

AUSSIECON

Memory Book



aussiecon two

Welcome to the Aussiecon Memory Book

Jean Weber

Aussiecon changed my life. Not because of what it was, but because of the people I met. And even more importantly, the very special person I met through the people I met at Aussiecon — my best friend and life-partner, Eric Lindsay.

In 1974 I moved to Australia from the USA. Until then, I had never attended a science fiction convention, although I'd heard of them. I got a note from some longtime friends in the USA, Dick Roepke and Chris Callahan, who said they were coming to Melbourne in August of 1975 for something called a "World Science Fiction Convention" and would I like to join them? It seemed a good excuse for a holiday, so I did (I was living in Townsville, North Queensland, at the time; it's a bit south of Cairns).

I enjoyed myself at Aussiecon, but I was quite bemused about what was going on. Much to my surprise, I discovered that I had met John Bangsund only a few months earlier, through our professional editing work. After the convention, I subscribed to various fanzines, in particular those by John Bangsund, Leigh Edmonds and Bruce Gillespie, and I began to correspond with faneds.

When I moved to Canberra in 1977, it was much easier for me to attend conventions. At Unicon IV (1978) I invited myself to sit at Leigh Edmonds' banquet table and thus met Leigh, Valma, Christine and Derrick Ashby, Helen Swift and Perry Middlemiss. The next thing I knew, I was on a panel at Eastercon 1979, in an apa (the now-defunct Sydney apa, *Applesauce*; Anzapa had a long waitlist at the time), on another panel at Unicon VI in 1980, producing a fanzine grandiously titled *Aussiecon Fifth Anniversary Memorial Fanzine*, and contemplating my first issue of *WeberWoman's Wrevenge*.

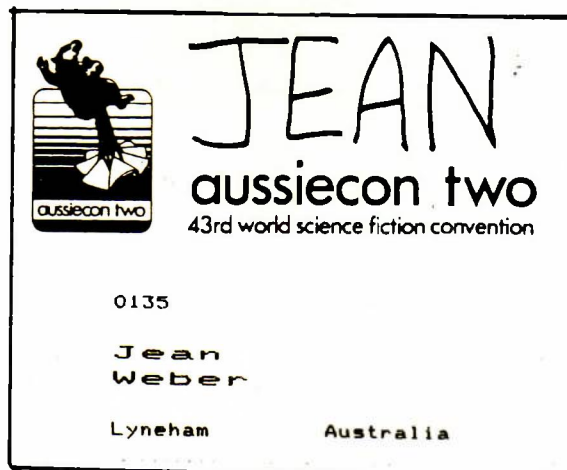
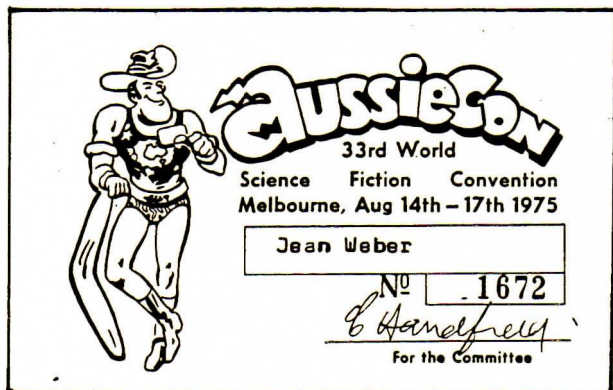
Eric and I may have met at Aussiecon, but if so, neither of us remembers. (We were in a lot of the same places at the same time.) We didn't really meet until 1980 at Unicon VI, which we remember as the "Haldeman convention". By 1982 I had invited myself to live with him, and thus I got caught up in bidding for Australia in '83 and '85, and working at Aussiecon II.

I didn't see much of the Aussiecon II program, except those items that were held in the fan lounge, where I was working. That was okay, because most of the people I wanted to meet either hung out there or at least passed through at various times.

When Eric came back from one of his USA trips brimming with enthusiasm for an Australia in '99 bid, I could hardly escape, even if I wanted to. So here we are, celebrating 20 years of Australian fandom (though it existed long before Aussiecon) and contemplating the insanity of doing it again if we win the bid for 1999.

Enough about me. Let's talk about the fanzine you hold in your hands (or are reading on the World Wide Web; how things have changed since my first mimeo'd zines with pasted-in electrostencilled illustrations). I'm doing the print version, and Eric is producing the Web version — mainly because he has the facilities to do so, and I don't, yet.

When the Aussiecon Reunion Convention committee approached me to produce this zine, I thought it was a wonderful idea. Not everyone I contacted responded, but Carey Handfield and Marc Ortlieb did a wonderful job of finding old con reports, photographs and artwork, and I raided Eric's and my photo collections. I didn't have time to do thorough research, so if you have words or pictures that you'd like to share, get in touch with me at the address on the inside back cover. I might be persuaded to do a follow-up edition.



Where it all began...

ONE UPON A TIME in 1967, John Bangsund, truefan publisher of the late lamented Australian Science Fiction Review, wrote frivolously in a letter to Andy Porter,

Fan Diemon's Land in '84!

The idea caught Andy Porter's fancy, and after Bangsund expressed the idea in an earlier year (1975) and a better location (Sydney, because most actifans lived there in the late 1960's), Andy Porter put this ad in the 1968 Laucon program book:



From there, things went rapidly (downhill?) until Leigh and Robin and John and a whole bunch of people found themselves selling kangaroos to people in the streets of Toronto, and looking at hotels and asking Ursula K. LeGuin to be Guest of Honor. And here you are in this impossible, improbable dream come true; all I can say is

Very Best Wishes From

Andy Porter & **ALGOL**

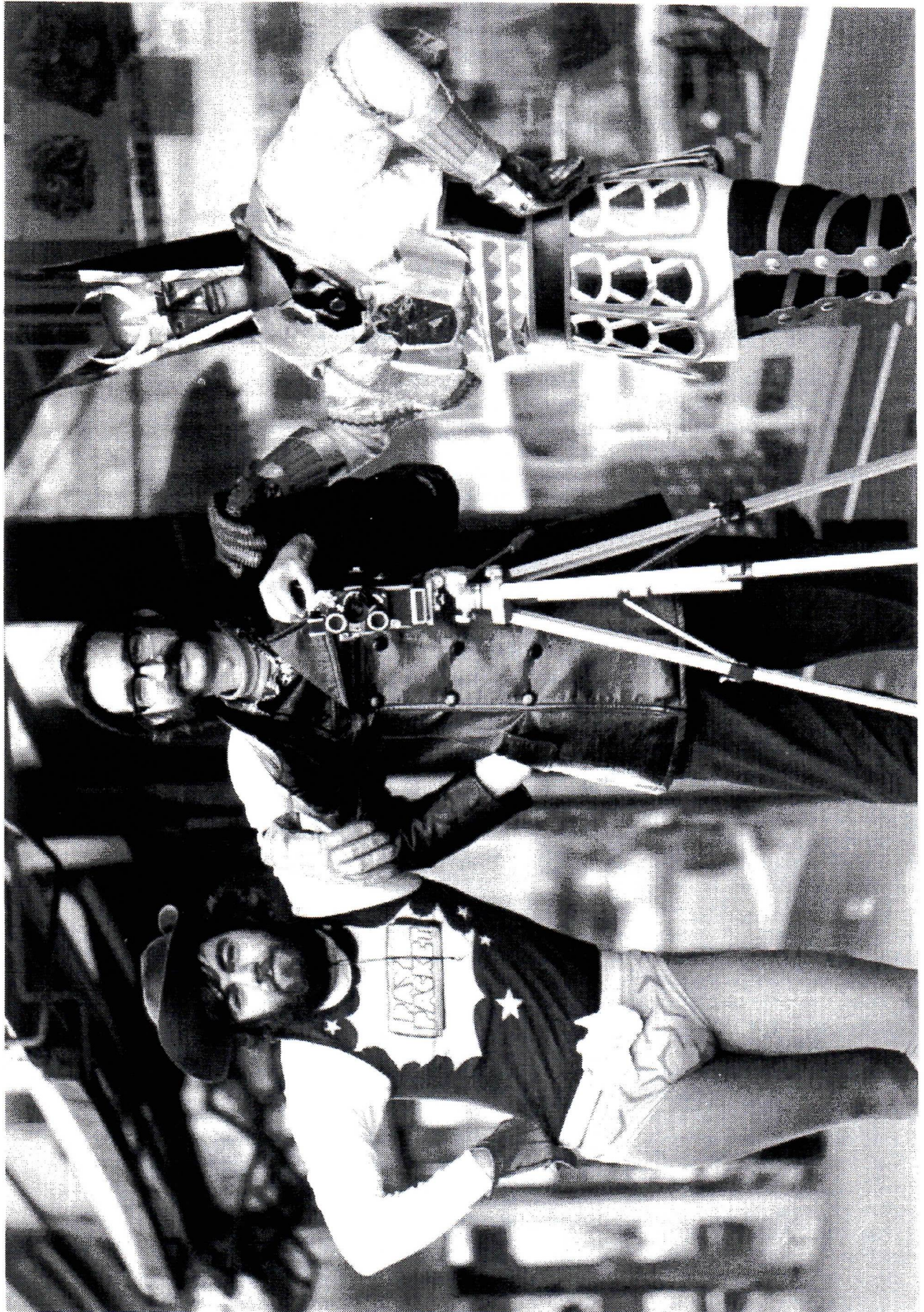
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To All Australian Fans.

Advertising Aussiecon



Stars of the Antifan film: Malcolm (?surname) as Aussiefan, Paul Stevens as Antifan, John Bredan



Facts and figures – Aussiecon (1975)

Venue: Southern Cross Hotel, Melbourne

Guests

Ursula K. Le Guin, Guest of Honour
Susan Wood & Michael Glicksohn, Fan Guests of Honour
Donald H Tuck, Australian Guest of Honour

Special visitors:

DUFF: Rusty Hevelin
Tucker Fund: Bob (Wilson) Tucker

Committee

Chairman: Robin Johnson
Vice-Chair & Writers' Workshop: Bruce Gillespie
Vice-Chair: Leigh Edmonds
Secretary & Programme Book: Peter Darling
Membership: Carey Handfield
Treasurer: Christine McGowan
Parliamentarian: Bill Wright
Awards: David Grigg
Masquerade: Shayne McCormack
Publishers & Films: Paul Stevens
Hucksters: Mervyn Binns
Auction: Eric Lindsay
Art Show: John Breden
Accommodation: Don Ashby
Other Committee Members: Gary Hoff, Mike O'Brien, Barry Salgram, Alan Sandercock, Dennis Stocks

Toastmaster: John Bangsund

Membership numbers

(Taken from *The Daily Con*; final numbers may have been higher)

Attending: 600+

Total: 2025

Awards

Invisible Man Award: A. Bertram Chandler
First Fandom Award: Donald A Wollheim
Big Heart Award: Don Tuck
Grand Master of Fantasy Award: Fritz Leiber
John W Campbell Award: P.J. Plauger

Committee awards

Donald A. Wollheim
Walt Lee

Hugo awards:

Best Novel: "The Dispossessed", Ursula K Le Guin
Best Novella: "A Song for Lya", George R R Martin
Best Novellette: "Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans", Harlan Ellison
Best Short Story: "The Hole Man", Larry Niven
Best Professional Artist: Frank Kelly Freas
Best Professional Editor: Ben Bova
Best Dramatic Presentation: "Young Frankenstein"
Best Amateur Magazine: "The Alien Critic"
Best Fan Writer: Dick Geis
Best Fan Artist: Bill Rotsler

Daily newsnotes & miscellaneous memories of Aussiecon

Excerpts from *The Daily Con* (daily news-sheet at Aussiecon), aka *Fanew Sletter*, written and published by Leigh Edmonds; *The Hat Goes Home* by Mike Glicksohn, published in August 1976; and *Marsupial Fandom* by Denny Lien, published in *Rune* 45 & 46.

Daily Con 1, Thursday, 14 August 1975. Welcome to the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention, or AUSSIECON as it is more fondly known. Leading up to the convention have been several events, the most important of which was the Writer's Workshop held last week under the careful and helpful tuition of the AUSSIECON Professional Guest-of-Honour, Ursula K. LeGuin... Talking to a couple of the people who attended the Workshop I was impressed by the enthusiasm which they all had for it and if that is any indication the writing of science fiction in Australia has received a massive boost and we will be seeing a lot more Australians in print some time in the future. (*Editor's note: that prediction has certainly come true.*)

Last Tuesday the Fellowship of Australian Writers held a meeting at which science fiction was discussed. Ursula LeGuin (and one of our Fan-Guests-of-Honour, Susan Wood) attended. The evening began with a panel discussion between Lee Harding, George Turner and Bruce Gillespie. Questions followed, and later coffee.

Preconvention warm-up: ...DeGraves Tavern, the meeting place for Melbourne SF fandom on any Wednesday evening, rang to the sounds of fifty sets of munching jaws yesterday evening—not

that you would have heard that sound because everybody seemed to be talking at the same time as they were eating... science fiction fans from all over Australia and around the world gathered down at DeGraves to mark the beginning of Aussiecon. It was chaos but a good time was had by all—except the few who could not find the place.

Cut to—Denny Lien: ... it being Wednesday, time for the local fans, temporarily doubled or so in number, to adjourn to DeGraves for food and related items. We followed our native guide down an endless number of strange streets at the end of which we put on our silver shoes and stepped through the looking glass and there it was, right between Gavagan's and the White Hart.

DeGraves turned out to be a large semi-subterranean place which was a little show on food orders but fast enough on wine and beer so I didn't much care. Don [Fitch], who is not much of a beer fancier, discovered that he actually liked a local brew appropriately named "Courage"; I met David Grigg... topics at our end of the table... centered on such serconnish topics as Pittsburgh and fake book jackets and the foghorn-like qualities of the cook's voice as she called out orders.

I kept watching for Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown to come in and after finally spying them across the floor crept up behind arriving as Valma was explaining to her tablemates why nametags were an absolute necessity at a convention. I dropped in some comment about agreeing because after all she hadn't recognized me yet and had the satisfaction of seeing her do a full-body doubletake ending with her shrieking and hugging my head (which happened to be closest to her) and bending my glasses out of shape while Leigh sat there chuckling evilly and everybody else at the table looked bemused...

Cut to—Mike Glicksohn: ... there are a couple of fannish dreams I've had since getting involved with fanzines from other fandoms. I long faunched to attend a meeting of the London fans at their famous pub "The Globe" and I wanted to see the infamous DeGraves that featured so prominently in tales of Australian



Mike Glicksohn
& John Foyster

fandom. London fandom moved to "The One Tun" but I got to see both places and in the company of fans too when I was there two years ago. And now Degraives!

Sheryl [Birkhead] and I place ourselves in the hands of Eric [Lindsay] and Shayne [McCormack] and ... Shayne manages to get us temporarily lost. But the delay is minor and we don't care: this area of Melbourne is a veritable honeycomb of lanes, arcades and alleyways, all lined with fascinating little specialty shops promising hours of happy browsing to come. And soon Shayne guides us to the right lane and to Degraives.

You'd have to know it was there. One narrow doorway at street level, with a narrow staircase leading down into the restaurant which is filled with long cafeteria style tables pushed together to seat forty or more as a group. The ceiling is low, and it traps the noise being generated by two tables filled with primarily Australian fans. I feel a warm glow at having achieved another fannish ambition as we are swept into the activities. Someone points out John Alderson... we wave at each other across the room. John Foyster comes up to introduce himself, a shy shaggy bear of a man with an immense flowing beard... I'm sure I'm sitting there grinning like an idiot at the fannishness of it all.

Degraives is hardly your typical North American restaurant. You order from a menu, but line up to tell the cooks what you want and to pick up your plonk, or local cheap wine. You get a ticket, and you pay, and then you sit and enjoy the plonk and the conversation. A few

minutes later an amazing stentorian voice bellows out an incomprehensible string of syllables from behind the counter and the locals tell you what has just been served up. If it matches your order and no-one else takes it before you get there, you get to eat. Otherwise... well, there's *lots* of plonk.

In the middle of the plonk and the conversation Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown arrive with a large contingent of American (and a Canadian) fans. Valma is a vivacious, auburn-headed

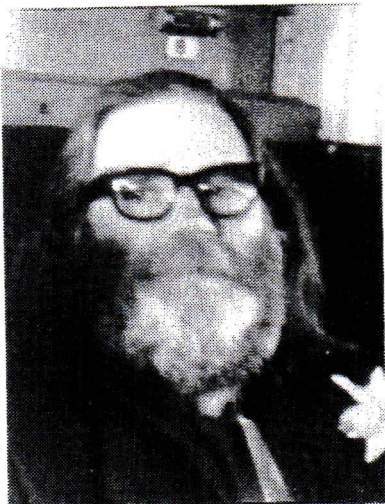
attractive and freckled young lady with a highly distinctive laugh and even more distinctive driving habits while Leigh is very tall, rather quiet, with a permanent grin, more-than-shoulder-length straight brown hair and a famous knitted cap that has been surgically grafted to the top of his head. Both came over to say hello before taking a table across the room, and I was struck by the irony behind the fact that in that brief exchange I probably said more to both of them than I did all through Discon the year before when they were over on Leigh's DUFF trip. That's the way it sometimes goes at Worldcons.

The plonk flows, Tucker smooths, and some of the best known fans on two continents start to get to know each other... Susan [Wood] jumps up from her table, grabs my arm and introduces me to John Bangsund! JOHN BANGSUND!!! A legend, a fan with a reputation of almost mythic proportions; perhaps the one Australian I was most eager and also most nervous about meeting. So this short, rotund little man with the flushed cheeks, the little beard and hair struggling to be long, and the rather deepset, twinkling eyes looks up at me and says "You can't be Mike Glicksohn, you're too tall" and I bow at his feet and suddenly we are friends. And at the table a slightly tipsy John Berry sits with an enormous grin and radiates fannish bonhomie at the mere idea of sitting in Degraives drinking rough red with John Bangsund. And now you *know* that Aussiecon has begun!

Cut back to—Daily Con 1: At about eight everybody trooped back to the Southern Cross and invaded the State Suite with a party which lasted until about midnight. It would have lasted much longer but many people were suffering from travel exhaustion and also saving themselves up for some hard conventioning in the days to come. The Star Trek™ computer games (there are three mini-computers provided by Wang Computers and programmed with the game) were in heavy use all evening...

Daily Con 2, Friday, 15 August 1975. The high-light of the first day of AUSSIECON would have been without a doubt the Guest of Honour's speech by Ursula LeGuin... (which) must have been the best piece ever heard at an Australian convention... *Editor's note: her speech is reprinted starting on page 11.*

Rusty Hevelin



AUSSIECON opening disrupted: Right in the middle of the opening speech by Race Matthews a group of fans who had hidden themselves in the audience rose and disturbed the solemnity of the occasion by singing a verse of the "Notional Anthem". The police were not called in and the disturbance subsided when the singers returned quietly to the seats... A fine opening to the convention actually.

Cut to—Mike Glicksohn: The breathtaking multi-media sound and light show that started off the opening proceedings literally left us all speechless. A variation of the presentation was used to start each major section of the con, and it never failed to be impressive, but that first time will always stay in my mind as one of the most effective and dramatic moments I've witnessed at a convention.

As the first Aussiecon panel, John Bangsund, Rusty [Hevelin, the DUFF winner] and I are the first to encounter the difficulties of addressing the Aussiecon audience, the great majority of whom are attending their first convention. It isn't so much that they are unresponsive, they just don't know *how* to respond. At one point during the opening ceremony, for example, a group consisting of most of the guests and "notables" interrupted the opening speech by politician [and fan Race] Matthews by rising to their feet and singing the first verse of a delightfully irreverent Australian national anthem written by John Bangsund.

Chairman Robin Johnson, who has a strong sense of formality and protocol, almost had apoplexy, knowledgeable fans in the audience thought it hilarious and most of the audience stared in bewilderment, probably wondering to

themselves *What has this got to do with Science Fiction?*

So that first panel was faced with a bank of blinding videotape lights, an audience almost totally shrouded in darkness and an audience that really didn't *understand* what we tried to tell them about How To Really Enjoy Yourself At This Convention. They listened politely, though and did their best. At one point I remarked that one of the best ways to enjoy the con was to repeat a very famous and honoured fannish expression, namely "Hi, you're the Fan Guest of Honour: let me buy you a drink" and after the panel was done quite a few people did just that. But the in-jokes, the fannish references, the by-play all went over their heads and communication was difficult... It wasn't until Susan [Wood] and [Bob] Tucker explained a lot of fannish history to them and the noisy American and Canadian fans made it evident that at a worldcon you *don't* sit on your hands and clap politely at the end that things started to pick up.

