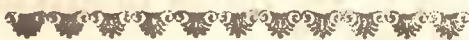




CHUNDER!



CHUNDER!

Number Five

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This edition of CHUNDER! is postmailed to the December 1972 ANZAPA mailing, and for the usual gang of idiots.

The next issue of CHUNDER! will appear on January 17, or perhaps January 20: they're all much the same from here.

Cover by William Rotsler

Bloomsbury Breakdown by Mervyn Barrett (earlier intended for BOY'S OWN
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OUR MAN IN CAMERA (3) by John Bangsund page 13

FAN DEMON'S LAND (2) by Michael O'Brien page 18

OTHER PEOPLE'S LETTERS

My Australia in '75 Committee spy has provided a copy of a letter from Jerry Jacks to Bill Wright. The following extracts will be of interest.

'It is with great regret that we in San Francisco have decided to drop our bid for the 1975 WorldCon, we have run into time and money problems, that, while they would not effect the running of a worldcon, would most definitely effect our bid for the con, we don't want to be a "spoiler" bid in the manner of New York this past year, and we feel that to withdraw . honorably at this stage is better than a drag-out fight we feel we ~~will~~ might not win.'

'We do have a plan for the Nasfic, though, we are planning to bid for, and haven't the slightest feeling we won't get, the Westercon for 1975. ... we plan to try and combine our Westercon, held over the weekend of the July 4th holiday here, with the Nasfic, (or vice the versa, whatever), all-in-all, I think a fair proposition.'

The letter also suggests that San Francisco's withdrawal will leave Australia as the 'sole bidder' for the 1975 Worldcon which is not, of course, strictly true. The letter is dated November 27, approximately three weeks after 30 fans in Adelaide sent membership applications to the TORCON Committee.

(continued on page 19)

Bloomsbury Breakdown

It has been said that the best way to get one's audience or, as in this case readers, with one before plunging into serious matters is to start with a joke. It sort of loosens them up a bit, gets them with you - that sort of thing. So here is the joke. We were at Chris Priest's room-party on the final night of the Con and Tony was telling those people squeezed into that corner of the room about his experiences in Gibraltar as a specimen gatherer. 'We even had to' he said 'go out and chase after rock apes.'

'A rock ape' I butted in to explain 'is a sort of monkey which, when you cut it open, has "Gibraltar" written all through it.'

And now that you are all with me I can proceed to the serious stuff. Sci-Con 70, you see, wasn't all witty quips and easy levity as the above might lead you to believe. There was the programme, which was mostly serious, and even more serious, though in a different and more basic way, there was the Con hotel.

The Con hotel this year was The Royal, a strange old accomodation factory slightly less in length than the distance from Euston to Holborn. Gloomy warnings and predictions had filtered through the grapevine for many weeks before Easter. 'I went in to look around - it's awful. Full of horrible-looking Northern businessmen who just stare at you.' 'There's this big Latvian woman who patrols around with a bunch of keys, like a jailer. She might try and stop us having room parties and so we're going to try and get her drunk.' 'The rooms are very small. You have to go outside to turn around.'

The first room I went into in the Royal didn't seem too bad to me, though. Narrow, certainly, but it was just possible to stand in the middle with arms outstretched and not touch the walls on either side. Eventually I realised that this was a double room. I never saw the inside of a single one.

The strangest thing about the Royal was its unwillingness to sell

booze. Come 10.30pm and the only bar would close down. So then, to get any drink at all, one had to go to a serving hatch where one's credentials would be scanned - residents only - and a meagre ration dispensed. I wasn't a resident but for some reason I haven't been able to figure I was served without question while callow youths, waving other people's room cards, were turned away beerless.

The Con programme started, traditionally a little late, on Friday afternoon. Chairman George Hay introduced the rest of the committee and gave a halting little speech on the coming of age of science fiction and its importance to society. Variations on this theme were rung by the first guest, Professor Willis McNelly of California State College, who stressed the 'literary' qualities of recent stf, singling out for special praise John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR, and was almost equally generous towards the works of Brian Aldiss. Both of these gentlemen were sitting in the front rows at the time.

A theme of his talk was the idea that the devices that science fiction draws on are now common property and can be used by writers outside the field without acknowledgement in the way that a story can be, quite legitimately and without fear of anyone crying 'Plagiarist!', based on, say, Shakespeare's HAMLET. He gave no examples of any important novelists that were doing this though, and the people he singled out for praise during his talk, Brian Aldiss and John Brunner for instance, are writers from inside the field who, because over the years they happen to have been getting better in all directions, have received attention for a non-regular-stf-reading public.

