

THE FORTNIGHTLY FIX #26

Xmas Eve News From Planet Me

This has been a rather brilliant month for getting together with family and friends. Three weeks back, I headed up into Staffordshire to spend a few days with my mom and her partner, and to see my sister, brother-in-law and nephew (who only gets away with preferring the post-1983 *Star Wars* movies by virtue of his age still being in single digits). On the return journey, I stopped over in Willenhall to stay with Martin Tudor and my younger god-daughter Heloise. A week later, Lesley Ward and Brian Davies paid me a visit (Lesley's mom still lives at the other end of my road).

Thursday night, I drove over to Kevin and Melanie Clarke's, for once not to see them (they were heading out to a local restaurant with friends) but to spend the evening with my 'unofficial godchildren' Kirsty and Adam. I got to enjoy Kirsty's homemade vegetable soup (she's a very good cook) and look over a few images from her current art portfolio, then discuss local politics with Adam, talk about movies and generally have a great time. It was only the increasing likelihood of falling asleep at the wheel (I'd been awake for most of the preceding thirty-six hours) which had me back on the road just before midnight.

This afternoon, Matt Bird swung by with the traditional yuletide gift of a zombie magazine. Tomorrow, I plan to drop in my father's and say hi to my brother before picking Theresa Derwin up from her sister's so we can spend the evening together. Monday, I'll probably catch up with Ray Holloway at Cineworld. And next Saturday, I'm off to Chris and Linda Monk's to see 2012 in.

Like I said, all in all, it's been a rather brilliant month.

Film Capsules

- *The Big Year*: A birdwatching comedy starring Jack Black, Steve Martin and Owen Wilson was never likely to set box offices alight, but this amiable movie doesn't quite deserve the cold shoulder audiences afforded it.
- *Paranormal Activity 3*: Unconvincing prequel to the shoestring homevideo hit, which opens as *Poltergeist* and eventually tips over into *The Wicker Man*. With luck, this will kill the series off.
- *Shark Night 3D*: Mildly entertaining but seriously logic-deficient backwoods thriller in which a standard-issue group of American teens get chomped whilst on holiday.
- *Trolljegeren* (aka *The Troll Hunter*): If one film could redeem the increasing tiresome 'found footage' sub-genre for me, it's this totally bonkers mockumentary exposing the 'truth' behind the Norwegian government's decades-long cover-up of its rock-based native population.



It's the End of the World As We Know It

Well, hopefully not, despite that braindead movie a couple of years back (prophesising the apocalypse because some - not all - Mayans didn't bother calculating their calendar beyond 2012 is akin to sticking your head in the gas oven because Letts diaries only run until the first week of January). Besides, I've been invited down south to guest at a convention next March, so the impending global catastrophe could at least have the common decency to hold off until next summer (even if the combination of elections in France, Russia, China and the United States will almost certainly send assorted news channels into meltdown).

I definitely intend to keep *The FFix* running next year, not least to catch up with the slight backlog in letters of comment (more of which would always be welcome). For the meantime, with less than six hours left until kids start sneaking downstairs to see what's under the tree, I offer season's greetings to you all and the very best for the year ahead.

But Before I Forget...

Okay, so we're still awaiting the actual voting figures two weeks after the polls closed, but at least we know the winner of the latest TAFF race, and I couldn't be happier.



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