

The Ankh-Morpork Times

"The Truth Shall Make Ye Free"

ISSUE NO. MMCCCXCVIII

JANUARY 11TH, YEAR OF THE SPINNING MOUSE

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CAPTAIN'S BRIEFS

An Open Letter from the Chair of the Watch Open Weekend

Well, I hope you were all good girls and boys and got lovely gifts from the Hogfather. It's now the year of the Spinning Mouse, according to Sir Terry Pratchett.

Last year we did the work of putting together our committee, choosing a venue and dates, inviting some wonderful guests, putting together ideas for programme items, and doing research into a plethora of other con-related activities. We sold memberships, limited edition pre-convention t-shirts, built up followers on Twitter and Facebook, announced ourselves in Discworld Monthly, and chatted to as many fans as we could at the International Discworld Convention in August. We went to Shamrokon and spoke to other Irish and international sci-fi and fantasy fans. And finally, in November, we joined a lovely bunch of loonies in Wincanton for Hogswatch.

So what are our plans for this year? Well, some of them have

to be kept under wraps, for obvious reasons. We'll be meeting with our lovely hotel and sorting out some of the finer details. We'll continue spreading the word among friends, family and fellow fans. We'll be counting down the days until the con (which you can see ticking down on our website). Prepping costumes, polishing off the plans for the programme, selling Banquet tickets... so much to do, but it's all a labour of love. I am so grateful to the hardworking, creative and dedicated people who've volunteered their help so far, both those on the committee, and the countless future Gophers¹ who've come up to offer help. Not forgetting those who've already run a Discworld event, whose advice, cautions and reassurances have been invaluable.

We can't wait to see you all in October; it's going to be great.

- Captain Shivers

¹ See 'Ask Not' article, overleaf, for further details on Gophers.

WHO WATCHES THE HOGSWATCHMEN?

A Special Report from Our Correspondent in Wincanton

The Watch was out in force during the annual Hogswatch festivities, both to promote awareness of the upcoming Watch Open Weekend, as well as to maintain Law and Order. Captain Shivers and Sergeant-at-Arms Scanlon took particular pride in displaying some of the Watch's new equipment (pictured, right). Unfortunately, a number of Feegles later absconded with said equipment, but Sergeant Keel has assured the *Times* that after a brief chase it was recovered, and is now back in Watch hands.

Other notable organizations present at the event included the Assassins' Guild, who tested visitors' skill with a crossbow, while Seamstresses challenged visitors to erect a large wooden structure, and then to see how long they could maintain that erection. At least one individual has been issued with a warning for conduct unbecoming to an officer of the Watch. When asked about rumours of Watch intervention in the activities of the Thieves' Guild, Captain Shivers declined to comment.

by J. Sproutshed

WEATHER FORECAST

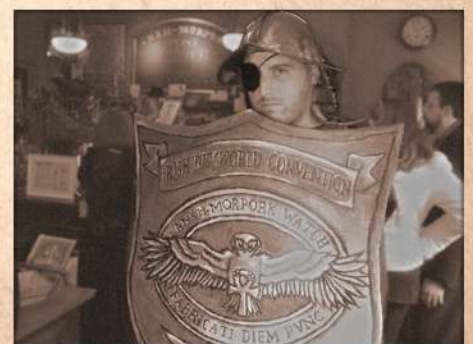
Typical Ick weather is expected to continue, with occasional showers and chilly spells. The near-constant fog across the city is perfectly safe, so long as it is not glowing green - though citizens are reminded that Ankh-Morpork should never be considered safe. Unseasonably warm temperatures across Djelibeybi have gone entirely unnoticed, as it is mostly desert. Despite recent rains of cats and dogs, we discourage our readers from stepping on poodles.

NEW YEAR'S PREDICTIONS

*from the Unseen University's
Professor of Astrology*

Having left the Year of the Reciprocating Llama, we have some exciting times ahead of us (except for the llamas, of course). No doubt the Year of the Spinning Mouse will result in extra paperwork for Death of Rats. This year, the house of Io and the house of the Bull will align, which will cause some confusion for Errata, who will start wearing red dresses when visiting Blind Io.

We are still near the beginning of the century of the Anchovy, which means there will be a lot of opportunities to grow and swim. Needless to say, this is the year that we should all take that extra step in helping our fellow Morporkians - and what better way than signing up for the City Watch Open Weekend?