Daily Con 3, Saturday, 16 August 1975. This issue mainly covered the results of the vote for the 1977 WorldCon, the masquerade results, and details about the planned post-convention trip to Ballarat.

Saturday night was the Hugo banquet, with John Bangsund as toastmaster.

Here's Mike Glicksohn again: The only noteworthy incident occurred after all the preliminary remarks and presentations of souvenir medallions to the guests had been made. John [Bangsund] said something like "And now we come to the Hugos themselves" and on cue at least fifteen of us scattered throughout the hall rose to our feet with



Chris Callahan, Dick Roepke, Jean Weber



Bert Chandler, Bob Tucker

whistles, noise-makers, balloons, paper streamers, bags of confetti and other party favours and made as much confusion as we could while singing a verse of "Waltzing Matilda". Eric Lindsay had dreamt up the idea as a way to liven up what can be a pretty stuffy affair and since it had the enthusiastic support of Susan and I and Tucker and John Berry there wasn't much poor Robin [Johnson] could do except watch the dignity of the evening fly happily out the window.

Daily Con 4, Sunday, 17 August 1975.

The Awards banquet ran a little over time this year, but this is more the fault of the banquet than the awards. John Bangsund did an excellent job as toastmaster ...

The rest of this issue was devoted mainly to listing the awards and programming items for the last day.

Editor's comment: Mike's and Denny's con reports continued, describing the famous train trip to Ballarat, a visit to John Bangsund's home in Canberra and Eric Lindsay's home in Faulconbridge, plus stops at Uluru (then known as Ayers Rock) and other tourist destinations around Australia. For most of the visiting North Americans, this was a first visit to Australia and they approached it with enthusiasm, delight and wonder — and wrote up the experience as a real adventure among the aliens. As a recent immigrant from the USA, I had at that time only partially become familiar with the differences, so I could appreciate that "sense of wonder" that a visit to Australia could produce.



The Stone Ax and the Muskoxen

Ursula K. Le Guin's Guest of Honour speech at Aussiecon (1975)

Editor's note: the superscripts in this speech refer to notes in the following article, Revisiting the Muskoxen.

I want to thank you all for having me here¹ — specifically, I want to thank the Literature Board of the Australian Arts Council for bringing me here, and the workshop and Robin and the rest of the con-committee for looking after me — and, most of all, John Bangsund, for thinking of the whole silly idea in the first place.

I have a question, a serious question to ask you. What on earth are we all doing here?

Well, I think we have come here to celebrate. This is a celebration; this is what the word means — the coming together of many people, from all kinds of weird places, away from their customary life and ways, often at some trouble and expense, maybe not knowing very precisely why they come, but moved to come, to meet together, in one place, to celebrate.

And a celebration needs no cerebation, no excuses or rationalization. A celebration is its own reason for being, as you find out once you get there. The heart has its reasons which reason doesn't know, and a celebration such as this has its own reasons, its own strange laws and lifespan; it is a real thing, an event, an entity, and we here, long after, in our separate ways and places, will look back on it and recall it as a whole. And if there were bad moments in it, if some of us got drunk and some of us got angry, and some of us had to make speeches, and others of us got horribly bored by the speeches — still I think the chances are that we'll look back on it with some contentment,² because the essential element of a celebration is praise, and praise rises out of joy. When you come right down to it, we've all come here to enjoy ourselves.

We aren't going to accomplish anything, you know, or establish anything, or sell anything. We're not here in order to make a new law, or declare a war, or fix the price per barrel of crude oil. No, and thank God we're



not. There are enough people involved in that sort of rubbish.

We are here, I think, simply to meet each other, in hopes, and some confidence, that we'll like each other. We're here to enjoy ourselves, which means we are practicing the most essentially human of all undertakings, the search for joy. Not the pursuit of pleasure — any hamster can do that — but the search for joy. And may I wish to you all here that you find it.

But what is it that brings us, this particular us, these particular peculiar individuals from unearthly places like Canberra and Oregon, together here, all standing on our heads in Melbourne? What is it that we're here to celebrate? 'Joy' is a bit vague, after all; we have to specify, and narrow it down, and put our finger on it. I put out my finger, here, tonight, and what is it that I touch?

Science fiction, of course. That's what brought us here. It does seem a rather bizarre motive, but it's certainly no odder than the motive that brings together International Conventions of Manufacturers of Plumbers' Supplies, or Summit Conferences of Heads of State

Leigh Edmonds



Valma Brown



discussing how to achieve parity in overkill. Science fiction is the motive and the subject of our celebration. That's the one point where all our different minds and souls touch, though on every other subject they may be utterly different, lightyears apart. Each of us here has a button somewhere in his soul, like a bellybutton, but a soulbutton, and it is labeled science fiction. Many people do not have a soulbutton, they only have bellybuttons, but each of us does. And if you put your finger out and touch that button, the whole spiritual console lights up and goes Zzzzzt Blink All Systems Go, All Systems Go.

I am your guest of honor, and deeply honored to be so. As such, I think I am to speak not only to you, but for you: to be the Oracle, the Leader of the Celebration, the Priestess of the Cult. When the last orgy is over, I understand I am to be led forth and thrown into the nearest volcano, to propitiate the Fertility Gods of Melbourne. But never mind that. So long as I'm here, my job is to speak for you. To celebrate what we are celebrating. To speak in praise of science fiction.

Well, that's something I don't mind doing a bit. I like science fiction. And I have reason to be grateful to it. For the past dozen years or so, SF has added money to the family pocket, and confusion to the family income-tax returns, and books to the family bookshelf, and a whole sort of Parallel Universe dimension to the family life. — 'Where's Ma going this month?' — 'Australia.' — 'You mean I have to wash the dishes for a week?' — 'No, we get to come along.' — 'Can I have a pet koala, can I? I promise I'll feed it myself!'

Do you people realize, by the way, that to my three children Science Fiction is not a low form of literature involving small green men and written by small contemptible hacks, but an absolutely ordinary, respectable, square profession — the kind of thing your own *mother* does? We, you and I, most of us, those over twenty-five anyhow, read SF when young, and hid our copy of *Galaxy* inside a copy of *Intermediate Algebra*, in order to appear respectably occupied. We asked children's librarians for SF and they said, 'Oh, we do not allow children to read escapist literature.' We asked adults' librarians for it and they said,

'Oh, we do not carry children's books on this side of the building.' We had to put the books down face down because of the cover, which showed a purple squid carrying off a fainting maiden in a large bronze bra. We had the difficulty and the pleasure of doing something which, if not actually illicit, was sneaky, eccentric, addictive and splendidly disreputable.

Now, you know, our kids — not just my kids, but all our kids, and everybody here that's too young to have any business having any kids yet — the rising generation, shall I say, is almost entirely missing this experience? The poor things have nothing disreputable left but sex and marijuana, and sex is getting respectable all too fast.³ They're getting *taught* SF in the *schools*. Some of them for all I know may be hiding their copy of *Intermediate Algebra* inside a copy of *Again, Dangerous Visions*, and solving marvelous irrelevant equations in secret while Teacher thinks they're reading Meaningful Literature.

I gather this coopting of SF into the curriculum is less usual in the Commonwealth than in America; but I was in England earlier this year, and got stuck on a tele spot with five beautiful Cockney kids from a Marylebone school, who had read more SF than I had, and done a whole school session reading and writing it. So it's coming, fans. In the States, it's come; and from St Pancras Station to the farthest sheep-station, it's coming. Science fiction is being taught, by teachers and professors, in schools and colleges. Science fiction is being seriously discussed, by futurologists with computers and by literary critics with PhDs. Science fiction is being written by people who don't know Warp Five from a Dyson Sphere, and being read by people who don't read science fiction. I am here to proclaim unto the assembled faithful that the walls are down. The walls are down, we're free at last.⁴ And you know what? It's a big, cold world outside there.

I can't really blame those of my generation and older who don't want to see the walls come stumbling down, and who cling to their ghetto status as if it were a precious thing, making a religion of SF, which the touch of the uninitiated will profane. They were forced into that attitude by the attitude of respectable society, intellectual and literary, toward

John Berry



their particular interest, and it was perfectly natural for them, like any persecuted group, to make a virtue of their necessity. I can't blame them, but neither can I agree with them. To cling to the posture of evasion and defense, once persecution and contempt has ceased, is to be not a rebel, but a cripple. And what I want is to see SF continue to rebel. I want to see SF evade, not those who despise it, but those who want it to be just what it was thirty years ago. I want to see SF step over the old, fallen walls, and head right into the next wall, and start to break it down too.

One of those walls is the labeling of books by publishers as SF — labeling, packaging and distributing. At the moment this is pretty much a necessity of the publishing trade. It is sensible, and I don't expect an immediate rejection of the practice.⁵ Public librarians, school librarians and booksellers want to shelve and display SF so that those who want it can find it. It's convenient for us addicts, and profitable to the booksellers and publishers. But the practice does considerable wrong to the innocent nonaddict, who is prevented from picking up an SF book by chance; he has to go to Shelf 63, between the Gothics and the Soft Core Porn, and look for it. And of course the SF label perpetuates a dichotomy that no longer exists, between SF and Mainstream. There is a spectrum, now, not a chasm. The SF label is a remnant of the ghetto wall, and I'll be glad to see it go. Oh for the day when I can go into my library and find *The Man in the High Castle*, not shelved next to *Barf the Barbarian* by Elmer T. Hack, but by author's name, Philip K. Dick, right next to Charles Dickens — where it belongs.

And another day. The day when *The Times Literary Supplement*, or *The New York Times Book Review*, or the *East Grong-Grong Sheep Rancher's Weekly*, reviews a major new SF novel along with the other novels, not in a little column set apart and headed Sci Fi or Spec Fic or what have you. In which columns, by the existence of which columns, it is implied that however highly praised the work reviewed may be, it's not to be placed in the same category, of course, as the other novels reviewed throughout the paper — the *real* ones.

There's lots of walls yet, you see, to be reduced to rubble.

But all this is a bit external. The worst walls are never the ones you find in your way. The worst walls are the ones you put there — you build yourself. Those are the high ones, the thick ones, the ones with no doors.

See, here we stand, Science Fiction, a noble figure among the ruined walls, chains dropping from our giant limbs, facing the future with eagle eyes, and all that. But actually, who are we? And exactly what future are we facing with our eagle eyes? Now that we're free, where are we going?⁶

From here on I have to speak as a writer. I've been trying to speak for the community of SF writers and fans, and enjoying it, but I can't keep it up. I'm faking. I'm not a fan. As you know, many SF writers are, or were; they started as fans. It was a phenomenon of the ghetto which is now called the Golden Age of Science Fiction.

Well, I came along just late enough to miss the Golden Ghetto, in ignorance that it even existed. I read SF as a kid, but knew nothing about fandom. I wrote SF first, and discovered that it was SF second, when the publishers told me so, and then finally, third, I discovered the existence of fandom. That was in Oakland in 1964, the first big Worldcon, I guess. I heard there was this Science Fiction meeting going on, and I'd published three or four SF stories and was crazy about Phil Dick and Cordwainer Smith, and so I went down to Oakland to see what was going on. And there were about 5,000 people who all knew each other and absolutely everything about SF since 1926. And the only one I met was Barbara Silverberg, who was so incredibly gorgeous that I instantly went home and put my head in a paper bag for a week.

That was the last Worldcon I attended. Until now. You see, I am an outsider, an alien, for all you know I come from a whole different galaxy and am planning the overthrow of the entire Australian Ballot System.⁷ But all the same, I do write SF. And that's why you asked me here. And so I think it would make sense if I went on and spoke as what I am; a writer. A writer of SF. A woman writer of SF.

Peter Darling



Do you know that I am a very rare creature? My species was at first believed to be mythological, like the tribble and the unicorn. Members of it survived only by protective coloration and mimetic adaptation — they used male pen names. Slowly, timorously, they began to come out of hiding. Looking around warily for predators. I myself was forced into hiding just once,⁸ by an editor of *Playboy*, who reduced me to a simple, unthreatening, slightly enigmatic shape — a U. Not Ursula, but U. I have felt a little bent, a little bit U-shaped, ever since. But we kept creeping out; it took a while, and there were setbacks, but gradually my species took courage and appeared in full mating plumage: Anne, Kate, Joanna, Vonda, Suzy and the rest. But when I say 'the rest', please don't get alarmed, don't feel threatened or anything. There are very few of us.⁹ Maybe one out of thirty SF writers is a woman. That statistic is supplied by my agent, Virginia Kidd, a very beautiful member of my species; the ratio is a guess, but an educated one. Do you find it a rather startling ratio? I do. I am extremely puzzled, even embarrassed, at my own rarity. Are they going to have to lock me up in pens, like the Whooping Cranes and Duckbilled Platypuses and other species threatened with extinction, and watch eagerly to see if I lay an egg?

Why are women so scarce in SF — in the literature, among the fans, and most of all among the writers? A good many historical reasons come to mind — American SF as action pulp fiction during the thirties, Campbellian SF written for adolescent engineers, etc. — but all of them are circular. *Why* was Golden Ghetto SF a males-only club? Is there really something in the nature of the literature that doesn't appeal generally to women?

Not that I can see. *Analog* and its school did certainly follow one minor element within SF to the extreme, to a point where only those who enjoy either wars or wiring diagrams — preferably both at once — can enjoy it much. Most women in our culture are brought up to be rather indifferent toward military heroics and wiring diagrams, so they're likely to be bored or irritated. They're used to this; juvenile males in almost all cultures tend to be afraid of women, and to form clubs that cut them out, exclude

them. And similarly a good deal of sword and sorcery leaves most women cold, because it consists so largely of male heroics and male fantasies of sexual prowess, often intensely sadistic. But those two minor provinces set aside for Boy Scouts only, all the rest is left — all the broad, beautiful countryside of grownup SF, where anything can happen, and usually does. Why have more women not moved in and made themselves at home?

I don't know. My trouble is, I was born here, I didn't move in, so I can't figure out what the problem is. Year by year I see more members of my species, young ones mostly, coming and building temporary nests, or boldly trying out their wings above the mountains. But still not enough. Twenty or thirty males to one female is not a good ratio for species preservation. Among domestic fowls, in fact, it goes quite the other way, half a dozen hens to one rooster, but never mind that.

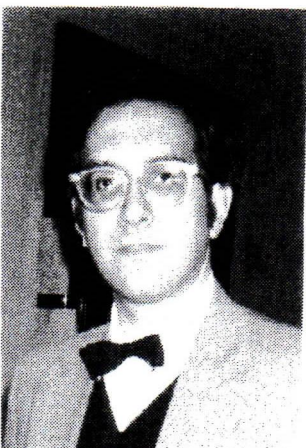
I just want to ask the men here to consider idly, in some spare moment, whether by any chance they have been building any walls to keep the women out, or to keep them 'in their place', and what they have lost by doing so.

And to ask the women here to consider, idly or not idly at all, why are there so few of us? We can't blame it on prejudice, because SF publishing is in general a quite un-sex-biased field. Have women walled themselves out, through laziness of mind, fear of being seen using the intellect in public, fear of science and technology, fear of letting their imaginations loose — and above all, perhaps fear of competing with men? That, as we all know, is an unladylike thing to do.

But no art is ladylike. Nor is any art gentlemanly. Nor is it masculine or feminine. The reading of a book and the writing of a book is not an act dependent in any way upon one's gender. (In fact very few human acts are, other than procreation, gestation, and lactation.)

When you undertake to make a work of art — a novel or a clay pot — you're not competing with anybody, except yourself and God. Can I do it better this time? Once you have realized that that is the only question, once you have faced the empty page or the lump of clay in that solitude, without anyone to blame for

Ben Yalow



failure but yourself, and known that fear and that challenge, you aren't going to care very much about being ladylike, or about your so-called competition, male or female. The practice of an art is, in its absolute discipline, the experience of absolute freedom. And that, above all, is why I'd like to see more of my sisters trying out their wings above the mountains. Because freedom is not always an easy thing for women to find.

Well, all right, so we've established one fact about who and what science fiction is. It's very largely male, but seems to be tending always a little more towards androgyny — at least I hope so. And what else is it? As one Theodore Sturgeon once remarked, it's 95 per cent trash — like everything else.

I'm in an heretical mood. I dare to question Sturgeon's Law. Is 95 per cent of everything trash? Really? Is 95 per cent of a forest trash? Is 95 per cent of the ocean trash? It soon will be if we go on polluting it, but it wasn't to start with. Is 95 per cent of humanity trash? Any dictator would agree, but I don't agree with him. Is 95 per cent of literature trash?

Well — yes. It probably is. Of the books now published in the world in a year, 95 per cent probably aren't even trash, they're just noise.

But I revert to my speaking as a writer, not as a reader, and inquire, how many books, *while they are being written*, are conceived of by their authors as trash?

It's really an interesting question. I have no idea of the answer. It's not 0 per cent — far from it. There are many many authors who deliberately write junk for money, and I have met others who, though less cynical, spoke of their own works as 'moneymakers' or as 'mere entertainment' — a little defensively, to be sure, because the ego is always involved in the work, but also honestly, realistically, in the full knowledge that they had not done, and had not tried to do, the best work they could do. And in art, from the artist's point of view, there are only two alternatives: the best you can do — or trash. It's a binary system. On/Off. Yes/No. But not from the reader's point of view, of course. From there, there are infinite gradations between the best and the worst, all degrees of genius, talent, and achievement between Shakespeare and

the hack, and also within each work, even Shakespeare's.

But from the writer's point of view, while writing, there are just two ways to go: to push toward the limit of your capacity, or to sit back and emit garbage. And the really unfair thing is that the intent, however good, guarantees nothing. You can try your heart out, work like a good slave, and write drivel. But the opposite intent does carry its own guarantee. No artist ever set out to do less than his best and did something good by accident. You head for Perfection and you may very well get trash. But you head toward trash, and by gum, you always get it. The Quest for Perfection fails at least 95 per cent of the time, but the Search for Garbage never fails.

I find this repetition of the trashiness of most SF too easy — both defensive and destructive. Defensive: 'Don't hit me, folks, I'm down already.' That's the old, ingratiating, self-protective ghetto posture. And destructive: because it is cynical, it sets limits and builds walls. It says to the SF writer, of all people, Why shoot for the moon? The chances are 19 to 1 that you won't get there. Only a tiny elite gets there, and we all know that elite people are snobs anyhow. Keep your feet on the ground, kid; work for money, not for dreams; write it like the editor says he wants it; don't waste time revising and polishing; sell it quick and grind out the next one. What the hell, it's a living, isn't it? And so what if it's not art, at least it's entertainment.

That 'entertainment' bit really burns me. It hides a big lie behind an obvious truth. Of course an SF story is entertainment. All art is entertainment. That's so clear it's fatuous to repeat it. If Handel's Messiah were boring, not entertaining, would thousands of people go listen to it year after year? If the Sistine Ceiling were dull, would the tourists troop there endlessly to get cricks in their necks? If *Oedipus Rex* weren't a smashing good show, would it be in the repertory after 2,500 years? If *The First Circle* weren't a gripping, powerful, highly entertaining story, would the Soviet government be so terrified of Alexander Solzhenitsyn? No! If he was a dull hack, they'd love him. He'd be writing just what they want, writing to the editor's specifications, weak tea, perfectly safe. He'd probably be a

Forry Ackerman



People's Artist by now.

Of course some art is immediately attractive, and some is difficult, demanding intense response and involvement from its audience. The art of one's own time tends to be formidable, in a time of change like ours, because we have to learn how and where to take hold of it, what response is being asked for us, before we can get involved. It's truly new, and therefore truly a bit frightening.

I'm easily frightened myself; I was afraid of the Beatles, at first. People are easily frightened, but also brave and stubborn. They want that entertainment that only art can give them, that peculiar, solid satisfaction, and so they do keep listening to the weirdest electronic music, and staring at big ugly paintings of blobs, and reading queer difficult books about people on another world 20,000 years from now, and they say, I don't really like it, it's unsettling, it's painful, it's crazy ... but you know I kind of liked that one bit where something went *eeeeeeeeee-bwang!* — it really got to me, you know?