Here is as good a place as any to sneak in my usual disclaimer. If in this report I misrepresent any speaker's ideas, or misquote him to the point of distortion then I apologise most sincerely. I never take notes and all this is being written some time after the Con. If I've got it wrong then it's my fault. Definitely - no arguments. And sheer politeness plus my natural-born humbleness would stop me from suggesting, even for a minute, that any speaker might have been the slightest bit confused in his thinking or unclear in his exposition.

That evening Philip Strick showed an extract from THE BIRDS and talked some about Roger Corman and the film we were to see - THE TRIP. This movie has been going the rounds of the film clubs for a year or two now but was refused a censor's certificate for public showing. Mr. Trevelyan seemed to think it might encourage people to experiment with drugs. Its an interesting movie and, as was to be expected, the sequences representing the visions of a man in a drugged state were largely unconvincing. It was a good offbeat choice for the Con, though, and it was the only feature film shown which I, and I think most of those present, hadn't seen before.

Later: carrying foaming tankards of Harp Lager I tip-toed back into the Con hall. The exaggerated care was so I wouldn't disturb the platform of poets assembled to read their works. 'Tom Disch and I invented this form when I was in New York and...' They were John Brunner, Edward Lucie-Smith and a lady poet whose name I don't remember. Lady poets, I was pleased to find, are young, great-looking, and wear black short-skirted dresses with silver-buckled belts, black tights and thigh-high black boots. This one

wrote light-hearted little poems like for instance one about how to prepare people for eating. It's the only poem of the session I can remember anything about - sorry Edward, sorry John - and if this admission brands me as some sort of cultural yahoo more interested in ogling the singer than listening to her song, then I can only raise my head defiantly and admit 'Yep, that's me, folks.'

On Saturday at 2 pm was given the best talk of the convention. It was called 'A Map of Inner Space - a scientific theory of mysticism.' It was given by and was the theory of Dr John Clarke of the University of Manchester. Having praised it I must now back off from making any attempt to outline it for you. To present it in a rough form, from memory, would be to do a disservice to Dr Clarke (and probably reveal I didn't take in as much of it as I should have), but I draw attention to it here because he did say there was a possibility of NEW SOCIETY publishing it. Dr Clarke also, as I found out later that day in the bar, can do the most realistic impression of a catfish I've ever seen.

3 pm was Guest of Honour time and James Blish, surveying the fiction field in general with particular reference to our kind of reading talked of the disappearance of the specialised fiction magazines - the sports story, western story and crime story mags that once abounded - mentioned that women's mags now printed as little fiction as possible, distilled the plot of ROSEMARY'S BABY to its essentially LADIES HOME JOURNAL-like essence (What if my child should be born deformed. I don't think the neighbours like me), and concluded that in spite of the shift from magazine to paperback form science fiction is doing all right because it still has, perhaps more now than ever, something worthwhile going for it.

There can be few among us who are unfamiliar with Dr Christopher Evans' theory. Certainly none of us who attend conventions here, and so for the sessions on computers he needed only to refer to it before talking about his efforts to produce a nervous breakdown in a computer by loading in one unrelated program after another without completely clearing the previous one. He also explained how Jim Ballard wrote 'How Dr Christopher Evans Landed on the Moon'.

Granting a personality to a machine is something we have been doing half in jest, half in earnest as long as we have been building machines. Car owners, for instance, usually nurse a suspicion that the occasional quirkiness of their machine can't be explained away by minor production variations. Built in to some of the standard programs available on the computer that Christopher Evans uses are some heavy sarcasms that are trotted out when you fill in an obviously wrong answer to a question - like saying you're a man and then claiming to be pregnant, that sort of thing. We saw examples of typewritten printout with such sarcasms on and the effect was astonishing. I figure the effect of being exposed to this sort of thing for a while would be, if not to make you believe the machine had a personality, at least cause you to slip into an attitude of friendly familiarity when working it.

At the Fancy Dress Ball, which was more of a party than a ball, very few people wore costume. I was one who chickened out and I think that the reason most people had for not coming costumed was the same as mine. That is, living in London I couldn't justify staying at the Con Hotel and with nowhere to change and not feeling inclined to drag across London in Drag I went uncostumed.

