 of course). He has a clear view about how to keep the FAAns interesting and relevant to the fanzine community, without overcomplicating them. There has been a lot of thought and discussion about this year's award categories, much of it openly in the pages of Nic's personalzine *This Here* (though some more by email between us). Nic and I think alike on most aspects of all this, and when there was a difference of view it was easy to sort out. For details, see the last few issues, which can be found, as usual, on eFanzines.

The date of the Corflu is currently the main factor in deciding how long the voting period can be. Postponing Corflu Concorde by a couple of months is not a disaster; it simply allows us to extend the voting deadline if we wish, which could even be a bonus in some ways as more fans might vote!

Things get a bit more complicated if COVID restrictions mean the con has to be postponed by a full year. We can still run the awards, but we may have to present the 2020 awards via a Zoom-based presentation in place of the traditional post-Banquet Awards Ceremony, most likely on the weekend of the con's original planned date. Though that is very much a worst-case scenario, we will make it as much of a party as possible. We will of course Watch This Space and keep you in touch; we are very much open to ideas about how best to handle things.

The Real and the Virtual

For over a decade now Corflus have made their programme available to faraway fanzine fans online, with varying degrees of success and interactivity; the frustration has often been how difficult remote Corfluvians have found it to comment, bid for items at auctions and so on. The drawback has usually been a slow and intermittent connection, or a user-unfriendly app on the broadcasting computer. At Corflu Heatwave, we were still using YouTube, which is not primarily a video conferencing app.

One of the major silver linings in the COVID cloud that has hung over us all in 2020 has been the easy availability and user-friendliness of online video conferencing apps such as Zoom. As well as letting us communicate in real time with only minimal delay, Zoom allows the recording and archiving of sessions which can then be stored on YouTube, Google Drive or wherever we choose. Zoom has been in general a user-friendly enough app that millions of us have suddenly learnt how to use it worldwide. Not only has it been put to serious use for work or family reasons all over the world, but many fans and other friends have had a lot of fun at Zoom parties.

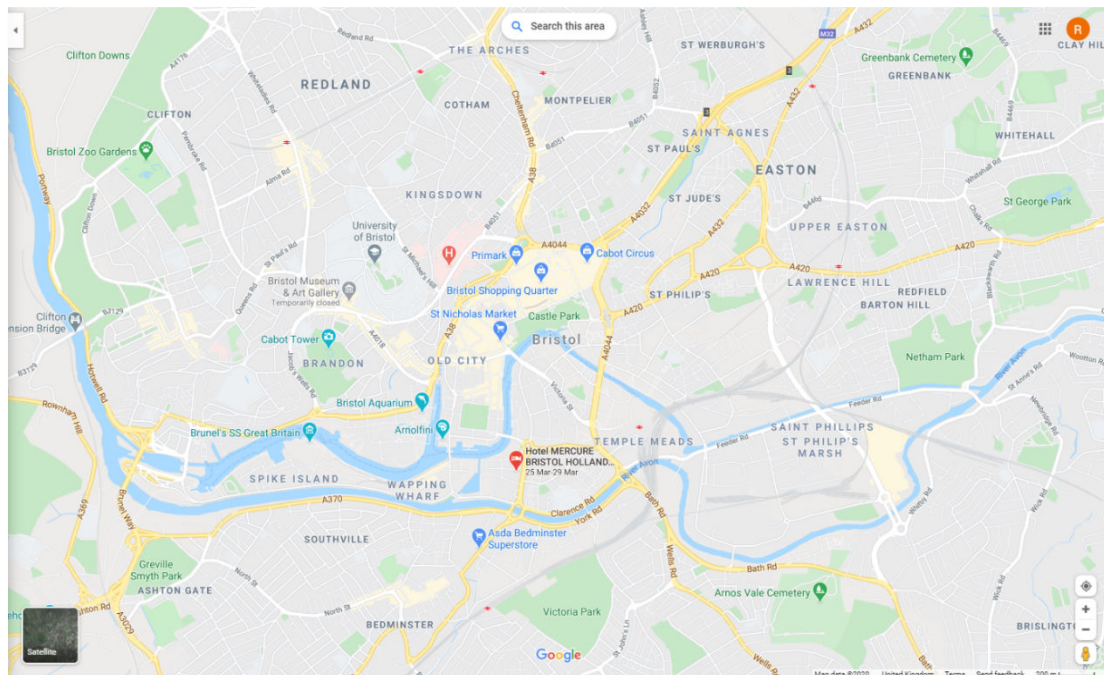
Real-time video conferencing allows us to try all sorts of New Stuff if we want, such as showing a screenful of remote audience members on the projector screen of the Corflu convention hall. Online viewers may perhaps – with suitable control by a moderator or meeting host – ask questions, submit auction bids and generally interact with the real-life event in the hall. There would of course be a need for careful control, but at its best this could be memorably good fun for all concerned.