That's all art wants to do. It wants to get to you. To break down the walls between us, for a moment. To bring us together in a celebration, a ceremony, an entertainment — a mutual affirmation of understanding, or of suffering, or of joy.

Therefore I totally oppose the notion that you can put Art over here on a pedestal, and Entertainment down here in a clown suit. Art and Entertainment are the same thing, in that the more deeply and genuinely entertaining a work is, the better art it is. To imply that Art is something heavy and solemn and dull, and Entertainment is modest but jolly and popular, is neo-Victorian idiocy at its worst.

Every artist is deeply serious and passionate about their work, and every artist also wears a clown suit and capers in public for pennies. The ones who put on the clown suit and the painted grin, but who don't care about performing well, are neither entertainers nor artists; they're fakes. They know it, and we know it, and though they may indeed be briefly and immensely popular, because they never frighten anyone, or move anyone, or make anyone really laugh or cry, but just reassure people by lying to them - all the same, that popularity is meaningless. The name dies, the work's

forgotten, and what's left? A hollow place. A sense of waste. A realization that where something real might have been done — a good handsome clay pot, or a really entertaining story — the chance was lost. We lost it. We accepted the fake, the plastic throwaway, when we could have held out for the real thing.

I'm not one of these antique-lovers, but do you know how moving it can be to use, or just handle, some object — a piece of pottery, or a tool — that has been used by several generations of people, all strangers, all dead now? I keep a stone ax on my desk at home — not for self-defense, but for pleasure. My father used to keep it on his desk. It makes a good paperweight. It's New Stone Age, but I don't know how old, anything from a few centuries to 22,000 years. It's partly polished and partly left rough, though finely shaped. It is well made. You think of the human hands patiently polishing that granite. There's a sense of solidity and of community in the touch, the feel, of that ax, to me. There's nothing sentimental about it, quite the opposite; it is a real experience, a rare intimation, of *time*, our most inward dimension, which is so difficult to experience consciously, but without which we are utterly disoriented and astray in the seemingly so familiar external dimensions of space. Well, that's what I mean about the real work of art. Like a stone ax, *it's there*. It stays there. It's solid, and it involves the inward dimension. It may be wonderfully beautiful, or quite commonplace and humble, but it's made to be used, and to last.

Hack work is not made to be used, but to be sold; and not made to last, but to wear out at once and be replaced. And that's the difference, I believe, between art-and-entertainment on the one hand, and trash on the other.

Ted Sturgeon, when he made his Law up, was simply responding to contemptuous and ignorant critics of SF who scarcely deserved so clever an answer. But his Law has since been used as a defense and an excuse and a cop-out, and I suggest that we in SF stop quoting it for a bit, at least if we're using it in a resigned and cynical fashion. I'd like us not to be resigned, but rebellious; not cynical, but critical, intransigent and idealistic. I'd like us to say, 95 per cent

Don Lundry



of SF is trash — Yecchh! Let's get rid of the stuff! Let's open the windows and get rid of this garbage! Here we have Science Fiction, the most flexible, adaptable, broad-range, imaginative, crazy form prose fiction has ever attained and we're going to let it be used for making toy plastic rayguns that break when you play with them, and prepackaged, precooked, predigested, indigestible, flavorless TV dinners, and big inflated rubber balloons containing nothing but hot air? The hell we are, I say!

You know what our statue of Science Fiction needs to do? To use its eagle eyes to look at itself. A long, thoughtful look. A critical look. We don't have to be defensive any more. We aren't children, or untouchables, or cripples, anymore. Like it or lump it, we are now adult active members of society. And as such we have a challenge to *meet*. *Noblesse oblige*.

We've got to stop skulking around playing by ourselves, like the kid everybody picks on. When an SF book is reviewed, in a fanzine or a literary review, it should be compared with the rest of current literature like any other book, and placed among the rest on its own individual merits. When an SF book is criticized, in print or in a class, it should be criticized as hard as any other book, demandingly, with the same expectations of literacy, solidity, complexity, craftsmanship. When an SF book is read, it should be read as a novel or a short story — that is, a work in the traditions also employed by Dickens and Chekhov — not as an artifact from the Pulp Factory.

The reader should expect to be entertained, but should also expect to travel on unfamiliar ground. Experimentation, innovation, irreverence, complexity, and passion should make the reader rejoice, not run away whimpering, 'But it wasn't like this in 1937!' And the science fiction writer really should be aware that he or she is in an extraordinary, enviable position: an inheritor of the least rigid, freest, youngest of all literary traditions: and therefore should do the job just as well, as seriously and entertainingly, as intelligently and passionately, as ever it can be done. That's the least we can ask of our writers and the most. You can't

demand of artists that they produce masterpieces. You can ask that they try.

It seems to me that SF is standing, these days, in a doorway. The door is open, wide open. Are we going to just stand here, waiting for the applause of the multitudes? It won't come; we haven't earned it, yet. Are we going to cringe back into the old safe ghetto room and pretend there isn't any big bad multitude out there? If so, our good writers will leave us in despair, and there will not be another generation of them. Or are we going to walk on through the doorway and join the rest of the city? I hope so. I know we can, and I hope we do, because we have a great deal to offer — to art, which needs new forms like ours, and to critics who are sick of chewing over the same old works, and above all to the readers of books, who want and deserve better novels that they mostly get. But it will take not only courage for SF to join the community of literature, but strength, self-respect, the will not to settle for the second-rate. It will take genuine self-criticism. And it will include genuine praise.

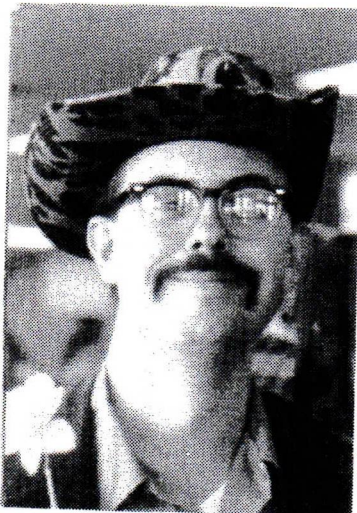
If you think, secretly or openly, that you're second-rate, that you're 95 per cent trash, then however much you praise yourself it won't mean much — to you, or to others. That's like adolescent boasting, which so often reveals a terrible sense of worthlessness and weakness.

SF is pretty well grown up now. We've been through our illiterate stage, and our latent or nonsexual stage, and the stage when you can't think of anything *but sex*, and the other stages, and we really do seem to be on the verge of maturity now.

When I say I'd like SF to be self-critical, I don't mean pedantic or destructively perfectionist; I mean I'd like to see more SF readers judging soundly, dismissing the failures quietly, in order to praise the successes joyfully — and to go on from them, to build upon them. That is maturity, isn't it? — a just assessment of your capacities, and the will to fulfill them. We have plenty to praise, you know. I do think SF during the past ten years has produced some books and stories that will last, that will be meaningful and beautiful many years from now.

It seems to me that we can grow and change, and welcome growth and change,

Ned Brooks

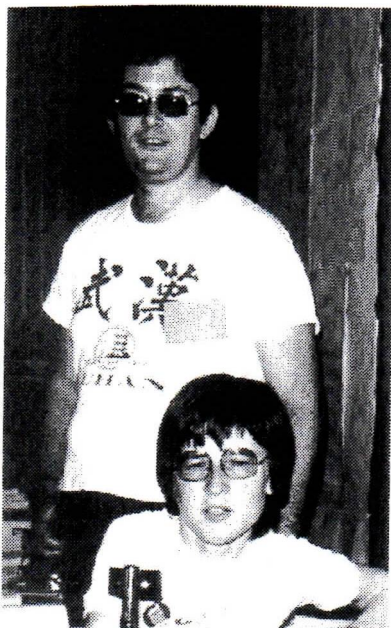


without losing our solidarity. The solidarity of the SF community is a really extraordinary thing. It makes the lives of fans much richer and a great deal more complicated, and for the writers, it can be an incredible boon — the support, the response, science fiction writers get from their readers is unique. Most novelists get nothing like that; they are quite isolated. Their response comes mainly from the paid reviewers of the review services and journals. If they are best-sellers, they're totally isolated from genuine response by the enormous mechanisms of salesmanship and publicity and success. What fandom, the SF community, gives the SF writer, or at least this is my own personal experience, is the best modern equivalent of the old small-scale community, city-state or the like, within which most of the finest art forms developed and flourished: a community of intensely interested people, a ready audience, ready to discuss and be defend and attack and argue with each other and the artist, to the irritation and entertainment and benefit of all.

When I say the ghetto walls are down and it behooves us to step over them and be free, I don't mean that the community of SF is breaking up, or should break up. I hope it doesn't; I think it won't; I don't see why it should. The essential lunacy that unites us will continue to unite us. The one thing that's changed is that we're no longer *forced* together in a mutually defensive posture — like a circle of muskoxen on the Arctic snow, attacked by wolves — by the contempt and arrogance of literary reactionaries. If we meet now and in the future, we writers and readers of SF, to give each other prizes and see each other's faces and renew old feuds and discuss new books and hold our celebration, it will be in entire freedom — because we choose to do so — because, to put it simply, we like each other.

Editor's note: this speech was first published in Suncon Convention Journal 1, 1976, and reprinted in The Language of the Night, edited by Susan Wood, Perigee, 1979 and later reprinted by The Women's Press.

Carey Handfield
& Christine McGowan



Revisiting the Muskoxen

Some 1995 notes on my 1975 talk for Aussiecon

1. "I want to thank you all for having me here" — Yes! Thank you all again! And again and again! It was a great three weeks and is a cherished memory. Despite the oyster.

2. "... the chances are that we'll look back on it with some contentment" — Yes, indeed. Despite the oyster.

When I wrote this speech, I wasn't planning to eat a bad oyster from Sydney for lunch at the Worldcon, a wicked oyster, a truly villainous oyster, and come down with acute food poisoning right at the beginning of the Banquet.

All I can say is, you know those anxiety dreams you have where you are the Guest of Honor and everybody is looking at you and you throw up? Well, they come true.

I was luckier than President Bush, though. I was not provided with a Prime Minister to throw up on.

In fact I got to the Ladies' just in time. All the same, it kind of interfered for a while with the enjoyment aspect. Then the oyster went away, and I came back, and all was lovely again.

3. "... nothing disreputable left but sex and marijuana, and sex is getting respectable all too fast." — This seems quaint, doesn't it? Marijuana isn't what it used to be, nor is sex. Pot was such a big deal in 1975, to those who used it and those who arrested them for using it. Now it's just a capitalist cash crop that happens to be illegal. As for sex, it certainly has also thrived as a capitalist cash crop, but it has some side-effects it didn't have twenty years ago.



John & Sally Bangsund

4. "The walls are down, we're free at last."

Oh dear. When I wrote this, I really believed it. It makes me a little sad, now.

Here is a True Sci Fi Story:

This year, Pat Murphy and I taught the first workshop in writing science fiction at a university which I am going to call Respectable, because if I name names it seems vengeful, and vengeance isn't my aim; and I don't want to jeopardize the possible future of the course we taught. So please excuse my indirectness and consider the genuine reason for it.

Respectable University, famous in many fields, the home of a very highly-considered graduate Creative Writing program — Respectable University teaching Skiffy? Amazing! Fantastic! The walls must be down!

Well, sort of, maybe.

The course, taught in the Creative Writing Department, was founded and funded by the Dean of Engineering. He saw it as a way to lure engineering and science students into learning how to write, which, as he said ruefully, most of them do very badly. That is an admirable goal in itself. The Dean was courageous, too, in crossing "disciplines," the territories that professors create and then spend much time defending by aggression displays, hooting, spraying, etc. Boundaries between engineering and the arts aren't often crossed. The schools of engineering are often more enterprising than the universities. Georgia Tech teaches science fiction; MIT and other engineering schools have required humanities courses. But in the universities, for students in the sciences and engineering, credit courses in the arts are essentially out of reach.

Our course had plenty of applicants from English, but we had to advertise it on the campus electronic net to catch science and engineering undergraduates, who weren't expecting anything like it to be offered to them. We selected one engineer, five scientists, two social scientists, and six English majors. They all worked very hard, writing two short stories apiece and numerous assignments, including 350 words of fiction *daily* for the first two weeks (Pat's idea — Pat Murphy, who also brought you the Thumbscrew and the Iron Maiden). Talent followed the usual random curve,

irrespective of "discipline," though Pat and I agree that the best story we got was written by the engineering student.

The Chair of the Creative Writing Department made civil inquiries a couple of times and left us to our own devices, which was fine with us. Except for the staff, who were thoroughly kind and helpful, the department we taught in ignored our existence all quarter. Professors from other departments who used my books in teaching only discovered I was on campus by accident and too late to ask me to visit their class. One who used Pat's *Falling Woman* had her speak to the class.

The only appearance we made on the campus was an informal reading arranged by one of our students. A reporter from the campus paper trying to reach us through our department was told, without consulting us, that we did not want to see her. When she finally got to us, despite several weeks of obstacles, we were delighted to talk to her about the course, which we and our students thought a great success, and which we hoped would become a regular offering.

On the last day of teaching I was approached by the Chair of Creative Writing and asked to come back and teach the course next year. As I had just told the Dean that I couldn't do this, and as the Chair had just had lunch with the Dean, I was puzzled. I said I truly couldn't come next year, but maybe some time in the future — and meanwhile I was delighted the course was to be repeated.

Oh, no, said the Chair. Not unless you teach it.

Not understanding the insistence on this condition, I repeated that though I couldn't teach next year I'd gladly recommend some excellent science fiction writers with experience in teaching writing.

Oh, no, said the Chair. I have no intention of dealing with the kind of people who write that kind of thing.

Since I am the kind of person who write that kind of thing, I took this a little hard. I said to the Chair, Excuse me if I speak brutally, but do you know what you are talking about? Have you ever, in fact, read any science fiction?

I have no intention of doing so, said the Chair, standing still on all four of its legs with its back up.

Sheryl Birkhead



Well, then, said I, since I believe this course should be taught again, and you won't handle it, perhaps it could be offered by the Dept of Engineering?

Oh, no, said the Chair. My department will absolutely not allow any such thing. My task as Chair of Creative Writing is to control and uphold the Standards of Literature for this University.

At this point, with audible capital letters making it clear what the conversation was about and why Pat and I had been kept in a closet while on campus, there was no more to say, and I parted from the Chair.

I can't tell you the end of the story, yet. I had to come home, leaving the Dean of Engineering to cope with that uncomfortable piece of furniture. I rather think he can do so. I hope he sits on it.

But the walls, the walls of prejudice, self-congratulatory ignorance, literary snobbery — are they down? Alas no. They are as high as they were twenty years ago, and even more despicable, less excusable.

I've lived all my life in or very near the groves of Academe, I love and honor the pursuit of learning and of excellence; I have no sympathy with those in the science-fiction community whose hostility to the community of education rises from prejudice, selfcongratulatory ignorance, and reverse snobbery.

That said, I will say that whole areas of modern literature in English are totally unknown to whole departments of English Literature. Professors in such

departments still parade their willful lack of knowledge as a sign of their superiority. Meanwhile, those who do teach so-called "genre" or any kind of "non-canonical" fiction, either in writing courses or as a subject course, are punished for doing so. They are likely to remain low on the totem pole, passed over in favor of teachers who hotly pursue the latest trends in Theory towards the enhancement of their career (the goal of most trends in Theory).

Stupid, reactionary arrogance, on either side of the wall, is stupid, reactionary arrogance.

5. "... I don't expect an immediate rejection of the practice" [of labeling by genre] — That was just as well, wasn't it? I sure would have been disappointed. Fully commercialised assembly-line Sci Fi was just getting going, back in '75. By now, the Sci Fi section in the assembly-line bookstores, or even a big independent bookstore like Powell's here in Portland, covers an acre or so, most of it in interchangeable jackets inside which are interchangeable adventure series. Talk about your capitalist cash crops.

If the Chair had been human, I might have talked with it about what's wrong with science fiction, because there's a lot wrong with it — and with all the rest of fiction publishing. But it's difficult to have a conversation with upholstery.

6. "Now that we're free, where are we going?"

I should be able to answer this question, at least to the extent of where we went during the twenty years since I asked it; but I can't. Science fiction has done a whole lot of fascinating things in the last two decades, but I don't see any steady direction to it. Nor do I know why there should be one. An art goes where its artists take it. Sometimes they all fly one way for a long way, and you have a big migration, like Romanticism. Sometimes they all follow a leader for a bit and you get a trip, like New Wave or Cyberpunk. But then they all fly off in different directions, honking at each other. This way! No, this way! Follow me! Go North! Go South! Go Back! Go Postmodern!

7. "I am planning the overthrow of the entire Australian Ballot System."

My plan failed. I regret it extremely.

8. "... forced into hiding just once, by an editor of *Playboy*..."

If I knew the whole story, when I complained about it in this talk, I wasn't playing quite fair. Anyhow, I know it now. Here it is: Virginia Kidd, Fearless Girl Agent, submitted the story to the notoriously misogynist magazine, which in 1968 had never printed a story by a woman except for one by Françoise Sagan — remember? she was really cute and sucked her thumb in her PR pictures?— On my MS, Virginia used the byline "U. K. Le Guin." Apparently accepting the initials as male or genderless, *Playboy* accepted it.

Marc Ortlieb



When they found I was *shudder* one of *gasp* THEM, they asked to run my byline as it was on the MS. And Virginia and I agreed that fair's fair. In love or war. I wasn't really bent out of shape. Not that time. We bought a new red VW bus with what *Playboy* paid. Last I knew, it was in Bloomington, Indiana and still running. That was good money.

9. "There are very few of us."

In this area of Gender, things have improved.

When, two years ago, Brian Attebery and Karen Fowler and I were reading and selecting for the Norton Book of Science Fiction, which covers 1960-1990 in North America, we found about a third of the stories we considered from that thirty years were by women. Not surprisingly, about a third of the ones we chose were by women.

The anthology was accused by some shrill and predictable reviewers of having a "feminist agenda" (misogynese for "something like parity"). Our criterion was quality, as we perceived quality. The number of women we included reflects the number of women writing excellent science fiction since 1960.

One in three isn't parity, but it sure beats that old one in thirty. If you crave the old ratio, however, you can find it resurrected in the recent anthology of "hard" SF edited by David Hartwell and Katharine Cramer.

(Parenthetically: the only review of the Norton Book that I have seen from Australia dismissed it as worthless because there were no Australian stories in it. I hope there are Australian critics, I know there are Australian readers, whose approach to literature is less exclusive. There are 67 great stories in that book, and I hate to think of them going unread only because they're by Americans and Canadians. Or because a third of them are by women. Or because only a third of them are by women. Or for any other reason that privileges membership in a group above the criteria proper to art and the blessed commonalty of art.)

So I feel that I wasn't too far off the mark twenty years ago in saying that even if you leave out the boy-toy areas of military heroics and wiring diagrams, though you don't have to, all the rest of science fiction is open to women — and therefore asking why aren't more women writing it?

Well, they did.

They are.

I just hope they don't stop.

Women have never gained any ground, in any society that I know of, that they can take for granted. Professionalism, preference, pay, choice of activity, reproductive choice, none of it is ever secure. All of it can be lost overnight. (*The Handmaid's Tale*, anyone?)

When I was in Australia in '75 I felt at times that the society was almost two societies — men, running most everything, and talking the way Americans think Aussies talk; and women, not running anything much, and talking the way Americans think Brits talk. It was a little like those tribal cultures that have separate languages for the two genders. The men I met during that visit were such lovely men that I hated to feel that anything was wrong; but I did. I took heart, though, from the wonderful women in our First Australian Science Fiction Workshop. And I gather, from friends and from reading what Australian women write, that in this respect there has been a lot of positive change in the last twenty years. I hope so. And I hope it lasts. Make it last, people — please, make it last.

From here on, I have nothing really to add to the twenty-year-old speech. Science fiction hasn't changed all that much.

I wish commercial publishing weren't increasingly in the hands of corporate profiteers who know nothing and refuse to learn anything about books or the business of publishing. But books will survive the businessmen.