There were a couple of notable disguises, though. The guest of honour wore the robes and fez of some as-yet-unknown Eastern emirate and Mike Moorcock's hair provided a perfect natural mane for the horse mask he wore. (I showed a photo of him I'd taken to a non-fan friend. "But that's a horse!" she exclaimed. "Well, so what?" I said, "But what's a horse doing there?" "It writes science fiction," I said, "why shouldn't it be?")

It was all-night movie time and where the registration and book-selling had been during the day the screen and projectors had been set up. Chairs were assembled and at the side of the room rolls of lino and carpet were piled lengthwise and fans had annexed their places along these, ready to watch or sleep as interest or weariness dictated. I sat through THE THING, a movie which holds up better than practically anything else of the period, then went off to a party I'd heard about.

I'm still not quite sure whose room it was but I think it was the Shorrocks'. I found a corner of the bed not covered by fans and sat down to talk to Dick and Diane and watch Marion Kearney being covered by little round black and silver stickers. There was this fan who had a box of them and he was peeling them from their backing paper and applying them to Marion; on her stockings, up her legs - as far as he thought proper and/or dared - and over her face. It was interesting to watch the effect. Marion was smiling and with each sticker stuck to her skin her smile became sunnier and somehow more serene. Is it possible, I wondered, to get high on stickers? Perhaps there's something in the glue - like, instead of sniffing it you absorb it through the skin.

Fans came and went and downstairs THE NIGHT OF THE EAGLE ran its course. A couple of hours passed and then some fan drifted in who had been at the movies. When he was asked how they were going he casually answered, "They were showing OH MR PORTER when I left."

"But that's not on the programme," I shouted. The sneaks had rung in a good movie without telling anybody. I lept up, and stumbling over the inert fan-forms on the floor as I went, ran from the room and down the long winding way to the place of movies.

No OH MR PORTER. Instead an 8mm sound extract from 20,000,000 MILES TO EARTH. I plonked myself down anyhow. "Someone said they were showing OH MR PORTER!" I said to the man next to me. "Eh, whassat man?" he said, cupping a beer bottle-holding hand to his ear the better to hear me and practically knocking himself out in the process. "Forget it, man" I said. Well, now that I'm here, thought I, I might as well stay. And that is what I did.

I sat through Laurel and Hardy and Woody Woodpecker on 8mm and was very impressed with the quality of the picture and sound. Then I watched (16mm. now, of course) Roland Young, Constance Bennett and Cary Grant in TOPPER and marvelled at that combination of wit and elegance that was so often a characteristic of the best 'thirties comedies. And because, as usual, no one had thought to get an anamorphic lens for the projectors I watched a slender Vincent Price, a rake-like Basil Rathbone and a now less-than-tubby Peter Lorre ham, beautifully, their way through TALES OF TERROR.

Now it was morning and light had come to the outside world. Around me in the 7am gloom chairs creaked and thick morning-after voices, seemingly unrelated to the rag doll-like postured bodies distributed around the room,

called to each other. Somebody, the projectionist I suppose, said "I'm going to run THE TRIP again if anybody wants it." There were moans, but whether of terror, resignation or encouragement I couldn't decide.

I strode off towards Euston Square Station and my train feeling, as I do on these rare occasions, rather smug and superior at being up and out on a Sunday while most of the rest of the population are lying asleep. Here I was, braving the cold: a man with a purpose, even though that purpose was nothing more than getting home and going to bed for a few hours.

With some time to kill before my train was due I decided that a coffee and a Sunday paper would be a good thing, so headed into Euston Station. It's the new Euston Station, but its modern facade and pseudo-air-terminal concourse do not conceal its general British Rail-type crumminess. Around the walls, on the terrazzo floors, huddled in blankets, sleeping bags or just lying on newspapers were people still sleeping or newly awakened. There were men and girls - mostly itinerant Irish workers waiting for the ticket offices to open and the trains to arrive that would take them on the first leg of their journey back home.

Unlike the older stations where vagrants and stranded travellers alike can stretch out through the night, the new Euston Station has no seats. "If you put in seats," the argument against them goes, "people will only sit on them." This would, of course, spoil the clean modern lines of the new terminal. One is only surprised that the station is not kept locked 24 hours a day. A few window dummies, carefully placed to match the blobs on the architect's rendering, would be much more in keeping with a school of design which sees people as either an irrelevance or a nuisance.