No final decisions have been made yet. Whoever organises the con's programme will have a major say in how this is implemented, obviously alongside whoever runs the Virtual Corflu for Corflu Concorde. Volunteers are sought for both those roles, by the way; the Virtual Corflu is nearly a full-time job in itself while the con programme is running, so as Con Chair I don't expect to have spare time to run the Virtual Corflu. If you have thoughts as to how it should be done, let me know!

HOTEL AND RATES



The Mercure Holland House Hotel, Redcliffe Hill, Bristol BS1 6SQ



The hotel is within easy walking distance of Bristol’s Old City centre, Bristol Temple Meads railway station, the main shopping centre, the massive variety of restaurants round the

Waterside and in the city centre, and the SS Great Britain – among many other magnetic reasons to be in Bristol.

The Mercure has most attractive top-floor function rooms – see these 360 degree tours: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=9UTcHMfNiwB>. We are likely to have one of the top floor suites like the Phoenix Suite, as it is about the right size for us. There is a spacious foyer to these top floor suites which will be ours for our cash bar for snacks and drinks – given the success of the bar we had to ourselves at Tynecon III in Newcastle, if we can't have a US-style con suite (in the UK, hotels don't allow con suites), this is the next best thing!



Our agreed room rates are £100.00 per room per night bed and breakfast single occupancy; £110 per room per night bed and breakfast double occupancy (i.e. £55 per person). I would remind US visitors who are used to taxes on top, that rates quoted by UK hotels are inclusive of any tax. ***We will announce details of the booking process once the dates for the convention are confirmed, which as noted above depends on our freedom to travel.***

VISITING BRISTOL

Ian Millsted

As with anywhere else just now, uncertainty abounds in Bristol. As a teacher, I plan to use some of the school holidays to check out such places as the Aerospace/Concorde museum and the Steampunk museum, to see if they might appeal to the discerning attendees of Corflu Concorde. Till now, my plans have been on hold for obvious reasons. Both of those places are now open, and I will see what I can find out in the next couple of weeks. Bristol is also close to cider country, so a trip to a cider farm might be possible if enough people are interested.

What else is there that is distinctive to Bristol? Wallace and Gromit? Banksy's street art? Famously empty statue plinths? Brunel's SS Great Britain? The rest of the harbour and waterside? Take your pick. Even better, let me know what you might be interested in, and I'll wear out some shoe leather to investigate. Here are a few ideas to be going on with:

<https://visitbristol.co.uk/things-to-do/attractions>

FAAn AWARD CATEGORIES AND VOTING

Nic Farey

There will be eight categories for the 2021 FAAns:

FANZINE CATEGORIES

Best Genzine; Best Perzine; Best Special Publication

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

Best Fanwriter; Best Fanartist; Best Loccer (Harry Warner Jr, award)

OTHER CATEGORIES

Best Fanzine Cover; Best Website

To qualify for a FAAn award, a fanzine should have appeared in the calendar year 2020 (and its cover is thus also qualifying); an individual should have had work which first appeared in a zine published in 2020; a website should have been updated during the year.