I wish the walls of genre, of gender, and of jingoism were lower. I hope all of us, women and men, keep lowering them, stone by stone.

I think science fiction is a richer literature than it was in 1975 — Twenty years richer — in some ways older and wiser, in some ways younger and crazier than ever.

I'm glad that I went to Aussiecon. I'm glad that I've never been to a Worldcon since, because I don't think any of them have been half as nice as Our Worldcon. Right?

With love, Ursula.

The Clubhouse (Aussiecon report)

Susan Wood

"Why are you here?" asked Jan Sharpe, the elegant blonde from the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

"We've come for Aussiecon."

"Here" was the State Suite on the 15th floor of the Southern Cross Hotel, Melbourne, Australia, Aug. 14, 1975. Robin, Johnson, chairman of Aussiecon, had hauled me away from helping to register convention attendees to attend a press conference where he was introducing convention notables to each other and to assorted reporters.

The basic "why" translated as "What's an Aussiecon?" with faint undertones of "Why here?" (Australians are so used to believing that everything important exists in the places where they're tourists that they find it hard to believe North Americans would want to cross the Pacific and the Dateline to see them, their wombats and their Opera House. In fact, they're most courteous, hospitable to visitors, and have an amazing country. This may be the first time *The Clubhouse* has given a rave review to a continent.)



Photo: Jay K Klein

Since 1939, we explained, and annually since 1946, science fiction fans have gathered at "world" conventions to talk; swap ideas and fanzines; sell each other old pulp magazines; look at masquerade balls, art shows and, especially of late, movies; meet writers who are meeting editors; give each other awards; eat dinner together; and ... anything two fans do together is fanac.

This is the 33rd of these "world conventions." Since it is supposed to be a "world" convention, it has been known to move out of North America, to London and Heidelberg, and so an Australian named John Bangsund thought ... Well, yes, of course, we hear writers give speeches, but it's not really like an academic conference. No, not like the sheepdip sellers' sales meetings, or the American Legion reunions, either. A former Clubhouse writer, John Berry, called it a gathering of the tribes, some think of it as a family reunion... but they were puzzled already, these people come to interpret us.

Media coverage of science fiction conventions tends to be sensational. The first Torcon in 1948 earned headlines like "Zap! Zap! Atomic Ray is Passe with Fiends," and one of the sensational Melbourne tabloids proved nothing has changed — they concentrated on the scanty skirts of the hired models promoting the WANG computers, loaned to the convention for Star Trek games, "Sci-fi." Sigh.

Most reporters, though, listened with interest as Robin stressed the respectability of science fiction, the educational and cultural nature of the convention, the funds from the Literature Board of the Australia Council to run a writers' workshop before the con, the videotaping of the convention for schools and libraries...

More important, Ursula Le Guin emanated, inspired, intelligent interest in this "Aussiecon."

"I have a question, a serious question to ask you. What on earth are we here for?"

"Well, I think we have come to celebrate." — Ursula K. Le Guin, Guest of Honour speech, Aussiecon, Aug. 14, 1975.

Reporters thought they could understand why Ursula Le Guin had come to Aussiecon: for professional reasons. The Guest of Honour was fittingly chosen: an acclaimed writer of science fiction and fantasy, winner of Hugo, Nebula and National Book awards, author of the Hugo-and-Nebula-winning *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the Nebula-winning-and-Hugo-nominated *The Dispossessed*. She must have journeyed half round the world to accept the admiration of her fans.

Admiration, however, makes Ursula Le Guin nervous. she changes the subject. She was lured from Oregon, en route to London the long way, by the chance to lead a writing workshop for 20 aspiring sf writers. She remained after the workshop, not to lecture to fans, but to share with them her delight in sf: to "celebrate" sf...

[Excerpts from Le Guin's speech have been deleted; the speech is printed in full starting on page 11.]

Thursday, we had panels on "new directions in science fiction" and on science; Friday we talked about art and sf; Saturday found me moderating panels on teaching sf, and on children's fantasy (featuring Ursula Le Guin and Peter Nicholls of England's Science Fiction Foundation — I really enjoyed this one), followed by hardworking Ursula on a panel on myth in sf, then sf criticism, and finally Bob Silverberg reading his own work — a most serious, literary day this, ending with the Hugo banquet; and Sunday had panels on the media in sf, reading sf, and writing sf: it *looked* like a literary conference. But what was that panel about "fanzines" — and this item, "The Role of Sheep in SF" — and all the announcements of the Test Match scores — and this "business session" where Orlando won the 1977 worldcon? What's this "fandom"?)

So the reporters assumed they'd dropped into a literary gathering, where Ackerman, Bova, Foster, Le Guin, Silverberg and Tucker had flown in to meet their Australian counterparts like Chandler, Harding, Turner and Wilder, their critics like Nicholls and Foyster. Off they went to interview Captain Chandler (and report, with pride, the presentation of an Invisible Little Man award to him at the banquet): a gentleman dignified, courteous, proud of

his craft, and as thrilled as any of us to be at Aussiecon. The papers and the radio didn't report on that last trait. We call it Sense of Wonder. It knows no limits of age or distance; and it unites us.

Why have you come to Aussiecon — from Perth, and Hobart, and Waiheke Island, N.Z.?"

"To meet science fiction writers, of course."

Aussiecon was, first of all, a science fiction conference, for writers and readers. As such it attracted 604 attending members, some 500 of whom were Australian who had never heard of worldcons or fandom — who probably didn't understand why some 1,400 other fans, most of them North Americans, paid to become supporting members of a convention they couldn't attend...

These readers, like the reporters, soon learned that what Ursula Le Guin said held true: "we like each other." The sf world tends not to split into an elite of Doers, sitting on platforms lecturing, and a supportive mass of Receivers or fans, sitting adulating. Convention: from the Latin, to come together: in order to share.

Chorus of voices: "And when I asked for an autograph, he/she *talked* to me! What a nice person!"

(And some are arrogant bastards, too, but they stayed home this time.)

"Why are you here?"

"Because the fans sent me to you."

Bob Tucker, a First Fandomite, legend, Hugo-winning fanwriter, and admirer of Jim Beam and pretty ladies, is also Wilson Tucker, Hugo-nominated sf writer. He flew to Aussiecon because a lot of us in the fan community love him; because a lady named Jackie Franke organized "The Tucker Bag," a special fund which collected some \$2,500 from fans to pay his way. During his first panel, on sf writing, he sat silent and fidgeting under the spotlights, feeling that only a handful of us were responding. "They're a cold audience," he complained to me. Since I was to interview him the next day on the programme, we considered the problem. The spotlights for videotaping panels were too bright, the hall too dark; speakers and audience were cut off. Easily remedied. Vital, though, since we wanted to establish the lack of barriers.

"Bob," I said, "I remember my first worldcon. You were up on a stage trading

one-liners about 'Rosebud' and 'Courtney's boat' and picnic tables — and I walked out. People keep talking about fandom; I didn't understand, and I was bored. We're got to introduce you properly — as Wilson the writer (Robin didn't make it clear who you are) and Bob the fan, and talk about why you're both.

Introduce fandom as a Tucker creation in 50 minutes? We tried. Soon Merv Binns of Space Age Books was selling out of hardcover editions of *Ice and Iron* and *Year of the Quiet Sun*; the local bottle shops were selling out of Tucker's elixir, Jim Beam; and Tucker was handing out Rosebud buttons and calling cards to bebies of femmefans. By Sunday, he had a hall full of people on their feet going "smoooooth," an arcane ritual you'll only understand if you attend a con with Bob, Wilson and Jim.

By Sunday, that is, Australia had a lot of people not only delighted to discover somebody else read "that stuff" (remember the thrill?) but also a lot of people happy to discover the subculture of fandom...

"Why are you here?"

"The fans sent me to keep an eye on Bob, there."

Rusty Hevelin (who drinks milk) travelled with his "son" Bob as the Down Under Fan Fund winner. The Fund alternately sends Australians up to visit us, us down to them...

"Why are you here?"

"Because I'm half of the Fan Guest of Honour."

At that press conference, and all through the convention, I was hyper-aware that few people would understand what role Mike Glicksohn and I were playing a "Fan" GoHs. What novel had we written? What had we published? What did we mean, we'd published a fanzine called *Energumen* which won a Hugo, articles from me that won another, and letters from him that made him a legend (thought the beard, boa constrictor, bheer and Bill Bowers helped)? What's a "fanzine"? Back to square one.

Mike and I figured that while Ursula represented the professional concerns, and he represented the fans (with a *duty* to sample local brews for them), I was an interface between sf and the subculture of fandom. After organising a fanhistory

display at the Toronto worldcon, I'd had some practice explaining fandom (especially to reporters, with Bob Tucker's help!). Besides — as Robin Johnson and the programme book kept pointing out — I had lovely respectable literary interests, having taught sf and finished off a PhD (now I can go back to reading fanzines). I was able to meet a lot of Australians through that "professional" interest in sf: librarians, teachers, students who wanted to set up sf courses — people like me who wanted to take sf seriously, but not take the job out of it. (I spent one panel on Sunday trying to have the best of both worlds!)

Yet when I introduced myself, I tried to talk about Susan the fan, about why fandom interests me as much as the sf which lured me into it.

"Why are you here?"

"To have dinner with my friends."

I explained, at the opening ceremonies, that years before when I was a neofan, a friend lent me some amateur sf magazines: fanzines. Most contained discussions of sf, book reviews and such; yet one, *Rataplan*, consisted entirely of someone named Leigh Edmonds in Australia talking about having dinner with someone name John Bangsund, and ... "Richard," I complained, "what's going on? This isn't even about sf! Who cares?"

"Oh," he replied. "That's fannish. You'll understand someday."

So in 1975 I left Regina, Saskatchewan; and I arrived in Melbourne, Australia; and I met Ursula Le Guin at the Nova Mob meeting, and didn't fall at her feet because she said she'd be embarrassed; and the next night I had dinner at Degraives Tavern with Leigh Edmonds, and John Bangsund, and Valma Brown who happens to be a sister of mine, not by birth but by choice and fandom. And I understood: for me, fandom was a communications network that brought me together with my friends.

It was hardly a unique message, but it was as simple, and honest, as I could make it. At the panel following the introductions, "How to Really Enjoy Yourself at This Convention," Mike and Rusty and the Aussiefen repeated the same thing: "Talk to people. That's why we're here. Talk to people." And we did. From platforms and panels; in groups over coffee... in the lounge outside the

meeting room; at the parties by the Magic Pudding Club and the Science Fiction Writers of America (and Australia) and the '77 worldcon bidders; at Leigh Edmonds' pie-and-sauce party, that vast end-of-con tribute to Australian cuisine; in ones and two and tens: we discussed, debated, disagreed, chattered, gossiped, heavyrapped, and got to know each other. And then we wandered back into the main ballroom to watch Sonar Graphics' unique light-and-sound show, preceding each major programme segment (Aussiecon's most impressive innovation), and list to someone else talk. What else is there at a worldcon? There's an art show — Aussiecon's was small but impressive, highlighted by Karel Tholes work — hucksters' tables, selling books and magazines and the like, and auctions of collectable material. There's usually a masquerade, this one capably organized by Shayne McCormack, with your hardworking GoHs to judge the costumes — far simpler than the elaborate North American presentations of late, but fun. A movie programme has become standard; Aussiecon premiered *Solaris* but I was too busy visiting. At larger conventions, there are often two or more concurrent programme items: on sf, fantasy, science, films, writing, editing, fan publishing, anything. Of course, it all leads up to the Hugo banquet, and the presentation of awards voted on by the members of the convention. Some people fall in love at conventions, and some get pros to autograph their books. Lots of things happen at worldcons...

Anyway, at *this* convention there was an excellent, smoothly-run programme, organized by Bruce Gillespie and Leigh Edmonds. I enjoyed it, and I rarely get around to attending the formal convention events (though I've never felt that I was *on* half the programme before, either). Carey Handfield, one of the committee members, set an example of stunning efficiency by day; and then in the evening, everyone relaxed and actually enjoyed their own convention. Remarkable. I just hope they don't all gaffiate...

Oh yes. A large chunk of my convention was spent talking to reporters. Taping a half-hour programme on Canadian literature (my specialty, one reporter discovered to her delight) was an odd experience, but easier than trying to

explain fandom as a subculture to Jan Sharpe for her "New Society" programme.

"But what are you doing here? Talking to your friends — but you're a successful woman, surely you have real friends?"

On Saturday afternoon, I sat trying to tell Jan's tape recorder (because I wasn't reaching Jan) what I valued about fandom: the chance to meet, to become friends (not just acquaintances: friends) with a wide and wonderful circle of people. Look, I said, at the people you found me with today: Bob Tucker, who's a legend, and Jilian Miranda Foyster, who's an Australian schoolgirl and her mum Elizabeth who teaches and paints lovely watercolours, and John Alderson who raises sheep (and, I thought, I want to get back down to the ballroom and talk to them). But she didn't understand — not even when I turned around and interviewed *her* for an article I'm writing on Australian women (I was busy, this trip, playing pro writer; scholar, too, visiting at University of Melbourne in hopes of coming back).

Young, intelligent, hip, a single mother, Jan complained she had no one to *talk* with, could feel at ease only with a small elite group of people her age who shared her ideas. Yet should couldn't believe that fandom gave me exactly what she lacked, that I had flown here for a sort of giant family reunion. (It has its quarrels, but it's not a bad clan.)

I passed Jan on to Tucker, and went off to interview an advice-to-housewives columnist and the German chambermaid. Not even Mr. Smooth could dent the preconceptions with which she edited me, and Bruce Gillespie, and Eric Lindsay, though. The radio programme presented the stereotype of fans as social misfits, shy, introverted, able to communicate only on paper (some of my second-year English students should be so handicapped!). Shy? Introverted? That raving bunch of lunatics munching daffodils, waiting for the train to Ballarat, and chattering away?

We come together because we value sf. We stay, because we value each other. We celebrate fandom because it is the bond that holds us together.

Well: when we talked to Malcolm Maiden — frizzyhaired freak, writing for the Australian edition of *Rolling Stone* —

about "tribe" and "celebration" and "communications network," he understood.

And the latest issue of Leigh Edmonds' *Fanew Sletter* reports that sf clubs and fanzines are mushrooming all over Australia. Fans coming together, talking with their friends.

"Why are you here?"

"Because John Bangsund has a bottle of Kaiser Stuhl Bin J426 in his wine cellar for me."

Several years ago, John Bangsund, Publishing Jiant, wine critic, and all-round legend of Melbourne fandom, proposed that Australians bid for a world convention, inviting Ursula K. Le Guin as GoH. They did. A somewhat erratic career took John away to Canberra, where he became a civil servant, married a charming woman named Sally, and generally Settled Down — except for producing a steady flow of outrageously brilliant fanzines... The cosmic wheels continue to grind, of course, and they brought me, one August night, to sit in John and Sally's living room, curled up by the heater with cat Dylan, sharing conversation and wine with them, and Carey Handfield, and three more North Americans: John Berry, Mike Glicksohn, and Sheryl Birkhead.

Now John Bangsund happens to be one of the best personal journalists (synthesizing ideas, emotion, experience, into words — OK, have you got a name for it?) existing today. Not "existing in fandom." Existing anywhere — though he chooses to distribute his material through fandom's network. Through that writing, its intelligence and insight and quirky humour, he'd earned our admiration; through it, and our writing, and lots of letters, we'd formed a friendship, which gained an extra dimension as we sat talking with him.

John Berry, in San Francisco in July, figured he couldn't go to Aussiecon: he had just enough money to find a place to live, exist til he could live by writing. "Bangsund has that bottle of Kaiser Stuhl waiting for me," he explained, as he wrote the cheque to the travel agent. Translation: we have a friendship to confirm in person. This will never happen to any of us again. Translation: impossible in words, possible only in the feeling we share as Bangsund pulls out the issue of *AMAZING*, with the

Clubhouse column in which Berry reviews (glowingly) Bangsund's *Scythrop* and incidentally (not so glowingly) Mike's and my *Energumen #10*; and the July, 1975 *AMAZING* in which I review (glowingly) Bangsund's *Philosophical Gas* and the defunct *Scythrop*.

Two days later, Australia's fabulous femmefan Shayne McCormack was handing us daffodils in Sydney airport, so we could concentrate on something besides the reality of saying goodbye several months too soon. Fans hugged fans, hiding emotions under the ritual exchange: "See you next year in Kansas City,"

"Where're you from?"

"Australia."

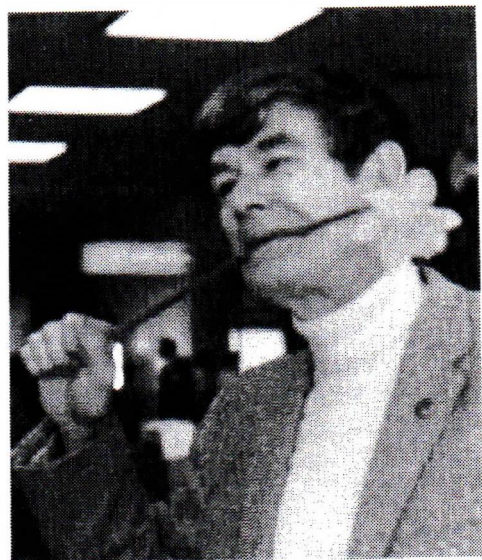
"Purpose of visit?"

"To have dinner with my friends."

Oh yes. Eric Lindsay is collecting pre-supporting members (A\$2) for the next Australian worldcon. Sixty or more of us are members already. Sydney Cove in '88? Beaut!

*Editor's note: this article was first published (as "Propellor Beanie") in the Summer 1976 issue of *Algol*, and in *Amazing*.*

Bob Tucker



Memoir found in a blog tub

Don Ashby

Groin put down his quill and sighed. He shuffled through a pile of disks and pushed one into the slot in the base of his crystal ball. The globe flickered into life, uplighting his whiskery haggard face. He reached for a goblet of wine and slurped.

"Aussiecon, they want my memories of Aussiecon." He muttered. "If you can remember Aussiecon, you weren't there...or was that the fifties? Luckily I had my brain put on disk."

The crystal ball beeped a couple of times, made a sound like a razor blade milkshake being made in a vitamiser and Groin was staring at himself. Himself said, in a querulous voice very like the one you just heard, "Well, what do you want now?"

"It's Aussiecon, they want to know about my memories of Aussiecon."

"Everywhere you looked there were polystyrene cups."

"Polystyrene cups? The first World Science Fiction convention in the southern hemisphere and you remember polystyrene cups?"

"OK, OK, well there was Americans...over weight, over here and over-heard..."

"What else?"

"Bob Tucker?"

"And Rusty."

"Rosebud!"

"Smooth!"

"Pretty arcane stuff for all the hoards of undergraduates in funny hats, cloaks and plastic ears."

"Nice guys though, not that we actually got to meet them till after the convention."

"We was very busy...we didn't meet much of anyone...apart from the team."

"What a team!"

"Before that is gone into: shouldn't we remember what we were doing?"

"Video!"

"Room bookings."

"Masquerade."

"Security."

"Cooking."

"Enough already. What about The Magic Puddin' Club?"

"If we get into that, this will be a novel, not a short memoir."

...Where to start?

In some ways Aussiecon was a bit of an anticlimax. We had been working on the event for what seemed like forever. In hindsight the actual preparatory work was rather more enjoyable than the few days of madness.

We, the team, lived in a house in Drummond Street, we had called The Magic Puddin' Club, for reason it is unnecessary to into here (See *The Metaphysical Review* No 4). John Ham, Ken Ford, Derrick Ashby, Judy Coleman and myself actually lived there. Carey Handfield, Bruce Gillespie, Robin Johnson, and sundry others just seemed to live there.

Carey turned up daily for meals and tasks for us to do. John Ham was an urbane and unemployed computer programmer (he was recovering from a serious crash), with a yen for painting, hippy communes and waitresses. He was my right hand man who did all the routine stuff while I had to go to work. An extraordinary person — unflappable, energetic and cheerful.

Ken Ford was a undergraduate drama student who collected comics and neurotic female undergraduate drama students. He knew how to party, a tireless worker and a great friend.

Derrick Ashby was at that stage a librarian for the Australian Society of Accountants. He is my brother and at the time used to spend most of his time reading *Widens* and playing null gravity hockey with a set of dice and large piles of paper. He was seconded to Christine McGowan to assist her in the money department and was involved with Bruce Gillespie in the Writers Workshop.