I bought coffee, served up in a disposable container whose band of corrugations didn't stop one from burning oneself, from a refreshment booth where there was no place to sit and then went looking for a newspaper. A trestle table had been set up for newspaper sales and indicative of the clientele expected was the absence of THE SUNDAY TIMES or the TELEGRAPH, and the presence of great piles of PEOPLE, MIRROR and NEWS OF THE WORLD. I dug around and found an OBSERVER then, still sipping my coffee, moved quickly out of this monument to man's indifference to the comfort of man and continued my journey towards warmth and sleep.

Now I'm not going to fake anything in this report. I'm going to come right out and admit that I didn't see all the programme. I offer as my excuse that when you're not staying at the hotel and you've been up late the night before it's just not possible to get up early enough to make it back for the morning sessions. So I missed a publishers panel, a panel being chaired by Kit Pedlar about the need for a scientific ombudsman and a talk on teaching systems present and future.

I was a little late on Sunday afternoon and by the time I got there the talk called SPACESHIP EARTH had already started. This may be why I never did seem to quite get the drift of it but it seemed to be concerned with some revolutionary ideas in building low-cost houses and on the social attitudes towards such things as possession and permanence.

An MP named Raymond Fletcher spoke and suggested harnessing the creative imagination of science fiction writers in a sort of 'think-tank' capacity. Then came an auction of lots of books. Then a talk about Scientology.

Chairman George Hay had once been quite involved in Scientology and organizing a Scientologist had been one of the first programme moves he made. His intent was, he claimed, to stir things up a bit. If that was his intent then it just didn't quite come off. Scientologist Tom Morgan faced a largely hostile crowd and speaking haltingly he gave a dull rundown on Scientology that was something like " ... and then in 1953 Ron decided to invent Scientology."

When he'd finished George Hay called for questions and up jumped Perry Chapdelaine. Perry had spoken earlier in the programme, following Christopher Evans in the section about computers. Perry's speciality is Computer Assisted Instruction and he's the project director in this at Tennessee State University. He's also written some science fiction and is a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America.

I'll try to give you some idea of the dialogue that went on between him and Tom Morgan.

"My name's Perry Chapdelaine and I'd like to say something here."

"You mean you'd like to ask a question."

"No, I'd like to say something about Scientology."

"I've heard of you. You're writing a book exposing everything, aren't you? Perhaps you'd like to take over this lecture then?"

"No, but I'd like to hear your opinion of what I have to say."

This sort of thing went back and forth for a while with George Hay butting in now and again, trying to get some agreement, and eventually Perry got to have his say.

He told how he'd worked with Hubbard in the days of Dianetics and at the beginnings of Scientology. He explained Hubbard's research methods which were, to say the least, relaxed. Hubbard would lie back on a couch with his eyes closed, dreaming up all this stuff, and Perry would write it down ("A couple of the axioms were mine") and when through curious and complicated legal manoeuvrings Ron lost control of the Dianetic Foundation and the copyright on the word 'Dianetics' he discovered Scientology. When someone else came up with an improved Wheatstone bridge, the E-meter, Ron denounced its use until some time later when he was able to get control of the device. When he'd completed this chronicle of questionable practices Perry paused and then announced "Scientology is a hoax."

There was loud applause after this and George Hay stood up and said something like "Well, I'd like to continue this but we've run out of time and John Brunner's ready with his panel. John, would you be prepared to hold off for a little while?"

"I don't mind," said John, "as long as you're through by 5.15." As it was then 5.10 he had established that he was clearly unwilling to have any of his time taken up by waffle about Scientology. His team of three lecturers from the London School of Economics came forward and with John in the chair the subject "Progress is a self-defeating spiral" was put forward. But not very successfully, I thought. By the time each of the speakers had established his position and, in a couple of cases, been challenged over some technical, and to me obscure, point by someone in the audience who considered his speciality was being trampled on there was not much time left for amplification or discussion.

So, I'd like to backtrack a bit now to the end of Perry's denunciation of Scientology and the applause that followed it. My immediate reaction was a mystified "Why are they applauding?" I tried to figure it out. Could they have applauded because they thought that at last somebody had proved Scientology a hoax? I hoped that was not the case because he had done no such thing. He'd related a lot of inside information which might have been wholly true, true in part, or not true at all - there was at that time and place no way of knowing - and then made his denunciation which stood alone, unrelated by any logical thread to what had gone before. No, it is more likely, I think, that he was applauded for denouncing a Scientologist to his face. Here was a popular prodigal son who had been to Hell and returned wise with the realisation of his folly. Here was a respected scientist, a writer, a fan and an all-round jolly good fellow speaking out authoritatively against the enemy. He was applauded.