VOTING METHOD

Each category will have five slots on the ballot form to record your choices. A first-place choice in any category will get a "bonus point" toward their vote total, i.e. 2 points; all others will get 1 point. The "bonus point" in the voting form below is marked "Top Choice."

Voters do NOT have to complete all slots or categories. This includes the possibility that you'd rather not have any zine or individual get the "bonus point", in which case you can leave the first slot blank, although this would restrict you to four choices.

Voting is open to anyone with an interest in fanzines; you do not have to be a member of Corflu or anything else.

An end-of-year issue of *The Incomplete Register*, listing qualifying zines and individuals that the Administrator, Nic Farey, is aware of will be published and widely distributed. Voters are in no way constrained by the contents of the lists in that zine, though.

Votes may be submitted by post or by email; for email, either append a filled-in version of this form as an attachment, or send a list indicating your preferences. For an email list, any first choices should be indicated as such.

THE CORFLU FIFTY

Rich Coad

The Corflu 50 arose from a couple of successful one-off fund-raising efforts to bring fans to Corflu. The Bring Bruce Bayside brought Bruce Gillespie from Melbourne to San Francisco in 2005 to attend Corflu Titanium (and, the following weekend, Potlatch 14, also in San Francisco). In 2007 Get Harry got Harry Bell from Gateshead (not Newcastle) in the North East of England to the centre of Texas for Corflu Quire. It was at Corflu Quire that Spike mentioned to me that bringing Steve Stiles to Corflu Silver would be a Good Thing. And so was born The Corflu 50, so named because Andy Porter suggested a simple mechanism of having 50 people each contribute \$25 to raise the money.

We've never actually had 50 members in the group, but fans can be generous and, with the additional influx brought about by Andy Hooper's auctioneering skills, we've managed each year to get somebody to Corflu. Several times we've had fans from the UK come to the US, twice sent US fans to the UK, and once even managed to bring a UK fan from Thailand to the San Fernando Valley. In lieu of actual campaigns and platforms, the winner is chosen by email conversations on a mailing list. Any member can suggest whomever they would like to see at the next Corflu and the pros and cons are discussed within the group. Usually a consensus arrives fairly quickly once the suggestions have been made.

In most years we have decided by Labor Day who should be asked. This year, with the uncertainties raised by the COVID pandemic, there is still time to join in and make your voice heard. Simply go to <https://groups.io/g/TheCorfluFifty> and click the link to ask to join the group. Alternatively you can send an email request to Rich Coad (richcoad at gmail dot com) or to Rob Jackson (robjackson60 at gmail dot com). We hope you will join in.

Past Corflu Fifty guests

2008	Steve & Elaine Stiles	Las Vegas, NV
2009	Curt Phillips	Seattle, WA
2010	Earl Kemp	Winchester, UK
2011	Dave Hicks	Sunnyvale, CA
2012	Shelby Vick	Henderson, NV
2013	Rob Hansen	Portland, OR
2014	Dan & Lynn Steffan	Richmond, VA
2015	Geri Sullivan	Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
2016	Grant Canfield	Chicago, IL
2017	Pete Young	Woodland Hills, CA
2018	Paul & Cas Skelton	Toronto, Canada
2019	Steve Jeffery	Rockville, MD
2020	Tommy Ferguson	College Station, TX

CORFLU CONCORDE MEMBERSHIP LIST

Keith Freeman

Correct up to 19 September 2020; listed alphabetically, with membership numbers and supporting/attending status alongside. Currently 33 attending and 8 supporting members.