Judy Coleman was not a fan. She was rather more interested in me and the society of The Pud' than in SF or its conventions. She was a fair illustrator and her drawings gladdened many of publications that issued forth. When it came to the crunch she was there to help and a very pleasant time was had.

We were the contact point for phone bookings for hotel rooms at the convention. This was all very well, except that many of the Americans who were coming seemed to have no idea about international time zones. Ken became very creative about some of his responses.

Then there was the cooking. John was a great cook and under his tuition I became fairly adept myself. All work and no play makes The Magic Pud' a dull place. Almost every night Con meetings developed into enormous dinner parties. In those faroff days food was reasonably cheap and I had a reasonable income so we feasted.

For some reason it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to video the proceedings at Aussiecon. So I approached Video Access (which later became Open Channel) and they agreed to supply me with a portable editing suite, cameras and etc. So I put it to The Committee and they agreed.

Aussiecon was not the only thing on my plate at the time. In my line of business (theatre production) almost everything you do is a 24-hour-day activity. I had one job that finished the night before the bump in of the Convention. Consequently I arrived at about midnight on "der tag". My team, John, Judy, Ken, and Gordon "The Magic Viking", had picked everything up and I was confronted with a huge pile of gear in the middle of the Banquet hall.

Many hours later we had lights rigged, cables run, cameras set up and ourselves ensconced in the projection room with all the editing gear. A preliminary run through revealed that the preview module on the editing gear was dead. The reason we only got the gear at the last minute was because this was supposedly being fixed. We also discovered that the talk-back was also dead — trying to call shots on three cameras with a loud-hailer would probably have disrupted the convention slightly. Peter Darling and Co found us some walkie-talkies, which apart from their tendencies to break into the P.A., would do. We reran all the cables which minimised the problem.

Most of our camera persons we had picked up from Melbourne State College Film and TV Department. Ken had organised it and I think the department was using us as a work experience opportunity. I never actually met most of them; they were

on a roster and were only disembodied voices through the talk-back.

Videoing panels is very boring; it is also very boring video. Still we had some fun setting up shots where Bob Silverberg read from his own works to his own shadow. It was just as well because the audience was asleep, or in the bar with Bob Tucker.

At about this time, or some other time, the audience complained that the cameras were in the way of the action. We had to pull them all to the back of the hall. A discovery was made of a practical application of the inverse square law: the lights we had rigged were no longer adequate. We rushed out and hired some 2K television lights. The hall layout meant that we had no way of creating side light so that in quick time all panel members sported dark glasses. We were not popular.

Ursula Le Guin, however, was — the BNFs and SMOFs treated her like a cross between Pallas Athena and Mother Teresa and the punters were awful in their respect. Her GoH Speech was the highlight of the main program. I never got to meet her; lionising was not on my job description.

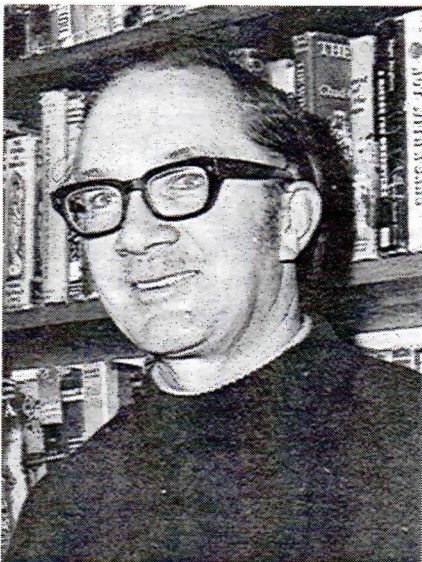
So, lots of people talked about lots of things and it was time for the masquerade.

Shayne McCormack was allegedly in charge of this event. After the last panel for the day she approached us with a limp plastic bag full of cassettes and a sad looking portable tape player and asked us if we could play 'something suitable' for each presentation. A tall order when we had no idea what was going to happen during each item and we were also unfamiliar with the contents of most of the tapes. Of course the leads we had for the hall P.A. were not compatible with the outputs on the tape player, neither did we have any patch leads to effect a tape-to-tape dub to make up a program tape.

Frantic searching liberated tape players from John Bangsund and Robin (Ghod) Johnson. We went up to Shayne's room and in the bathroom (acoustics) dubbed together a tape using the mics built into Robin's. John Bangsund's machine was compatible with our leads.

Time was getting on and we left the unflappable Pedder Gurteen to finish taping and rushed back to the main hall

Don Tuck





Keith Curtis

to find disaster. In the absence of us a whole gang of Hotel minions were resetting the hall for the upcoming extravaganza, with scant regard for the thousands of dollars worth of equipment set up around the place. Frantic activity rescued most of it and more of the same effected repairs to the stuff that was damaged.

Time was getting on. Now both myself and my offsider (John Ham, more of him later) were both in the masquerade as was Judy. "An interesting topological problem", as John would have said. During the night, the proverbial fly on the wall in the projection booth, would have seen, at various times: Mephistopheles, a Viking and a scantily clad Martian Princess calling the shots.

Organisation back-stage was entirely absent until Del Stocks, a person of infinite calm and patience, filled the breach. Out front Lee Harding was compering and had to be incredibly witty for punishingly long periods, as each act got itself together. So the great event stumbled towards its mighty conclusion. Most events got suitable music, some got unsuitable music and some missed out altogether. John was a great success as The Devil Himself and so was Judy, for quite different reasons.

After a sketchy clean-up we stumbled off to The Dead Dog Party, the first party we had had time to get to; beer and pies never tasted to good.

Mind you, the post Aussiecon period was one continuous party, that eventually came to a desultory halt after one by one we succumbed to bottle fatigue and people overdoses.

"Well that's about it, squirt it down the wire to Handfield will you?"

CLICK

Aussiecon memories

jan howard finder

What do I remember about the con after 20 years? Lots and not enough.

I was living in Italy at the time. In fact I was one half of the Italian delegation to the con. Karol Thole (really Dutch) was the other. I had always wanted to go to Oz, but never had the chance before. I had gotten fairly involved with European SF fandom at the time. My first real SF con was Ompacon in 73 in Bristol, England.

For some reason I got it in my head to stand for DUFF. GUFF hadn't been thought of as yet. In any case I left Italy and headed back to the States for the first time in 4 years. That was an odyssey in itself. I visited friends in NYC, Cleveland (there a lass at a bank in the airport didn't know that she could accept my passport as an ID for cashing a traveler's cheque), a big party hosted by my folks for friends, San Francisco, where I signed a peace treaty between the Kingdom of Naples — me and The Papal States; I was in a diplomacy game. Then on to LA for the going-away party for everyone on the trip to Oz.



It was my first taste of American fandom and I was quite anxious going to the party. I didn't know anyone. I was a little bit known in European fandom, but I felt that I knew no one in the States. I needn't have worried as everyone was so very nice.

I also got to meet Bob Tucker, a real fannish treasure. I learned to smooth from him not much earlier than did the Aussies.

On the flight over I got to dislike the increasingly watered down orange drink of some sort that the airline, Air New Zealand, kept pressing on us. Biological warfare of some sort.

The trip has to be the best 3-week trip I have ever taken. We partied in the air, also producing a "one-shot;" we partied, seemingly, the rest of the time as well.

I spent some time out at the Ron and Sue Clarke's. They couldn't have been nicer to a wandering American. It was they who took us out to Featherdale Park where I saw my first wombat.

I remember having a very nice time at the con. I went to most of the programming; I wasn't doing any yet.

One thing I remember strongly. It was brought back to me oh so very strongly the wonderful day in June 1990 when I was invited to be one of the Honoured Guests at ConFrancisco.

I was sitting in the audience at the banquet listening to the speakers. Then came Susan Wood and Mike Glicksohn. I had met Mike at a con in England. He was the first, to me, real international BNF I had ever met. I wondered then, as I don't doubt many another fan has and will, how does one get to be a Fan GoH at a Worldcon. You can fantasize, but truthfully, you don't ever really expect it to happen to you. I never did. It is a humbling experience. I know of a number of fans who deserve that sort of recognition and haven't received it.

Oh yes, back to Aussiecon. I remember introducing Rusty Hevelin to a lovely lass. I got the impression that both smiled a lot thereafter. Then there were the 300-year-old pancakes. Well, the recipe claimed to be that old. This was in a small shop around the corner from the Southern Cross with wooden tables and good pancakes.

After the con there was the freezing ride to the gold fields, but we were all on vacation, so what the hell. It was a great day trip.

Then on to the Red Centre. Genie DiModica was a marvelous trip leader. She took good care of us. She was cool, calm and collected while everyone else was getting a little bit panicky at times. As I was an add-on for the trip, I was

most pleased that she got everything sorted out.

The Red Centre was/is magnificent. Out at The Rock we got to see the color changes and use up a lot of film. We stayed in iron quonset huts and slept under several woolen blankets. The temp dropped to about zero by morning. Of course, a number of us were up at the crack of dawn ((could sleep when I got back to work) to watch the new set of colors.

Then 4 of us braved the steep slope and climbed to the top of The Rock. I bought a T-shirt saying so. The view is awesome from up there. I, of course, signed in at the logbook in the cairn.

Oh yes, I was struck by something I observed in Alice Springs while we were there. It was the invisibility of Whites to the Aborigines and the Aborigines to the Whites. They would walk by each other as if the other were either invisible or an immovable object. It wasn't always the Aborigine who stepped aside into the street to let the other pass. It was simply that the one did not exist for the other. Now the hippies camping on the green along the river on one side of what I think was Main Street, went out of their way to be cool and interact with the Aborigines.

From there I was treated to some very fine Aussie hospitality by Dennis & Del Stocks. We had corresponded and he had been kind enough to nominate me for DUFF. I got my first taste (and so far only, sigh!) of mud crab, yummy.

I remember the daffodils on the way to the gold fields and then again at the airport. How they were used as boarding passes and the look on the chap's face as he looked over my shoulder and saw this, apparently, unending line of people with daffodils in their hands.

I took with me and remember the kindness and friendship offered by everyone. Maybe that is why it was so easy to think about coming back and doing my Grand Tour of Oz. I enjoy driving and scenery.

However, I found some really neat people and that, I believe, made it so easy to consider returning to the Land of Oz. There is a lot of enchantment there.

Other Australian bids — abandoned, failed, and hoax

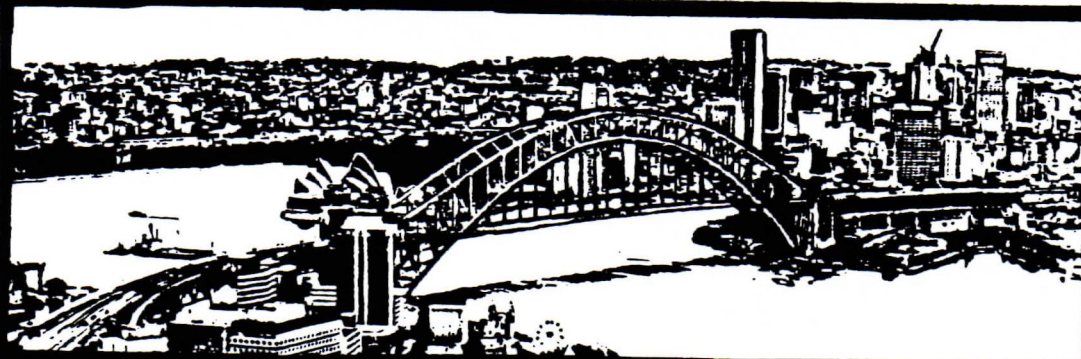
At the end of her article, Susan Wood mentions Eric Lindsay's "Sydney Cove in '88" Worldcon bid, which was to be held in the Bicentennial year of the founding of the penal colony in Sydney Cove.

That bid was overtaken by a series of bids for earlier years:

- Perth in '84, which was abandoned in favour of —
 - A Sydney "Australia in '83" bid, which lost to Baltimore and was reborn as —
 - The successful Melbourne "Australia in '85" bid
- Meanwhile Sydney Cove kept reappearing. Here's a letterhead I did for the bid somewhere in the early '80s.



*Paul Stevens
as Antifan*



SYDNEY COVE IN '88

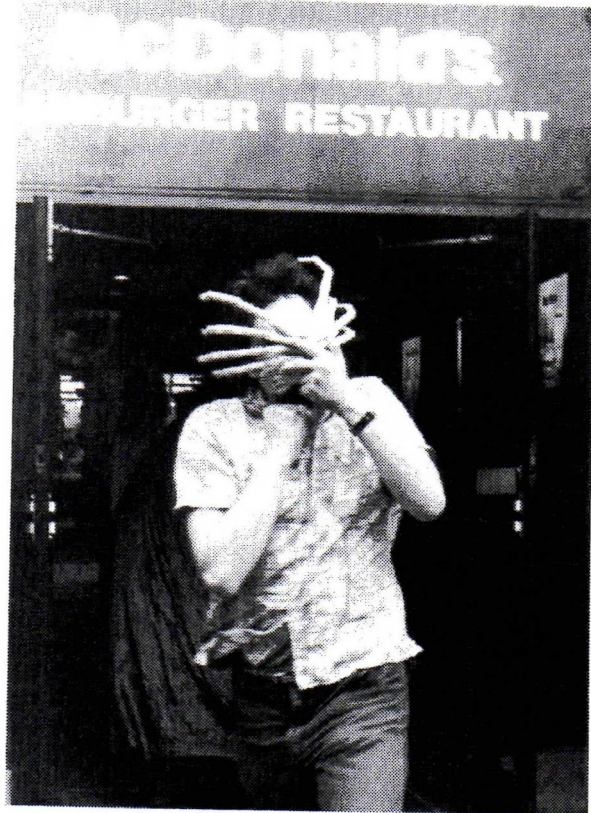
The Australian Bicentennial

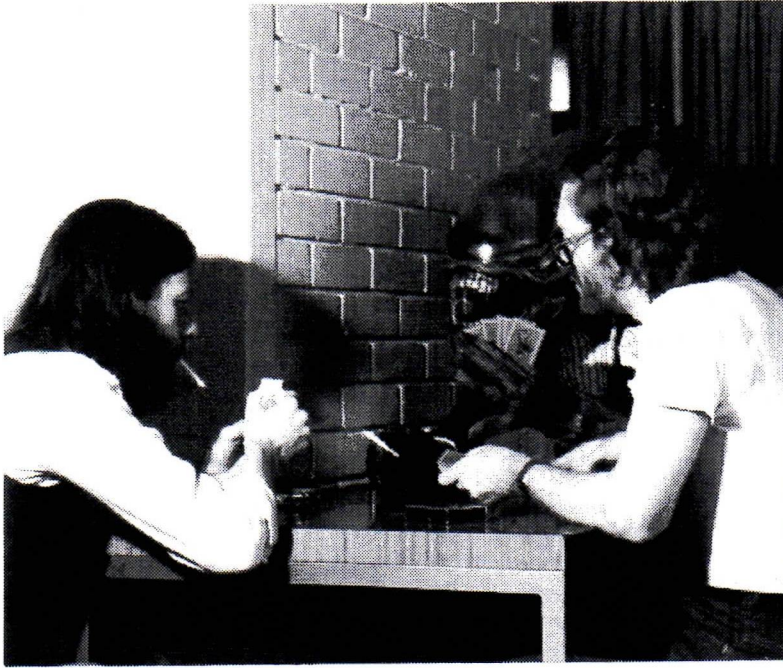
Since 1975, the original - and best - Australian WorldCon bid

P O Box Sydney South, NSW 2000, AUSTRALIA

Antifan Strikes Back — the Australia in '83 and '85 bid film

Here are some photos taken during the filming of Antifan Strikes Back.





Reminiscences of Aussiecons

Marc Ortlieb

There are times when I feel that the two Aussiecons are the boundaries of my active fannish career — rather like the scientist who has ten active years of research following by a declining twilight of administration.

Aussiecon was my first science fiction convention. I was not quite a callow youth. Twenty-three is somewhat of an elderly age at which to discover fandom. I missed being one of the founding members of the Adelaide University Science Fiction Association by the skin of my teeth. I'd been a member of the Science Club, but never got organised enough to attend their sf discussion weekend in either 1970 or 1971 and so did not get involved in AUSFA.

I was teaching at Naracoorte [South Australia] at the time of Aussiecon. I caught the train to Bordertown, transferred to the Melbourne-bound train, and trudged along Bourke Street early on the morning of the convention.

I met Rob Lock at the Southern Cross and we registered, but missed much of that first day because we had to find a school friend of ours, Geoff Hudson, who was living and working in Melbourne and whose floor space we were occupying for the duration. It was my first visit to Melbourne. I recall being impressed by the tram ride down St Kilda Road and the office buildings along there, in one of which we found Geoff.

The convention itself was mind boggling. I recall thinking of it as a party where I should have been having a

wonderful time. There were all these people with a common mythology who had gathered to celebrate friendships forged over years. I saw Mike Glicksohn and thought "I could be like him." In several ways I was. We were both hirsute ex-pommie teachers, he from Canada, me from Australia. He though had a Hugo Award and an absolutely beautiful ex-wife. I suspect I wasn't the only socially backward male to fall in love with Susan Wood at that convention.

Rob and I did the neofan thing. We went to panel items. We watched the films. We listened to the guests of honour and marvelled at Lindsay Rodda's multimedia presentations. (I was to remember this when I fell victim to those very same presentations while presenting the Hugo Awards at Aussiecon Two.)

I watched people who stunned me with their ability to talk to fans. John Bangsund was awesome. Leigh Edmonds seemed so much a part of the scene. John Alderson amused me. We didn't discover room parties. I met Allan Bray but did not really talk to many other fans. (Rob knew Chas Jensen, from Adelaide theatre circles and we saw him there.) I picked up two issues of Bangsund's *Philosophical Gas* and, since I didn't have paper with me, scribbled notes for my first convention report in the margins.

If I may quote straight from that very fanzine:

"Notes During Banquet (non-attender) whilst waiting for Hugo Presentation. Hell & Damnation says he of the warbling rumbling pocket-empty stomach. Nattering with Rob about symphonies for knife, plate and rabble. Maybe add a stomach microphone.

Outsider feeling very strong from here at the back of the auditorium. Differential between what is/could have been is very strong and painful. This end of the auditorium is very strong bachelor territory like seal herds. Mated couples centre, rangy bachelors on outside. (Over simplified)

Rob's gone catatonic. Can't say I blame him. Balloon pink with "Mordor '78" on it. Sounds like a Good Idea. The Orcs would enjoy a prime piece of S.F. fan. (For that matter, at the moment, so would I.) Convention rip off? No I don't



Cath & Marc
Ortlieb

think so. Still *The Banquet* seems a capitalist affair. Dress standard seems neater than is customary. Free women for the revolutionaries when the Revolution comes. I seem to be on a low-blood sugar high. It feels good in a way but makes one hellish paranoid.

...Shit I wish they'd hurry up. It's getting highly dull sitting here listening to the enjoyment of others. ...the coffee is being poured. It shouldn't be long now.

Mind you, I don't see why I'm bothering to attend this. I suppose the sight of a Hugo presentation has its mystique but it's a very middle class phenomenon. (Note for later verification: Perhaps it's just that I'm middle class. Who noze?) (Note 2: There are almost as many paper planes here as there are in my Leaving English class. Aerodynamic quality is lower though.) If this Con has done anything it has perhaps released my writing inhibitions. I pity the poor recipients of this garbage.

...If I get to Kansas next year I'm going to have to become more outgoing. Seek out people in my situation (preferably female) and make the misery more of a group phenomenon. SFites are often, as part of their natures, book lovers and people with their noses deep in books tend to fizzle as social animals...

There seems almost a mellow atmosphere hanging over the peoples now that the Hugos have actually been presented. I feel, for some reason, that it is already over. Tomorrow can only be an anti-climax. "The dream is over." Fatigue and an empty stomach have combined to produce a highly unusually euphoric yet depressed (whatever that means) state of existence."

(For the purists, that was written on the back, inside front and front covers of John Bangsund's *Philosophical Gas* Number Thirty-One: July 1975. John liked to leave a little white space in his zines. Letters inside that issue were from Phillip Adams, George Turner, Robert Bloch, A Bertram Chandler and Van Ikin. Any wonder that I decided that fan editing looked like a fine game? It also appeared, with far more typographical errors, in my first ever fanzine, *TANSTAAFL* #1.)