Now about here I'm going to stop being the Sober, Accurate Convention Chronicler and indulge in a little fanciful examination of some curiosities of behaviour and attitudes among science fiction readers. Now this is all just noodling around, mind you, so of course any resemblance to persons living or dead.....

Let's start with the animosity and resentment a lot of fans - particularly a lot of the older ones - have against Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard. Is it because they see Scientology as an evil that should be stamped out? I don't think so. They will, when pressed, admit that there are greater and more important evils that they don't get nearly so worked up about. I think their indignation and resentment is because they feel that science fiction was stabbed in the back, and they, as readers, made the object of ridicule by L. Ron Hubbard. Here was a man at the pinnacle, to the dedicated fan of the time, of the most desirable career imaginable. Here was a popular and successful writer. His stories appeared regularly in ASTOUNDING. And he turned his back on it all. Did it, too, in such a way as to suggest that science fiction was totally unimportant - not worthy of a backward glance. Then he compounded this slight by claiming to be, in the publicity handouts and books of the organization, a nuclear physicist. No mention of his science fiction background. And this infuriated a lot of fans even more, because it put them in a cleft stick. While wanting to play down the fact that he'd been spawned by science fiction they hated to let him get away with his claim to being a nuclear physicist. "He's no more a nuclear physicist than I am. He's a mere science fiction writer." Mere?

Now, for as long as I've been reading sf I've been aware of, and rather puzzled by, a pathetic desire expressed one way or another by a lot of fans to have science fiction though 'respectable' by the non-sf reading public. I don't know why this is. On first encounter with science fiction it would not be unreasonable to think that its readers might be free, thinking souls, responsible, but unfettered by convention or what people might think. Not so, though. I think science fiction fans were, and still are to a large degree, very conservative and conventional people.

In the forties and early fifties, if one is to judge from the letters of hypersensitive fans to the prozines, science fiction was almost like a aberration or a bad habit one admitted only to one's friends. It was defensible, if you could find anyone interested in standing still long enough to listen to a defense of it, only while it remained complicated and conservative and refrained from anything too crackpot or salacious. Hence the anguish aroused by the Shaver Mystery - ironically, the only interesting thing that AMAZING had going for it

in that period - and those letters to the editors from readers who complained how they had to keep the magazine under their coats on the way home from the news-stand on account of their lurid covers.

Then came Dianetics. The reaction to this was slow in building because a lot of readers weren't sure whether or not Hubbard had something. But the coming of Scientology made up their minds for them - science fiction was being brought into even greater disrepute. And now, fifteen years or so later, mention of Scientology can still provoke howls of outrage the equal of which one might only hear from a group of D.A.R. members who witnessed 'Old Glory' being defiled.

In the late fifties and early sixties science fiction began to achieve a respectability of sorts. Everything was becoming grist for the culture mill and this included such previously-ignored genres as comic books and science fiction. Now it was becoming all right to wax nostalgic about Bergey covers and good old Planet Stories. And besides, these things were no longer around to embarrass anybody.

This craving for respectability persists and now manifests itself among fans as a wish to see science fiction and its writers as an honoured part of the literary establishment and themselves as its recognized prophets.

Who are these fans I've been talking about whose desires, largely unconscious, manifest in this way? Can they be named in sufficient numbers to give substance to what I'm suggesting? Probably not. But, in the way one seldom meets dangerous drivers and yet is made aware of their existence by accident records and insurance statistics, so also is one made aware by many indirect ways of this unwillingness on the part of a lot of fans to let science fiction be just what it is, to grow at its own rate and move in whatever direction is natural for it.

If science fiction seems to be receiving a lot of critical attention now it is because there is less emphasis on putting books into labelled groups. Coupled with this is a quite large number of good, or at least (and I think this is important) interesting, science fiction novels that have appeared over the last few years. If a book by, say, Brian Aldiss receives a lot of attention it is not necessarily because of any upswing of interest in science fiction as such. It is the imagination and the quality of the writing that capture attention.