ASK NOT WHAT YOUR CONVENTION CAN DO FOR YOU, BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR CONVENTION

Editorial

Well, what we can do is obvious – provide you with the Irish Discworld Convention in 2015. But what can you do? In the run up to the IDWCon, you can spread the word. Tell any friends or fans that you know of that we have this wonderful event coming up, and that the only way to come along will be with a membership. Send people to our website, our YouTube channel, our Tweets and join in the chatter on the Facebook group. But nothing really beats good old-fashioned word of mouth.

Prior to IDWCon, feel free to get in touch with us on info@idwcon.org, and we'll do our best to answer any questions that you have accurately and promptly, but do please remember we're all human, and all volunteers.

What can you do at the con itself? Well, we always need hands on deck, to help with a multitude of things. These helpers are known as Gophers. When I first asked why they were called Gophers, I was informed that it comes from the fact that volunteers at a major event are often told 'go for this and go for that'. Fetchers, carriers, stand-in participants, finders of lost things, losers of found things – their duties are many and varied. It's a great opportunity to meet people and to see the behind-the-scenes workings of the convention itself. Gophering can be something you do during the whole convention, or it can be something you just do for an hour when you have the time. If you'd like to be a Gopher, we'd be delighted to have you – just let us know at Registration at the convention, and we'll gladly let you know when and where your help will be needed.

OUT AND ABOUT IN ANKH - Our Weekly Society Column

All of the Stories, None of the Beatings!

Nobles wait anxiously this week for the Implications of the Patrician's new Inheritance Laws. As reported previously in the *Times*, Lord Vetinari has ordered an In-Depth inspection of all birth records dating back Fifty Years, which could change the lives of many of the *nullius fillius* in Ankh-Morpork, who may be Entitled to land and titles once denied to them. "It is an Outrage and a Travesty," Lord Selachii (54) shouted at the *Times*, slapping a copy of the legislation. After an interview with our Complaints Editor, his Lordship went on to clarify that he was merely worried for his Colleagues, that he himself had no real Interest in the change of law, and that he was in fact late for a Prior Engagement.

One of the most Anticipated Social Events of the year took place this week: The Annual Ankh-Morpork Flower Show and Competition. Shasher Harris (48), Head of the Ankh-Morpork Floral Arranging Society, said how pleased she was with the turnout and with the Greatly Reduced number of Casualties

this year. However, proceedings were delayed as the Watch were called to arrest a Rowdy Protester. The *Times* can Exclusively Report that this protestor was one Vita von Überleben (age unknown), head of the League of Life for the Living. Ms. Überleben used the flower show as an opportunity to hand out pamphlets, wave about select Pieces from her collection of Handcrafted Daggers, and to express her Violent Opposal to the existence of the Differently Alive. We here at the *Times* condemn Ms. Überleben's views totally, and Remind our readers that Ankh-Morpork is a city where anyone can Hold Their Head High!¹

by M. Browne

¹ The *Times* would like to make it clear that this is a Saying or Colloquialism, and is in no way meant to disparage or insult the more Vertically Challenged of our population. We remind our readers that the *Times* regularly donates to the Campaign for Equal Heights, whose good work continues to Improve our Fair City beyond words.

THE TIMES WORDSEARCH by "Puzzler"

Find all of the Watch-related words (below) in the grid. Words can be forwards, backwards, and diagonally. When you have found all the words, rearrange the spare letters to find the name of a notable person appropriate to the theme.

E	S	A	H	C	E	V	I	T	C	E	T	E	D
P	M	C	E	S	A	C	U	S	T	O	D	Y	M
S	A	I	A	C	E	L	L	T	D	G	N	B	K
R	S	T	R	A	N	U	N	M	N	W	E	Y	R
E	M	I	R	C	D	E	S	I	N	A	G	R	O
P	L	O	E	O	M	U	D	E	T	T	D	I	W
P	A	R	S	E	L	E	T	I	A	C	A	U	R
O	W	I	T	N	E	S	S	Y	V	H	B	Q	E
C	W	A	T	C	H	H	O	U	S	E	A	N	P
M	T	N	O	T	E	B	O	O	K	L	I	E	A
S	I	R	E	V	I	T	O	M	M	P	L	V	P
E	P	R	I	S	O	N	E	R	E	D	R	O	I

Words to find:

Arrest, Badge, Bail, Beat, Case, Cell, Chase, Clue, Copper, Crime, Custody, Detective, Duty, Enquiry, Evidence, Help, Law, Motive, Notebook, Order, Organised Crime, Paperwork, Patrol, Prisoner, Proceeding, Sir, Statement, Watch, Watch House, Witness