In the ten years between Aussiecon and Aussiecon Two, I published fanzines, attended huge numbers of conventions, including my one and only trip to the

U.S. while helping with the Australia in '83 bid, won a few Ditmars, helped run conventions, helped found the South Australian Science Fiction Society, became an apahack, working through eight apas at different times, became a letterhack, fell seriously in love twice, ran DUFF and the Shaw Fund, the latter of which brought Bob Shaw to Australia, moved to Melbourne, married and became enmeshed in the running of Aussiecon Two.

My memories of Aussiecon Two make a strange contrast with those of the first Aussiecon. I had done all of the things I needed to do to get to where I had seen all those people at Aussiecon doing. Okay, I wasn't Mike Glicksohn, but I did have a beautiful wife and though I didn't have a Hugo, I had presented them. I was on first name terms with those people I'd watched on stage — feuding terms in some cases. I had Bob Shaw in my kitchen, washing up the breakfast dishes. Somehow though it was nowhere as exciting as Aussiecon had been. It was a wonderful occasion and I enjoyed it immensely, but seeing it from the inside had its drawbacks too. I lost a couple of people I'd considered friends through pressures created by the convention. I saw exactly how close various events came to absolute disaster.

And since then? Well, I'm still an active fan. I get involved in running conventions, I publish fanzines and attend conventions, so long as they are in Melbourne. I even participate in the stfnal aspects of the information superhighway. But somehow the past ten years haven't seemed anywhere near so productive, in terms of fan activity.

It has been productive in other ways. Through the confidence I have gained through my fan activities, I have far more of a sense of self-worth than I had as a 23-year-old neofan. Cath and I have two children, Michael and Natalie. I'm actually well-thought of in my work — something that I could not have said in the ten years between Aussiecons when I was too interested in fandom and certain substances (not necessarily in that order.)

And I'm involved in the Australian bid for the 1999 Worldcon. I hate to imagine what that will be like. I'll be twice as old as I was at my first Aussiecon. Maybe I'll just attend the programme items and then get an early bed.

Alyson Abramowitz



Jeanne Mealy



Facts and figures – Aussiecon II (1985)

Venue: Southern Cross Hotel, Melbourne

Guests:

Gene Wolfe, Guest of Honour
Ted White, Fan Guest of Honour

Special visitors:

DUFF: Marty Cantor & Robbie Bourget
GUFF: Eve Harvey
Shaw Fund: Bob Shaw

Committee:

Chairman: David Grigg
Deputy Chairman: Carey Handfield
Secretary & Administration Director: Peter Darling
Treasurer: Christine Ashby
Treasury Administration: Elayne Pelz, Lance W. Symes
Memberships: Derrick Ashby
Presiding Officer, Business Session: Jack Herman
Parliamentarian: Donald Eastlake III
Site Selection: Roy Ferguson
GoH Liaison: Carey Handfield
Hotel Liaison: Peter Darling
Publisher's Liaison: Justin Ackroyd
Awards: Roy Ferguson, Terry Stroud, Clive Newall
Technical Services: Terry Stroud, John Maizels, Don Ashby
Operations: Carey Handfield, Ben Yallow, John McDouall
Security: Cary Lenehan
Logistics: Bob Ogden
Masquerade: Paul Stokes, Marc Ortlieb
Hucksters & Auctions: Justin Ackroyd
Art Show: Christine Ashby, Elayne Pelz, Carey Handfield, Chris Johnston

Programming: Mark Linneman, Mandy Herriott, Catherine Ortlieb, assisted by Phil Ware, David McDonnell, Russell Blackford, Jenny Blackford, Lucy Sussex, Marc Ortlieb, Lucy Zinkewicz

Film Programme: Irwin Hirsh

Publications: David Grigg, Marc Ortlieb, Bruce Gillespie, Roger Weddall, Mike Glycer, John Maizels, Leigh Edmonds (and a cast of dozens)

Membership numbers

(Taken from the *Free Press*; final numbers may have been higher)

Attending: 1600
Total: 2522

Awards

John W Campbell Award: Lucius Shepard
(if there were other awards, they were not recorded in the *Free Press*)

Hugo awards:

Best Novel: "Neuromancer", William Gibson
Best Novella: "Press Enter", John Varley
Best Novelette: "Bloodchild", Octavia E Butler
Best Short Story: "The Crystal Spheres", David Brin
Best Non-Fiction Book: "Wonder's Child: My Life in Science Fiction", Jack Williamson
Best Professional Artist: Michael Whelan
Best Professional Editor: Terry Carr
Best Dramatic Presentation: "2010"
Best Semi-Prozine: "Locus", ed. Charles N. Brown
Best Fanzine: "File 770", ed. Mike Glycer
Best Fan Writer: Dave Langford
Best Fan Artist: Alexis Gilliland



Daily newsnotes from Aussiecon II

Excerpts from *The Aussiecon 2 Free Press* (daily news-sheet at Aussiecon II), written and published by "the publishers of *The Notional*" (Leigh Edmonds et al); and Mervyn Beamish's convention report published in Pandora Issue 3, 1985.

Free Press 1, Thursday, 22 August 1985. We would like to point out that the editorial panel of the *Free Press* is not actually a part of the convention committee and is therefore quite free to publish all sorts of interesting information ... although we must also point out that we are ideologically allied to and close personal friends with some of the organizing committee, and you can guess what that means...

[Miscellaneous program changes were then listed, along with instructions on how to obtain free tickets to the feature films, which were 2010, Ghostbusters, The Star Wars Saga, Dune, The Last Starfighter, and Razorback. The Minneapolis in '73 party, Nova Mob meetings, and a New Zealand fanzine, Phlogiston, were advertised.]

Last night the ABC's literary programme "Books and Writing" ... discussed sf as a way of marking this convention. The two anthologies which are to be launched today, *Strange Attractors* and *Urban Fantasies*, were reviewed (with a very favourable mention going to the story by David Grigg, who is the Aussiecon 2 Chairman in his spare time.) Others works reviewed included books by Gene Wolfe (Guest of Honour at this convention) and Fred Pohl.

The *Free Press* Programme Recommendations: ... Start the day with George Turner in the VIP room at 11am. George always likes to send at least half the audience away with a flea in its ear and you might want to find out which half you fall into.

Then go along to the "Celebration of Australian SF" in Ballroom A at 1pm where you will see the launching of a couple of important Australian sf books. After that it's into the main room for the official opening.

At 4pm you could take your choice of the panel on "Eastern European SF" which is being moderated by Jack Herman (who would like to hear from anybody who knows something about the

subject), or you could go to the VIP Room for an item on "Libraries and SF".

At 6:30 in Ballroom A there is the item on "Warfare in SF" on which you have Joseph Nicholas from Britain (who is very active in the CND and is trying to hold off the Third Big One), Cary Lenehan (who is practising for it), George Turner (who fought in the Second Big One), and Greg Turkich. Joseph tells me that such items as the Hegemonisation of the Pacific Basin and Theories of Limited Strategic Nuclear War will be discussed — it will be interesting to see what the others think.

Finally for the day you can hop across to the VIP Room and catch Jeff Harris talking on "How to Build a Time Machine out of Ordinary Domestic Materials"; end the evening with one of Australia's most interesting and scientifically informed sf personalities.

Cut to — Mervyn Beamish: What is a con? Well frankly even now, after the event, I'm not quite sure... There would seem to be two major streams of activity. Firstly the organised panels, discussion groups, speakers, films etc., where one can meet local and overseas authors, producers, etc., discuss concepts, enlarge knowledge of scientific possibilities, see how your favourite author ticks and become a devil's advocate in discussions etc. etc.

Secondly there is the semi or unplanned social scene. I have the distinct impression that this is the more important side of a convention. Here people meet friends and associates, party-on in smoke filled rooms to all hours of the nights and partake in a fantastic brainstorming session — the afterglow of which seems to hold them up until the next convention.

Free Press 2, Friday, 23 August 1985. More programme changes and film news; instructions for masquerade entrants, child care arrangements, site selection votes, and other officious stuff. Also announcements of the Hogu banquet and various room parties.

Cultural Alert: Australian and North American room parties run on a slightly different basis. Australian parties are traditionally BYO (especially Grog) whereas American parties are normally

Alan Stewart



Bob Shaw



host supplied. Taking along some of your favourite liquid is a good plan for North Americans. Australians — beware of Americans who enter your room and immediately look in your bath tub — they are looking for your beer and other drinks supplies.

Small Furry Things at Night: A visit to Melbourne's after dark wildlife — small furry things that creep out of trees in the Treasury Gardens at night — is recommended. Possum feeding expeditions will be held by Lyn Fames at midnight on Friday and Saturday. People who want to go along should dress warmly and take some bread. Meet in the registration of the Southern Cross. But don't take any cameras, the little furry things don't like it.

Anybody wishing to go to the Australian Rules Football Match at Princes Park, for the Carlton-Hawthorn clash should meet in the lobby of the Victoria at 11am on Saturday.

Booklets explaining the rules and related trinkets should be available at that time... Dress warmly! The temperature at the grounds will fall about 20 degrees F below what you feel on the street. Be prepared for wind and rain...

Van Ikin was turning Terry Dowling somewhat green with envy at the party following the launching of *Urban Fantasies* and *Strange Attractors* yesterday... with a statement that started "My first published short stories...". Interesting as this statement is on its own, the full conversation revealed that Van's earliest work was published in *Pocket Man* and *Man Junior*, two Australian men's magazines of the sixties now long ceased publication. In was finally remarked that Van would have been under age at the time to receive his writer's copies, to which Van replied that this had been the case, he was from memory 16 or 16 and a half and the headmaster had to give special permission for him to bring *Pocket Man* onto the school grounds for Van to share his publishing debut.

Cut to — Mervyn Beamish: One of the nicest things about Aussiecon was its informality. The panelists were approachable, in most cases, unassuming, helpful and interested.

It was nothing to go to a party and find yourself deep in conversation with Larry Niven regarding the alcohol

content of overproof rum, swap experiences with George Turner and Frederick Pohl or even as I managed to do, keep beer over Anne McCaffrey's carpet (blush, shame, embarrassment).

The real gem of a speaker and personality was Bob Shaw, his beautiful accent, incredible patter and friendly personality won him the admiration of most conventioners. By the way his books are equally entertaining.

Free Press 3, Saturday, 24 August 1985. Yet more programme changes, party announcements and masquerade instructions; information on the art show auction.

Jonathan V Post, former Mission Planning Engineer on Voyager 2, shows films and discusses missions to Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune. An insider's view of the outer planets by a scientist and noted sf poet. Dr Prentice will tell us what deep space probes are saying about our solar system.

For those lucky enough to get in, it appears that the Banquet last night, which was followed by Bob Shaw's speech, was exceptionally well received. (The only criticism that I've heard was that the person keeping the spotlight on Bob during his speech was laughing so much that he couldn't keep it steady.)

The *Free Press* had two reporters at the event, and they have provided the following observations:

Apart from the food, Bob Shaw's speech, and Marc Ortlieb's usual enthusiasm, and plentiful liquor, last night's banquet was distinguished by the presentation of a Golden Caterpillar Award. This institution, of previously dubious note, given for "thing done to Australian fandom" — took a turn for the serious when originator/awarded Paul Stevens presented an amazing award to Carey Handfield for "things done for Australian fandom". The award, well deserved and well received, capped a remarkable banquet by any standards.

The report was accompanied by some fine sketches by Elizabeth Darling.

Cut to — Mervyn Beamish: The art show... I must say that I was disappointed in this area. While there were some brilliant works on display, the exhibition lacked lustre and innovation. One good point was that the prices asked for the items were not inflated. The model section was small and unimpressive.



There was a more interesting range of models on display within the huckster area...

Free Press 4, Sunday, 25 August 1985. Yet more programme changes, and the masquerade results.

A packed ballroom received enthusiastically the thirty-five contestants and were clearly amazed/ecstatic about Lewis Morley's Daemon Creature — an elaborate winged creature with glaring eyes which had taken him only two weeks to build.

Also outstanding was the multiple masked creation of Famulus by Nick Stathopolous, a complex, rich creation of the character and pasage from Guest of Honour's "Sword of the Lictor". Not to be forgotten was Gary Armstrong's receiving a pice of the Death Star model from "The Return of the Jedi", as a special additional prize from Lucasfilms, for his creation of the mask and costume of Admiral Akbar.

A dissenting masquerade report: (by Bill Burns, NY, US) Well, no one expects the Masquerade to start on time.. and the band was a great filler ... and the lighting was perfect — for the band... and the sound system wasn't too bad either. But someone forgot the contestants. Beyond the first few rows of the audience there was a view of only the uper third of the larger costumes, and the smaller contestants were totally invisible. And someone should have told the lighting crew that most costumes don't look their best in red and blue spots. And if the MC had made his announcements *after* the applause, then we might have heard the contestants' names. From what I saw of the costumes just after the parade (before the house lights were dimmed and security chased them away), it's a pity we missed them while they were on stag.

It's particularly unfortunate that the hard work and attention to detail that were evident from my brief glimpse of the costumes couldn't be appreciated by most of the audience.

Cut to — Mervyn Beamish: At the official masquerade event it was unfortunate that some of the better costumes were in the audience rather than on stage. There were 35 entrants and some wonderful costumes... the best summary of this events would be, when the costumes were good they were very good but when they weren't they were mediocre.

Free Press 5, Monday, 26 August 1985. Yet more programme changes, and the Hugo voting and 1987 Worldcon site selection results. (See page 36.)

Cut to — Mervyn Beamish: A number of times throughout the convention the technical gear was available to make an event a slick, exciting and memorable presentation but it seemed that the people operating it were unskilled or unprepared. Nowhere was this more evident than at the Hugo Awards. Multivision is a wonderful and dynamic medium but it needs preparation and planning — little of which seemed present on the night. Similarly the masquerade presentation lacked forthought and an experienced lighting operator.

I believe the organisers should have planned within their capabilities and tried for something a little less spectacular but professional in result...

That is my gripe; now for the sweet bit. I believe that the Aussiecon II committees and workers succeeded in producing a very successful convention. A lot of hard and thankless work took place in organising and running this international event.



Aussiecon II

Gene Wolfe

Editor's note: These comments are taken, with the author's permission, from the report he wrote for the SFWA Forum in 1985.

Nothing moves the SFWan soul like music and the prospect of being pro guest of honor at a Worldcon. My time arrived Wednesday, August 21, when the "official" Aussiecon tour, my head cold, and I hit Melbourne's Southern Cross Hotel with my wife in tow.

Rosemary and I stopped in the lobby to talk to Richard Gilliam for a few minutes, and we were soon joined by Fan GoH Ted White, who revealed that the hotel had not been told that the convention would be responsible for his bill; thanks to Ted, I was prepared when the desk clerk asked how I intended to pay. Shortly afterward, we were assured by a Worldcon committee member that five hundred Australian dollars (about \$355) had been deposited to our account.

That evening we had dinner with Ted, Special Guest Bob Shaw, and the chairman of the committee, who apologized for the trouble at the desk and picked up the check for dinner.

In some embarrassment, Ted explained that he planned to remain in Melbourne for two nights after the convention. Would it be possible for him to stay with some Melbourne fan? That would hardly be necessary, the chairman assured him; he was welcome to keep his hotel room as a guest of the convention.

There was talk about Constellation's sinking in red ink; Bob and I had heard of it, and Ted was familiar with all the details. I asked about the breakeven point for Aussiecon II and was told it was 1300 attending. Ted, Bob, and I all agreed it was an entirely reasonable figure.

At the opening ceremony next day, Race Matthews, the Minister for the Arts in the Victorian state government, detailed his introduction to science fiction and his years as an active fan in a fascinating talk.

What they say about going to the Worldcon to meet your neighbors is quite true; Rosemary and I had dinner that night with Frederik Pohl and Dr Elizabeth Anne Hull (aka Bed and Fretty), who live about ten miles away; I learned that Fred is working on a movie about nuclear disarmament for MGM.

Dinner was followed by a panel on collaboration, with Fred, Bob, Jack Chalker, Anne McCaffrey, and me. The 43rd Worldcon was under way.

Friday morning, Jeff Harris, Larry Niven, Stan Schmidt, Jonathan Post, and I did a panel on the science in sf. (The rest of us were bemused when Jeff handed us a thick sheaf of reference material a quarter hour before the panel.) After that came a panel on series books, and Frank Herbert began by apologizing for what was being called the Myer Debacle.

Six months before the con, some of the pros had been asked to arrive two or three days early for a "literary lunch" at the Myer Department Store, the biggest in Melbourne. A few weeks later this invitation was cancelled; Myer paid Frank's way to Australia and he alone appeared at Myer's lunch. As I understand it, Myer prevented him from signing books that had not been bought in the store *that day*, and ordered him not to hold a signing at the convention — an order that he, to his everlasting credit, disregarded. However welcome, Frank's apology was not needed; no one blamed him for what Myer had done. There was no apology from Myer.

Ted White gave his speech that afternoon, comparing fandom to a city — originally a crossroads village, now a ring of suburbs around a decaying core. The core, he said, was fanzine fandom. I couldn't help thinking how much of his speech could have been applied to us, if *magazine* was substituted for *fanzine*.

The banquet that evening lifted the spell of gloom. Rack of lamb was the main course, and the food was superb. Bob Shaw spoke after dinner, and as an after-dinner speaker Bob has no peer. When he told us how his lead telescope crashed into the dog kennel three floors below — But never mind. You have to hear him, and if I could tell stories



photo by Patti Perret

like that I wouldn't bother to write any.

The business meeting Saturday morning considered a proposal to take action against World SF for allegedly infringing a service mark of the World Science Fiction Society. The society boasts a whole list of service marks (World Science Fiction Society, WSFS, World Science Fiction Convention, Worldcon, Science Fiction Achievement Award, and Hugo Award) and it was never made clear which was in danger, or why those who felt legal action was advisable has waited ten years. I was there because Fred and Betty had alerted the World SF members at the con, but the proposal would have failed even without us.

Afterwards Forrie Ackerman and I debated the identity of the next target, should the proposal have passed. I said SFWA, but Forrie insisted on San Francisco.

At noon, several of us signed at Merv Binn's Space Age Book Shop. It was a memorable event for me; I met and talked with George Turner, perhaps Australia's most distinguished living novelist, and he gave me *Landscape with Landscape* (by Gerald Murnane), an Australian fantasy novel. Not to be outdone, Merv gave me George's Hugo-nominated *In the Heart or in the Head*, and George inscribed it for me.

That afternoon I was told in strict confidence, by someone in a position to know, that attending membership was about 1550, total registration (including many supporting memberships) about 2520. I was also told that the committee did not want these figures released during the con.

Sunday morning I was stopped in the registration area by the con chairman and a committee member. They informed me they had deposited an additional \$A50 with the hotel, and that the con would not be responsible for my hotel charges when it was spent. I protested — the con had pledged to pay my hotel bill, and Rosemary and I had not charged entertainment, or even all our meals, to our room. They refused to discuss any obligation, saying that the Worldcon could not pay and would not pay. All this took place in the middle of a crowd of fans; it was, quite frankly, one of the most embarrassing moments of my life.

The Hugos were awarded that night. The candidates and those who (like me) had agreed to accept an award for someone else were herded into a side room and told that we would be briefed on the ceremony. No briefing was provided, but after an hour it was announced that we could enter the main room. There was a wild scramble for seats; I got one in the second row, between Rosemary and Frank Herbert.

Before the presentations, we were treated to a short film on the history of the award, in which the voiceover referred to Gernsback's "One Twenty-Four C Forty-One Plus." It was a foretaste of what was to come; the visual presentations seemed out to get Marc Ortlieb, the m.c., and it gave us a lot of comic relief.

[The next paragraph listed the Hugo winners—Ed.]

Monday morning, as Rosemary and I were eating breakfast, the chairman and two committee members presented us with tiny silver spoons, one topped with an emu, the other with a lyre bird. Shortly before lunch, the committeeman who had told me the convention would not cover the rest of my hotel bill informed me that the con had made money after all and would pay the entire bill. The committee's understanding, he said, had been that it would pay only *the rent*. This had not even been mentioned the day before in the registration area; and if it were true, the initial \$A500 would have been too much for \$A75/night for five nights.