41	A	Mowgli Assor
29	S	Karen Babich
32	A	James Bacon
3	A	Tom Becker
26	A	Doug Bell
13	A	Claire Brialey
37	A	Bill Burns
38	A	Mary Burns
7	S	Jim Caughran
9	A	Rich Coad
33	S	Nic Farey
34	S	J. L. Farey
24	A	Doug Faunt
10	A	Tommy Ferguson
23	A	Keith Freeman
35	A	Lucy Huntzinger
22	A	Rob Jackson
25	A	Christina Lake
12	A	Dave Langford
16	S	Robert Lichtman
17	A	Ian Maule
18	A	Janice Maule
27	A	Ian Millsted
4	A	Murray Moore
5	A	Mary Ellen Moore
15	A	John Nielsen-Hall
39	A	Ulrika O'Brien
8	A	Mark Olson
2	A	spike
11	S	Curt Phillips
14	A	Mark Plummer
30	A	John Purcell
31	A	Valerie Purcell
19	S	Dave Redd
28	A	Mark W Richards
40	S	Heath Row
42	A	Nigel Rowe
20	A	Paul Skelton
21	A	Cas Skelton
36	A	Geri Sullivan
6	A	Pat Virzi
1	A	Ted White

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

S&ra Bond is developing ideas for Special Publications to commemorate the con. A particular favourite of hers is a fanthology of the very best faan fiction, but others have ideas as well – Doug Bell and others have commented on the strong fanzine history in the Bristol area and the South-West of England generally. But it's early days yet....



VAN CORFLU ASPIRATIONS

Ulrika O'Brien

Way back in February of 2020 several of us in Seattle fanzine fandom were plotting various ideas for hosting a small convention or two in the area. Personally, I have long cherished the idea of bringing fans to the Sylvia Hotel in Vancouver, BC. The building is charming and quirky, and eminently well-suited to room parties because it started life as an apartment building, so many rooms have kitchens or sitting areas intact from that time. The hotel has traditionally been a very reasonably-priced one, especially given its location is very central, right on English Beach and very close to Stanley Park, making it a good starting point for a morning constitutional. Vancouver is a vibrant, lively city blessed with a great many good restaurants, some very fine bookstores, and some of the most ridiculously ravishing natural views you may find on the West Coast. I have also long considered that Britons who have some (quite understandable) hesitancy about traveling to the US may be easier about traveling to Canada.

Suzle and I were just gearing up to contact the Sylvia to see about pricing and availability when the Covid-19 lockdown fell, and the border closed, and so our Corflu-in-Vancouver (Sylvia Van Corflu?) aspirations went on hold. We haven't given up on the idea, but as with everything else pertaining to hotels and travel and convening indoors, it's all to wait for more certain times and more open borders. But watch this space. Something may happen eventually.

CORFLU IS COMING HOME!

Tommy Ferguson

The Belfast SF Group and I – you may recall us from the parties hosted at EuroCon 2019 in Belfast after the Dublin WorldCon – are planning to host Corflu in Belfast. Those of you who were delighted to hear such news at Corflu Heatwave and wanted to immediately know details were asked: “What date suits you?” Originally planned to celebrate 75 years of Irish Fandom on 26th August 2021 – marking the date that James White and Walt Willis first met up – we’re relaxed enough to change our plans to suit. In these uncertain times the Irish easy-going approach to hosting events seems more appropriate than ever. So whether it is 2023 or 2024 – we’ll be ready.

Which isn’t to say this isn’t a serious bid. The hotel is The Malone Lodge Hotel – <https://www.malonelodgehotelbelfast.com> – a wonderful boutique hotel (with self-catering apartments next door for a con suite and proper room parties) in the leafy area of South Belfast. This is home to many parks, museums, galleries, restaurants and pubs nearby and I’d already secured the booking. As I regularly use them for many other events, and have a close relationship with them, they are more than flexible this far out. The committee is self-selecting amongst Belfast fandom – utilising skills from the TitanCon conventions – as well as trufannish knowledge. Special events: we will shamelessly steal from Geri Sullivan's tour including visits to Oblique House and the Tower of Trufandom, city tours with a difference (local knowledge!) and a true Irish feast. Don’t worry – we’re serious and ‘have plans’!

That said, it wouldn’t be an Irish con without some laid-back entertainments as well. Come along, enjoy the craic and we’ll make sure you have fun!