When fanzines discuss science fiction now the emphasis seems to be placed on 'literary' qualities rather than on science fiction values. Presumably the more 'literary' it is the happier and more secure a lot of fans feel. But alas for all those fans who, after years as outsiders, see a rosy and honoured future for science fiction and themselves within the literary establishment. It will never be. What we are seeing develop is not a great awakening of interest in science fiction by the establishment but the result of an across-the-board breakdown of 'authority' in art and literature that is at present working to the advantage of science fiction. Since this 'authority' they seek association with is diminishing in influence, the amount of respect by association available for those fans who need it is going to be somewhat less than minimal.

Poor, insecure, star-begotten souls.....

We returned early to the Con hall after eating dinner at an Indian restaurant (mutton dansak), found seats in the second row where we were free from head

obstruction problems, and watched the Doc Weir Award being given to Mike Rosenblum.

The Con Hall was full by the time the final programme item was ready to start. The lights went out and on a hastily pinned-up screen of sagging newsprint (Ted Tubb had fallen, or been pushed, through the original one at the costume ball the night before) was projected THINGS TO COME. Even if it didn't have one of my favourite movie credits - 'costumes by the Marchioness of Queensbury' - it would still be one of my most-loved films, science fiction or otherwise. It has so much going for it: some remarkable process work, Arthur Bliss's great score, the direction of William Cameron Menzies, Georges Perinal's masterful photography and the excellent acting of Raymond Massey, Ralph Richardson and Margretta Scott.

In the picture, after the Moon Gun has been fired and as Kabal and Passworthy stand looking out at the stars seeking a glimpse of the projectile, Kabal talks about Man, his destiny and the paths along which the pursuit of knowledge might take him - to destruction perhaps, or to some sort of nobility of mind and spirit. A heavenly choir asks the question, "Which will it be?" but I don't think that H. G. Wells at that time had any doubts about the pursuit of knowledge being as desirable and, ultimately, beneficial as it was inevitable. It is a viewpoint which must have infected everybody working on THINGS TO COME because the film just overflows with integrity and optimism. To romantic nut, incurable optimist me the whole thing is just irresistible.

Although the programme did list a Monday morning event - a meeting of BSFA bibliographers - the showing of THINGS TO COME marked the official end of the con. The unofficial end comes at check out on the Monday morning in and around the lobby, if you are staying at the Con hotel or at a room party on Sunday night if you are not.

We sat, several of us, at a table in the dining room of the hotel drinking beer by guile and deception from that serving hatch marked 'for residents only'.

Around us fans, students of James Cagney prison escape pictures all, moved quietly, paused to say - without moving their lips - "You heard of a room party yet?" and then moved on. I left my friends for a while and walked through to the lobby. There were lots of big name fans just sitting around. That was very reassuring. If anything big was happening they wouldn't be there. I went back to my friends.

Pat Kearney brought the word and whispered it to us: "Party in 1001."

"Whose room is it?" I asked, trying to gauge in advance the sort of welcome we could expect on arrival.

"Don't know, man" he said.

I'd been there an hour or so before I found out it was Chris Priest's room. Somehow I got the idea it was Ken Bulmer's and so when he expressed his views on the Con programme I didn't disagree with him in case he said "Well, who invited you here, anyhow?" At least, I think that was why I didn't disagree with him. It was either that or the wine I had been drinking had had a temporary paralyzing effect on my tongue. The substance of Ken's objection was that the programme had too little to do with science fiction. "Computers, pollution, we know all that. It's supposed to be a science fiction convention." He told us how pissed off Pate Weston was at having his panel cancelled because the stuff on computers

overran. He'd worked quite hard, it seemed, to get the topic for discussion sorted out in advance. This is something fans who chair panels here don't do too often, which is why I don't go along with Ken very much. Panels, particularly fan panels, often have a tendency to get boring and draggy. Having people from outside - people who are not writers or fans - who are sf readers and enthusiasts talk about things that will be of interest to science fiction readers has, in my small experience, made for more interesting programmes. At the last two conventions it has been these 'outsiders' who have provided the most interesting parts of the programme. At Oxford last year it was Professor Armytage and this year it was Dr John Clarke with his 'Map of Inner Space'.

Of course there's no positive way of knowing in advance what's going to take off and what's going to drag. Items that look good on paper sometimes just don't make it and this can apply to non-fan speakers as well as to fans. On balance, though, I'd sooner see the programmes at Cons loaded more towards non-fan speakers.