When I checked out, I learned the amount the committee had balked at paying — \$A57 or about \$40.50.

I said that I was embarrassed when I spoke with the committee members in the registration area. I'm more embarrassed at having to air my troubles here. Rosemary and I had a wonderful trip, and the Australians and New Zealanders we met were uniformly friendly and obliging. When I called his beautiful oil painting the best illustrating my work, the artist, Stephen Campbell, insisted on giving it to me — a piece of generosity that still leaves me nearly speechless. But if I didn't warn you, I wouldn't be doing the job for those of you who will be Worldcon guests of honor in the future. No one warned me.



Marilyn Pride

Lewis Morley



A Brighton belle meets Skippy

Eve Harvey

Being extracts from the diary of Eve & John Harvey relating their summer holiday adventures of 1985.

Southern Comfort In A Borrowed Glass

Wednesday, 21 August 85: My initial impression of this strange place that has monopolised my thoughts and stretched my imagination for so long was one of *disappointment*.

Disappointment no. 1 came even before we'd stepped onto Australian soil. "Ladies and gentlemen", the pilot had said, "we are beginning our approach to Melbourne, the local time is 6.00 a.m. and the outside temperature is 1° C."

Disappointment on arrival — no bear hug from Justin Ackroyd, my local friendly GUFF administrator. Having suffered the indignity of being sprayed against undesirable alien freeloaders, I was looking forward to having my ribs cracked in that inimitable Ackroyd style.

Of more import as we filed through the arrivals door in Melbourne airport was: a) were we being met?; b) if yes, by whom?; c) if no, how do we find the bus and do we know where to get off?

Our first sight was a sea of faces, none of them belonging to Justin or anyone else we knew, but just as panic

was about to set in, deliverance was at hand in the shape of a little sign, way, way at the back of the crowd, that simply stated GUFF.

This was how we made the acquaintance of those life-savers and all-round good people Clive Newall and LynC — two people we'd never heard of who'd been willing to get up at the crack of dawn and drive all the way out to the airport to welcome us. That, for me, is one of the essences of fandom.

Disappointments no. 3, 4 and 5 came during the drive into Melbourne. As we chatted with our chauffeurs, John and I were peering out the windows to ensure we didn't miss a single nuance of this strange country.

After about 5 minutes we turned to each other and almost simultaneously cried, "It's the M4 from Heathrow to London!" If you looked carefully differences were apparent, house styles & vegetation etc., but the general impression was unmistakably British. To add to this feeling of *deja vu*, we were driving on the 'right' side of the road, and fell foul of an identical traffic jam to that which typifies the M4 as it nears London. That was disappointment no. 4 — with all the wide open spaces we'd heard about I'd never imagined that there would still be traffic jams.

Then no. 5 — on the horizon we could eventually espy some skyscrapers, shrouded in grey cloud — Melbourne? Surely not, too reminiscent for my liking of the view of London I used to have commuting the 50 miles from the coast each day — before the pollution lobbyists started getting somewhere. One of the newest and least densely populated countries of the world and they have to copy our mistakes!

As we swept into Melbourne proper my disappointments began to fade. Now this was different. Wide streets — at least twice the width of London's main thoroughfares; widely spaced office blocks so you don't even notice the height; gentle, if not sedate traffic; and trams! We passed Minotaur Books, to discover it's just a bookshop. It's funnyhow places you hear about seem to develop an almost mythological aura, and a common-or-garden bookshop, a slightly



upmarket Forbidden Planet, somehow is not what was expected.

These downbeat thoughts were swept from my mind, though, as we pulled up outside the Victoria Hotel. We were here. The usual pre-con adrenalin started flowing and the 1-hour's sleep on the plane seemed like 10. We were at a convention. Even the similarity with any British con hotel couldn't dampen the excitement.

Our first sight as we entered through the doors was Bob Shaw! The magic had started

Poor Clive and LynC, they must have wondered what on earth had happened. There they were, official welcoming party for these strangers, who suddenly start hanging round the necks (well, the female half of the duo did) of strange men and then have the audacity to introduce them to him, in their own home town. They braved it well, and then again when the Conspiracy Committee in the guise of Chris Donaldson, Paul Oldroyd, Jan Huxley and Chris Hughes strolled by. That magic again; we'd been in the country 2 hours, at the convention for 30 minutes, and here were 7 Brits standing around chatting as if we were all back at a UK convention.

Bob warned us that no hotel rooms were ready yet, but the poor overworked lad on reception couldn't even confirm that one was booked for us. No room, no Justin and no sleep. Great start.

Clive and LynC had to leave and so we decided to kill some time by breakfasting in the coffee-shop next door (never known a hotel without its own breakfast catering facilities) and swap airplane anecdotes with Paul & Chris. Unfortunately the shop was just closing,

so we repaired to the coffee shop in the hotel, meeting up with Terry Hughes from the USA.

It still amazes me, here we were, spanning 3 continents and chatting as if nothing unusual had happened at all. Thereafter, since we still didn't have a room, we accompanied the Conspiracy mob to the Southern Cross where they were due to Conspire some more.

Eventually Justin was found and bearhug delivered, but not until I'd first treated Carey Handfield as if he were a complete stranger. Admittedly we'd only met him a couple of times on his trip to England last year (or was it the year before?) but I should have known him. It's weird how difficult it is to recognise people when you're either not expecting to see them, or you're meeting them out of context.

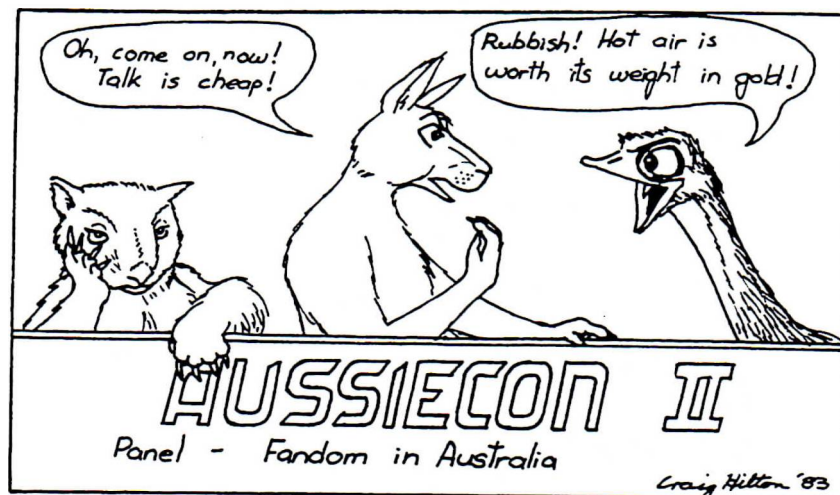
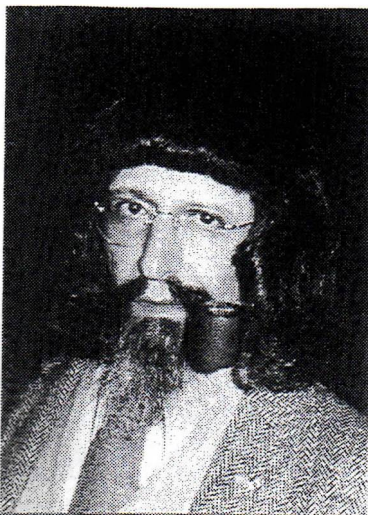
Back at the airport, Clive had given us a note from Justin scribbled on a Minotaur bag detailing his likely whereabouts and we'd made enquiries at the ops room for directions. A very nice guy had provided these and added that Justin was there at the moment. Strange, I thought, how did he know we were looking for the big J? Must have been our English accent. He reminded me of somebody but I couldn't at that time place the face. It wasn't until quite some time later that I realised it had been Carey.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in the usual half-life that typifies pre-registration at any large con. A hotel room materialised for us, so something was looking up. Joe Nicholas and Judith Hanna were met and assignments for dinner made and then the registration desks opened.



Robbie Cantor

Marty Cantor



I'd missed the chaos of Seacon '79 registration, so this was my first experience of the birth of a worldcon. All looked well organised, fans were wandering around with large brown envelopes, tables were positioned here there and everywhere, each manned by people pawing over computer printouts. All very impressive.

As we neared the front of the queue we had the unexpected pleasure of another tri-continental link up as we saw the familiar face of Joyce Scrivner sitting behind the desk. In the general melee, faces were put to many of the Aussie names I knew — far too many to relate. In particular, we made the acquaintance of Marc Ortlieb, who previously had merely been a name and a voice on the telephone.

On meeting him we experienced that sinking feeling of realising people had actually taken us seriously when we'd offered to 'do anything'. This was followed by panic when I found out that my first panel was to be in the main con hall immediately after the opening ceremony ("How to enjoy this Convention"), and that John was to be moderator (their version of Chairman) on a panel which consisted of people he'd never met before supposedly providing "Survivors' Guide to Room Parties".

And then all of a sudden it was evening and we were standing on a street corner with the 2 J's and Grant Stone, who hails from Perth, deep in important discussions on the topic of where to eat. Just as we had decided on the Golden Orchard in Little Bourke Street we saw in the distance an apparition singularly like a Colin Fine struggling under the weight of his luggage. That ol' fan magic was working again — we'd last seen Colin at the One Tun in London, and here he was, arriving from Adelaide in a famished condition at exactly the right time to accompany us on our first foray into the unknown realms of the Australian culinary arts.

Well, Chino-Aussie actually, given our destination in Chinatown. On this expedition John and I discovered our first real cultural differences, the good and the bad. The good absolutely delighted us — the BYO (Bring Your Own — alcohol) restaurant. These exist in the UK, but are not the norm. Here, the prices in the Bottleshop (see how quickly I'm picking

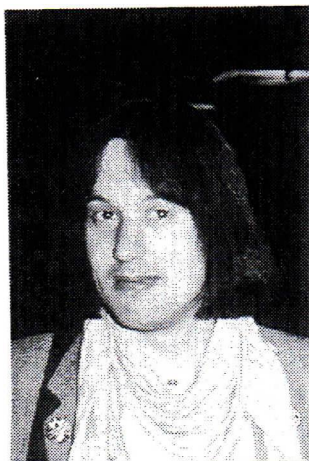
up the local language — so much more descriptive than Off Licence!) at first glance looked the same as at home, as did the restaurant prices. When I remembered I was getting A\$2 per 1£, I realised how much I was going to enjoy this trip.

Having delighted in the novelty of BYO, we concentrated on the important business of the evening — eating. By about 9.30 we had cleared all plates in front of us and were just deliberating on a further order when the waiter pre-empted us with the news that we should order anything else immediately since the kitchen was closing. AT 9.30 P.M.!! Admittedly, we did manage to stay until 10.30, but by that time all chairs apart from ours were up on the tables, the waiter was wearing his anorak and had already conspicuously taken black rubbish bags from the kitchen out through the front of the restaurant.

This was, and still is, dumfounding! It would have been more understandable if we'd been out in the backwoods, but we were in the centre of one of the largest cities on this continent.

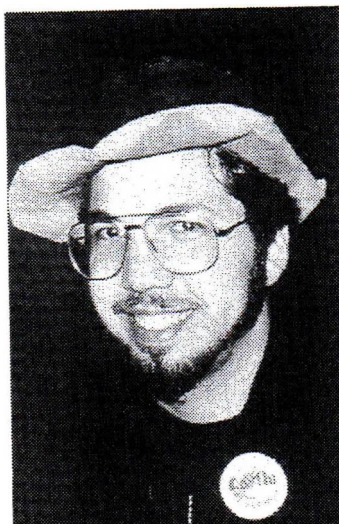
Cogitating on this unexpected hurdle, we made our way back to the Victoria to meet up with Justin. We'd seen very little of him during the day since he'd been tied up with organising the book room, but he'd promised to spare us some time in the evening. I mustn't be too harsh on poor Justin, he was good company during the evening as we sat on the stairs outside the closed hotel bar — closed even to residents! Yet another peculiarity, they don't seem to have heard down here that one of the privileges of being a resident is the ability to get alcohol at any time of the day or night. OK, the more inconvenient the hour the heavier the supplement, but at 11.05 p.m. there should be no problem.

Since there appeared no way that the hotel would be persuaded to take our money, we decided to drink our own duty free. We sat around chatting for a while with the people there until Bob Shaw and Charlotte Procter turned up. Bob didn't want to sit on the steps so Bob, Charlotte, John and I went over to sit in the lounge area. Amazingly the bar staff were perfectly happy to supply us with clean glasses, which can't be bad — the next best thing to keeping the bar open.



Joseph Nicholas

Neil Kaden



We sat around talking, plying Bob & Charlotte with our Southern Comfort and Canadian Club. The cast list was ever-changing, as is typical of fannish gatherings. Justin came, then Clive and LynC. We sat around drinking and chatting some more. The cast changed again as Clive & LynC left, to be replaced by a certain Ian Nicholls, and finally Justin departed.

We eventually rolled up to bed at 3 a.m.

No Drinks In The Southern Cross

Thursday, 22 August 85: We started off this morning with what was supposed to be a quick meeting with Bob Shaw, Charlotte Procter and Jim Gilpatrick down in the bar of the Victoria. John had already begun worrying about his panel timetabled for 5 this afternoon with Peter Toluzzi, Charlotte and two people we've never heard of, Art Widner and Richard Hryckiewicz.

I was doing my best not to panic over mine. Charlotte and Justin were two of my co-panelists (with the same Art Widner as moderator) and we'd had a brief discussion last night but given the quantity of liquor consumed that could hardly be deemed serious preparation. Still, John was more important, so I let him worry whilst the rest of us tried to make sense of the Programme Book — all 40 pages of it! The logistics are going to be hell, even worse than the 'three-ring circus' Pete Weston had been so keen on for Seacon '79. Not only are there 9 streams of programme, but they are

situated all over Melbourne. Well, perhaps a slight exaggeration, but the main con hotel is the Southern Cross; the Fan Lounge and Art Show are down the road in the Victoria Hotel; about a 10 minute walk in the opposite direction from the Southern Cross is the Sheraton which is hosting the more media-orientated items; the film programme is in the State Film Centre located another long-short walk away; and finally there's 'Other'. All this means we're either going to get incredibly fit as we dash from one to the other, or we're going to see very little of the programme. No-one would take bets on which of the two alternatives would win out.

(Later): John and I have made our first Australian public appearances and we're still alive to tell the tale.

Instead of shuffling to the back of the hall for the opening ceremony, we were shepherded to the front row, where I was ordered to stay since as a 'celebrity' I was to be forced to sit up on the stage with the real big names; Gene Wolfe (Guest of Honour), Robbie & Marty Cantor (DUFF winners — USA/Australia), Nigel Rowe (FFANZ winner — New Zealand/Australia), Bob Shaw (Shaw Fund winner!), Ted White (Fan Guest of Honour) and David Grigg (Chairman). This notoriety still sits strangely on me — I'm no-one special — but it does make you feel good. Almost as good as when people honestly compliment your fanzine. The only drawback is that if you're stuck behind a table on the platform, you can't sneak out early if the proceedings get



Charlotte Procter

Ted White



boring, nor can you sleep, make rude comments to your neighbours, or indulge in any of the other pastimes so useful for survival on these occasions.

The convention was opened by the Minister for the Arts, Race Matthews, who not only is a science fiction reader himself, but provided continuity in that he had opened Aussiecon 1 a decade before. His was a reasonably interesting speech, as speeches go, detailing his background as an SF reader which paralleled that of most of us. What was interesting, though, was his professionalism. As a politician, he obviously knows about speech-writing, and definitely has access to numerous researchers, if not speech writers. His talk was peppered with references to magazines, books etc., but instead of saying, "I think it was in a New Worlds about 1965", as most of us would, he had exact issue, date, content and editorial details. Quite a performance.

I must admit to only listening with one ear, however, since the majority of my attention was drawn by the audience. As usual, once I'm up in front of a horde, my knees stop knocking and the butterflies disappear, so the sight of what must have been about 1,000 people all seemingly staring at me wasn't so frightening.

What was awe-inspiring was the realisation that I could see not a single glass in a single hand. Not even a soft drink appeared to have been brought. The lack of people wandering around with a drink (alcoholic or otherwise) in their hands had already impinged at registration and during the melee before the opening ceremony, but I'd thought it due to my lack of observation. Now I could study carefully from my vantage point, and I still couldn't see a beverage being imbibed. I don't think I have ever seen this at a UK convention, in fact I'm sure I haven't.

Immediately after the opening ceremony my first panel started (luckily to a much diminished audience) and when it came my turn to speak, I mentioned this point, that I was the only person in the room at that time with a drink. Afterwards someone came up and explained that it was because of the peculiar licensing laws in Victoria, which make it illegal to be seen drinking in public, and hotels are public places. So

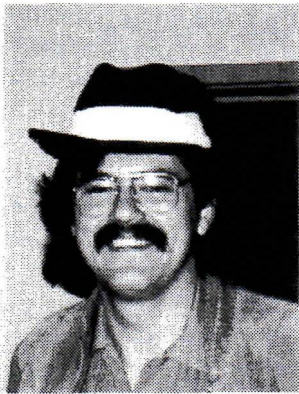
apparently people don't wander around with a pint in their hands. How very peculiar, if it's right, but that still doesn't explain the lack of soft drinks.

Anyway, I'm getting ahead of myself. I had a chance to make the acquaintance of Art Widner in the hiatus whilst the majority of the audience were leaving, but no longer felt any panic for that very reason — the majority of the audience were gone and it would be far less of an ordeal to sit and chat to the 50 or so that remained. What the panel said I can't really remember — the usual platitudes about going up and actually talking to people rather than expect the 'big names' etc. to pick li'l ol' you out of the crowd. We chatted for about 45 minutes, none of the audience voted on our performance with their feet, lots asked questions.

The panel title, 'How to Enjoy this Convention', had obviously appealed mainly to the first-timers, which was as it should have been since that's who it was aimed at. Charlotte explained her rule of 2 and 6 for survival — 2 meals and 6 hours of sleep a day which sounded good, but very difficult to meet if you're actually successful in your attempts to enjoy the convention (the sleep quotient anyway). At the end about 10 people came up to chat to us which was very encouraging, but having stressed how people would be only too willing to talk if you had the courage to approach them, I had to break my own word since John and I were forced to make a dash down to the Victoria Hotel for his panel. Thank God it'd stopped raining.

This was to be our first expedition to the Fan Room in the Victoria, and I choose the word 'expedition' with great care. Following directions, we started down the corridor at the side of the lifts and were met with well-positioned signs. Down the corridor, and round the bend, "Don't worry, you're going in the right direction", the sign reassured; down the stairs, along a corridor, through a couple of double doors, "Still on the right track"; down some more stairs, "Almost there", and hey presto — a Fan Room, deep in the bowels of the hotel, low-ceilinged, non-air conditioned and adorned with water pipes.

To be perfectly honest I can't remember much of John's panel, I was still coming down from my own, but being a 'Survivors Guide to Room



Kim Huett

Nick Stathopoulos



Parties' it consisted of the usual fannish competition to outdo each other in the anecdote stakes. Considering the devious route there, a fair-sized audience attended and participated.

Afterwards we made our way back to the Southern Cross to arrange a small group for dinner. Unfortunately our plans went somewhat awry and we had a rather larger group than planned — Alyson Abramowitz, Rick Sellick (Chairman St Louis in 88 bid), Ben Yallow, Chase Jager, David Taylor (Cincinnati in 88), Debbie Woodruff, Lise Eisenberg, Greg, Allan and Gayle joined Justin, Jim Gilpatrick and us. The trouble with such a large group is that it's impossible to hold a conversation across a table large enough to seat all.

Arriving back at the Southern Cross, raring to find the room parties and meet more people, we started wandering the corridors. It was reminiscent of the maze at Hampton Court — miles of identical corridors, groups of lost people exchanging queries as they passed. At one stage we met Ted White on his way over to the Victoria to see if things were better there.

Eventually the native drums told of a publisher's room party, and in desperation we went in search of it. Randall Flynn, a native Aussie we'd known for several years during his sojourn on UK shores, was sitting outside. Having glimpsed the crowd inside the room (seemingly the only room party at the con, it was bound to be somewhat full) we joined Randall in the corridor. It sounds ridiculous, but even though he's been around UK fandom for several years, we had to come all the way to Melbourne to get a chance to talk to him for any length of time. He's an excellent raconteur when he's in the mood, and luckily he was in that mood.

I mentioned in passing that I was lifting up every toilet seat, just in case; I'd seen Clive James's 'The Return of the Flash of Lightning', and had no intention of providing a free meal for a black widow, funnel web or any other foreign spider.

He kindly reassured me that winter was not a favourite time for spiders, and continued with a dissertation on other Oz fauna. Three in particular. First there was the unicorn possum, a flying possum similar to a flying squirrel. The unusual

aspect of this little marsupial is its bony horn which could be lethal if a person was caught out in the bush without a hard hat as a result of its habit of gliding down from the trees at low level. According to Randall, ancient aborigine skulls were being found with distinctive holes, smaller at one side of the skull than the other, which apparently is the typical trademark of these horns.

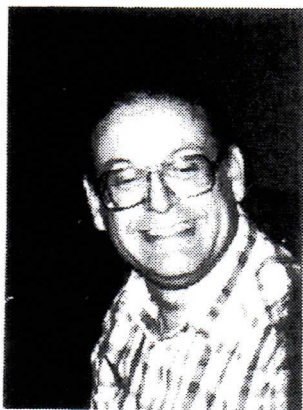
Next he told us about the Murray River cod which, not surprisingly, is a large fish with an enormous mouth and great teeth that lives in the Murray River. This is fine since no-one does very much in the Murray River, but when it's been raining heavily, the river level rises and the fish can get onto some of its many bridges. This means anyone walking over the bridges has to be very careful because the fish can take off the bottom half of a leg before you know what's happened.

By this time Bill & Mary Burns had joined us, listening as avidly and as disbelieving as we were, especially when Randall got onto the third animal — the tree kangaroo! Apparently this is a normal, though small, kangaroo; feet just like its larger cousins', not particularly made for an arboreal existence; a tail just like an ordinary kangaroo's, not prehensile like a monkey's. Obviously this animal has not been designed for a safe existence in the trees — even the normal small front paws aren't useful for very much. It's not surprising, therefore, that the major cause of death is falling out!

We all laughed, of course, which was Randall's intention, but then he surprised us by saying that one of the three was actually true. By a process of elimination we reached the right answer.

This was too much, so we decided on a change of scene and raided the Minneapolis in 73 bid party up on the 15th floor. Previous reports had said it was unbearably crowded, but luckily the numbers had thinned somewhat by the time we arrived.

Towards the end of the room party we'd collected Ted White who'd come back from the Victoria as there was even less happening over there, and Bob Shaw who was always around where there was alcohol. Jim Gilpatrick wandered in and out of our conversation at various times. And then Joyce Scrivner decided it was



Fred Patten

Terry Hughes



time for the room party to finish so we started to make our way back to the Victoria. En route we picked up another follower in the shape of Eric Lindsay which made the group Eric, John, Roman, Ted, an Australian (somebody Boot, Bob Boot I think), me, Jim and Bob Shaw.

Somewhere along the way John realised he'd still got the meal vouchers the convention very kindly supplied to moderators. This was a novel idea — instead of having a hospitality suite for panel members to meet, the committee had organised vouchers for use at the local 24-hour Pancake House. Each moderator was supplied with sufficient for his/her panel, and could then make arrangements for discussions over free coffee and pancakes. The only flaw was in the logistics. The Pancake House was a little too far from the Southern Cross to make these meetings convenient, but at 2 in the morning it seemed the best idea in the world.

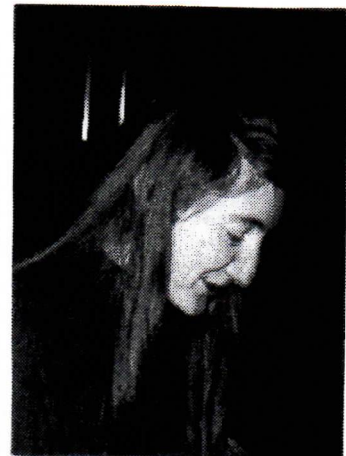
Last night we were bemoaning the early closing of restaurants, but finding somewhere to have pancakes at that hour is something we could not do in London. I don't think we could find anywhere to

eat at that time. Anyway we gorged ourselves on pancakes and coffee but unfortunately they weren't licensed.

Bob Shaw, never one to imbibe soft drinks when alcohol was available, tried Eric Lindsay's overproof rum. I don't know whether it was the hour, or the latitude, but that's the first time I've seen Bob beaten. Mixed with coffee he could just about stomach it, but that only proved his stamina and years of hard training.

Eventually John and I made it back to our room. One day down, another 4 to go before Aussiecon II's finished. If the rest follow today's pattern I'm going to need a holiday afterwards. All this enjoyment can be very harmful to your health — good conventions ought to have a Government Health Warning. So far the con has lived up to my expectations — not the organisation, or the programme, they aren't central to my enjoyment, the people are. These Aussies may not appear to value fanzine activity as highly as we do in the UK, but they still have the essential fannish qualities and are 'real' fans in my book. It was definitely worth the trip out here. Roll on tomorrow

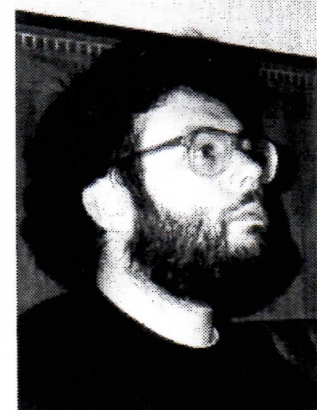
*Eric Lindsay,
Derrick Ashby,
Christine Ashby*



Judith Hanna



Eric Lindsay, LynC



Terry Frost

Aussiecon II — a hard lesson



by Leigh Edmonds

Reprinted from The Notional Number 6, September 1985.

About 1600 people attended the 1985 World SF Convention held in Melbourne last month. It seems that most attendees had an enjoyable time, but that could not be said of many people involved in putting it on. I was one of the latter (having spent most of the convention in an empty room producing about thirty pages of convention newsletter).

Highlights of the convention were the banquet with Bob Shaw's speech, the masquerade and the Hugo presentations (which suffered from severe technical problems). These were popular events because they were about the only ones when everybody was in one place; at other times the convention was dispersed across four or more venues with perhaps as many as eight official programme items taking place at once.

The size of the convention was difficult for many Australians to envisage. The lack of experience which the entire convention committee had in running events of over two or three hundred members showed through in a failure to plan many of the small details which, at smaller conventions, can be dealt with easily, but which ended up being real problems.

Now there are many suggestions that Australia isn't big enough to marshal the manpower to run a World SF Convention properly. It is much more likely that there are enough, but only if the resources are used properly. As this was Australian fandom's first attempt at a very large convention (by local standards) a great many lessons were learned the hard way, and to the disgruntlement of too many people. If Australian fans were to host another large convention in the next year or two it would run a lot more smoothly as people applied that hard won experience. In addition, expectations would not be so high and as a result the organizers would not attempt too much as was the case with, for example, the Hugo presentations and the extraordinary number of programme items.

Unfortunately things went wrong often enough, too much stress and animosity developed and enough

unhappiness and bad feeling resulted that a great number of people who learned the hard (and valuable) lessons are not likely to get themselves involved in this kind of thing again. This is understandable but if they were to give it another go there would be no doubt that an Aussiecon III would be a much better and enjoyable event for all concerned.

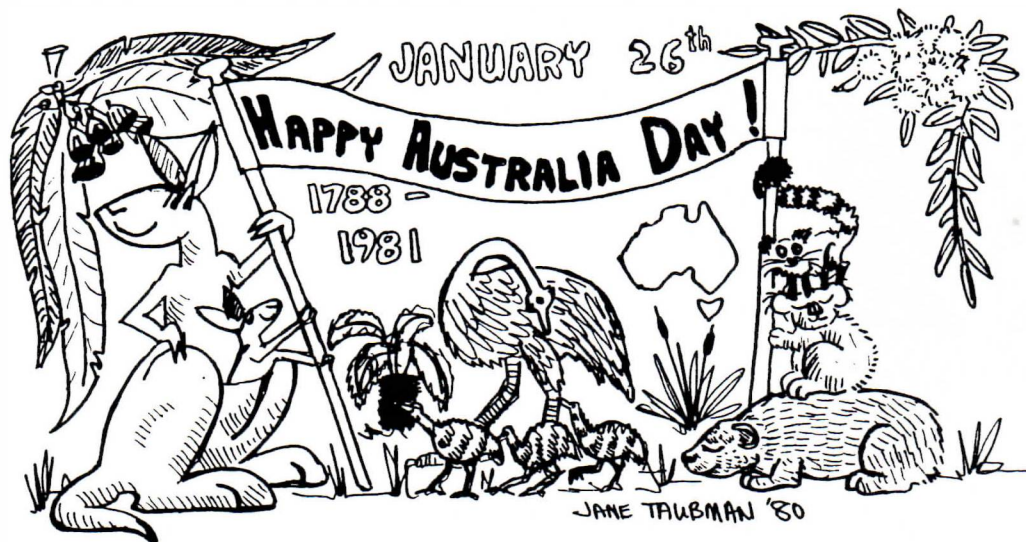
Some comparisons have also been drawn with Aussiecon held in Melbourne in 1975. However it is not realistic to compare the two events, one being a very large Australian convention with an overseas title and guests, with a handful of overseas visitors; and the other being an attempt to hold a sparkling multimedia event for a large numbers of overseas people — perhaps trying to meet their expectations rather than putting on the kind of convention that Australians have proved themselves best at; the fairly serious minded but relaxed and friendly event. This might not be what overseas fans consider to make up a Worldcon, but that might well depend on what you think a World SF Convention should be like.

In retrospect it is evident that the organizers of Aussiecon II tried too hard to do something they knew little about. As a result they made a bit of a mess of it, but apparently not enough to spoil the whole thing. However it seemed like the right thing to do at the time, and that is also a valuable lesson.

There are probably going to be two lasting results of the convention. On the negative side there are people who will never again work with (or perhaps even associate with) each other — the intense stress of such events does that kind of thing. On the positive side there seems to have been a lot of enthusiasm generated as a result of the convention — no doubt some of this will find its way into presenting more conventions (just as Marc Ortlieb, the front man in the flash suit with the saving sense of humor at Aussiecon II had been just one of the crowd at his first convention at Aussiecon), and hopefully also in fostering the development of sf in Australia.

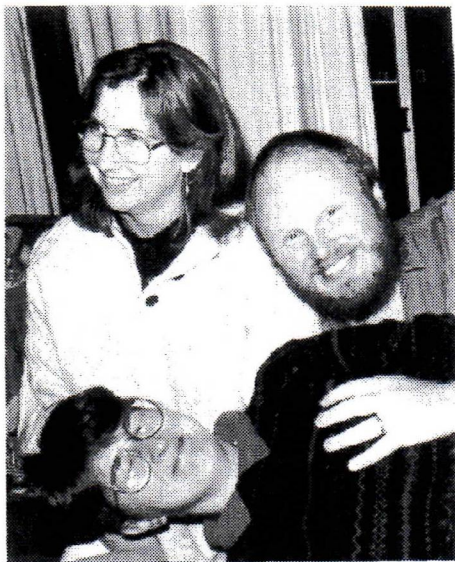
Cindy Smith





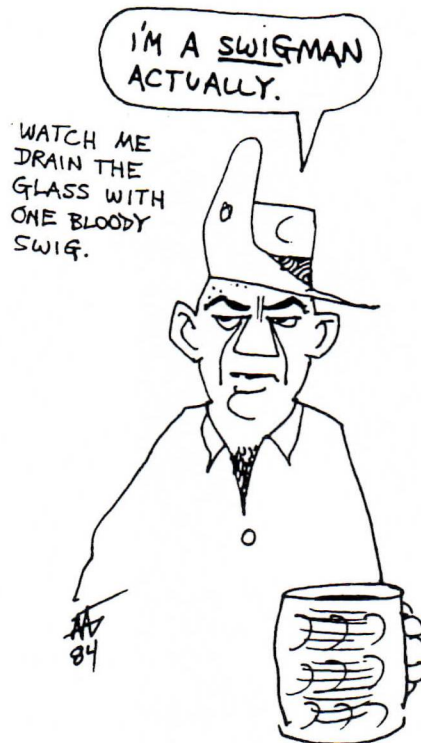
JANE TAUBMAN '80

Cath McDonnell, Justin & Jenny Ackroyd



Jack Herman & Marc Ortlieb

Chris Callahan, Jean Weber, Dick Roepke



Ann & Don Griffiths

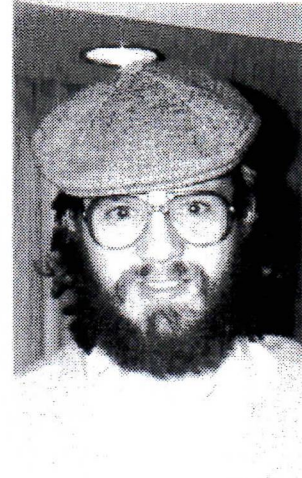


Peter Toluzzi & Jane Taubman



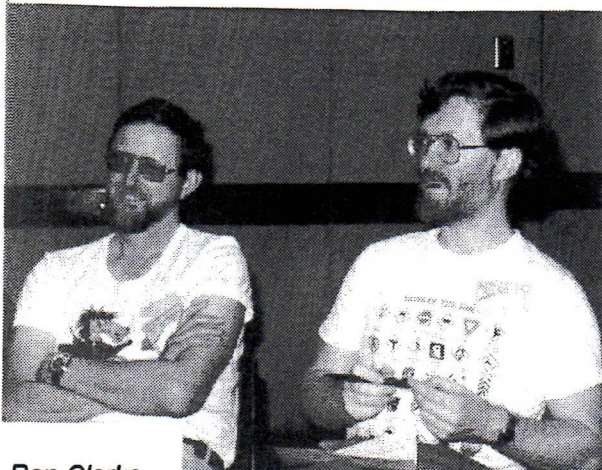
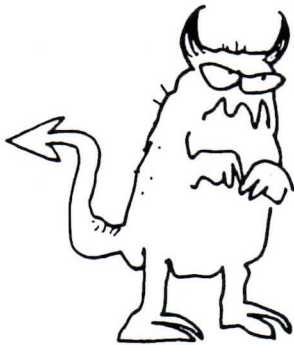
Roy Ferguson

Gordon Lingard



BLOODY HELL,
CHITTABOBI! I
WANTED TO VISIT
THE AUSSIES,
NOT BE ONE!

Marc Linneman



Ron Clarke



Grant Stone

Let's do it again!

Jean Weber

I deliberately included in this Memory Book a few negative memories, to remind us that we need to learn from our mistakes.

The team that's bidding for Australia in 1999 has a wealth of experience to draw on, both in Australia and overseas, and we'll use that experience to our advantage. It is possible to organise a convention with many of the workers and decision-makers scattered around the country — even around the world — during the planning stages. I know it can be done; I (successfully) manage projects like that in my job. A convention needs a few people on the spot for things like hotel liaison, but many

other things can be done remotely. We have email and fax to supplement the telephone, so we can communicate more quickly and much more cheaply than in 1985. Equally importantly, we now know better than to be too ambitious. We'll do a larger-scale version of a good Australian convention, rather than trying for a smaller version of a North American con.

I'm looking forward to it — aren't you? Have you become a pre-supporting member of Australia in 1999 yet? Have you joined L.A.con III so you can vote for Ain99? If not, what are you waiting for?

Let's do the worldcon again!



Robin Johnson, John Newman, Gerald Smith



Doll & Alexis Gilliland



Karen "Womble" Warnock

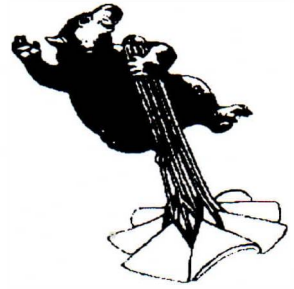
Women's apa members and friends at Aussiecon II



Autographs

Australian Science Fiction Foundation

P.O. Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3052.



The Australian Science Fiction Foundation (affectionately known as the Foundation) was formally established in 1976, partially to carry on the work of Aussiecon, the first Australian World Science Fiction Convention.

The Foundation has an unusual role in the SF community. It is not a social club and does not hold social events. Its main purpose is to sponsor and encourage the creation and appreciation of science fiction in Australia. The Foundation does that through the sponsorship and administration of writing workshops, short story competitions, seed loans to regional and national conventions, and the publication of its newsletter, The Instrumentality. The Foundation has, since its inception, been a resource centre for everyone involved in science fiction in Australia.

The Foundation was the nucleus for the successful Aussiecon II bid and its members worked, along with many others, to run the 1985 Worldcon in Melbourne. In March 1988, the Foundation became an incorporated association.

THE CHANDLER AWARD

In 1991 the Foundation set about establishing a new award for "Outstanding Achievement in Australian Science Fiction". In recognition of the contribution that science fiction writer A. Bertram Chandler made to Australian Science Fiction, and because of his patronage of the Foundation, the new award (after gaining the approval of Bert's widow, Susan) is called the Chandler. Unlike the Ditmars, this award is decided upon by a jury and, although it is nominally an annual award presented in conjunction with the National Science Fiction Convention, it is not necessarily presented every year. The first three winners have been Van Ikin, Merv Binns, and George Turner.

THE BILL WRIGHT COLLECTION

As a result of a generous donation from Bill Wright, the Foundation has begun a memorabilia collection of fanzines, convention booklets, and other fannish paraphernalia. Some of this collection dates from the 1950s and includes rare gems from the first Aussiecon. It is now housed by the Melbourne Science Fiction Club and may be accessed by fans at their venue. An audio/visual collection, such as the Anti-fan films, is also stored there. Any donations of films, photos, audio tapes are gratefully accepted.

JOIN NOW!

Though based in Melbourne, the Foundation has benefited Science Fiction and Fandom throughout the country. The Foundation is guided by its members, which is where you come in. Members elect a committee, which meets approximately every six weeks (depending on the nature of the business to be transacted). We have coffee and cake and a good natter after these meetings. Members are welcome to attend and have their say. Members also receive information from these meetings via the newsletter. Meetings are generally held in Melbourne but the Foundation does have representatives in other states, and often holds open meetings during the National Science Fiction Convention.

Like the Blood Bank, we are in need of fresh blood. Discover a side of Science Fiction not seen by many and help the Foundation carry on its good work - join now.

FEES

There is a \$5-00 joining fee, plus an annual membership fee of \$5-00. Write to the above address for a membership form.

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Art and Photo Credits

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Aussiecon Memory Book

September 1995

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This fanzine is available from the editor.

Prices (air mail postage included):

A\$13 or equivalent in NZ\$ within Australia/NZ;
A\$15 or equivalent in the rest of the world;
Make cheques out to Eric Lindsay for Australian or
US dollars, or British pounds. We can also take
Australian, Canadian, US or NZ cash (notes only),
but that is strictly at your own risk. No coins!

Portions or all of this zine will be available on the
World Wide Web.

<http://www.maths.uts.edu.au/staff/eric/sf/arcon.html>

Last chance this millenium!

Australia in 666 I

Let's do it again!

Australia is bidding for the 1999 Worldcon, to be held once again in Melbourne.

Contact: Ain99, c/o Donna Heenan, P.O. Box 99, Bayswater, VIC 3153, Australia

Pre-supporting memberships are now available, at US\$10, A\$10, £5 or equivalent.

US agents are Dick and Leah Smith, 410 West Willow, Prospect Heights, IL 60070, email dick@smith.chi.il.us.

UK agent is Martin Hoare, Pangolin Systems, 45 Tilehurst Road, Reading, Berks. RG1 7TT

Join L.A.con III (1996 Worldcon) to vote for the 1999 Worldcon site.

Mailing address: L.A.Con III (Attn. Membership), P.O. Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409. Email: Compuserve: 71154,307; America On-Line: Cloister; Internet: lacon3-help@netcom.com

Australian agent is Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde NSW 2112; email eric@zen.maths.uts.edu.au

Supporting L.A.con III memberships are US\$30 (A\$40); attending (until 31 December 1995) are US\$110 (A\$150). Australian prices vary with exchange rate.

1999 Australia in 666 V