Alan Perry and I once compared notes about taking photos at parties and found a common experience. No matter how many people are present in a room when you take a photo the print never seems to show more than two or three of them. I have a photo I took at this party. There is only one person in focus and only four visible. But there were twenty-six people in the room that night and they were everywhere: on the chairs, on the washbasin and covering the floor and bed. The camera must have malfunctioned somehow. That has to be the explanation. The alternative is too dreadful to contemplate.

It was on a walk back from the toilet - some hundred yards down the corridor - that I saw these three girls. One of the bedroom doors, just a few doors down from room 1001, was open and the occupants were sort of larking about, all shy and daring, in view of passers-by. Two of them were kind of overweight and dressed in those sensible pyjamas that mothers choose for daughters travelling away from home. The third one was dressed, or undressed, a bit more stylishly and was the best-looking of the three.

I had passed their room and was opening the door of 1001 before I realized what I'd seen. I did a double-take and turned around. They were peeking around the door of their room. I stood their making come-here gestures, pointing to the glass of wine in my hand (it doesn't do to just leave a glass of wine sitting around at a room party) and then into the room I was about to enter. The expression on my face was the one I usually wear on such occasions: one of guileless, open friendliness. Either because they were lacking in intelligence or, more likely, because of a trick of the light, these girls chose to misread this expression and obviously misconstrued it to be some sort of sex-crazed leer. They looked at each other, laughed, then ran back into the room.

Back in the party I mentioned my strange encounter to Chris. "Hey, there are these three strange-looking broads along the hall goofing around in their pyjamas. Why not ask them in?" A great idea, it was conceded by all the men present, and Chris and someone else raced off to extend the hand of fannish hospitality.

They came back a few minutes later. "They couldn't understand us. They're not English. I think they're French. Who speaks good French?" A linguist was found but he too failed. "They're not French. I don't know what they are. I think it's German. Who can speak German?"

"Gian Paolo Cossato can," I said. "Where is he? He was here a minute ago..?"

And so, on into the night.....

Mervyn Barrett, London. June 1970.

OUR MAN IN CAMERA (3)

When Miss Oliver wrote to me, enclosing an invitation to the Sydney SF Foundation's Xmas party and expressing what seemed more than a polite wish to see me, it was with the utmost reluctance and frustration that I tendered my apologies for inability &c. I mentioned a certain rare illness which seemingly afflicts only red Volkswagen fastbacks, a certain absence of spondoolicks or other negotiable currency, and other factors.

When Mr. Hyde indicated that he also had received such an invitation and intended to drive up to Sydney, I accepted his kind offer of a lift some seconds before he offered.

But before Leigh and I set off to make nuisances of ourselves at the Smith mansion and amongst Sydney fandom in general, on the Friday night (8th December) we attended a meeting of the Nova Mob In Exile (ACT Auxiliary) - or the mid-monthly informal meeting of members of the Canberra SF Society, as they insist on calling it. This month we met at Barbara and Arthur Davies's place in an outer suburb I've never heard of called O'Connor. (It's over three miles from Kingston.) Amongst those present were Helen & Leigh Hyde, Robert Boot, a chap named Frank (who reminded me of George Turner - if you can imagine a shy and almost silent George Turner), and, um, Bach and Chopin and a few more of that crowd.

Despite the smallness of this gathering a good time was had by all, and hardly a one of us stopped talking or drinking except to do the other and it was a fine meeting. Certain of those present felt slandered by a report in some publication or other that Canberra fans are un-fannish, as evidenced by a tendency to talk about science fiction at the drop of an Ace paperback, and were determined not to talk about sf just to prove me wrong. I felt suitably guilty and contrite, and as soon as they saw that I felt that way they started to talk about sf. Most of the conversation seemed to be about a writer named E. E. Smith, whom they hold in high esteem. I say 'seemed' because while this rot was being talked I was deep in a learned and extremely biased argument with Robert Boot on the literary merits of the works of T. Keneally and P. White. (I understand he feels they have few, but I could be wrong about that because by then I'd had more than a few.)

A few hours after the meeting finished Helen and Leigh (not to mention Clifford and Rosalie) were on my doorstep demanding to know whether I was going to Sydney or not, packing my bag, making coffee, mowing the lawn and generally carrying on in their usual energetic, heathen fashion. I mumbled something about the Sabbath and some minutes to go before mid-day, but before I knew where I was exactly I seemed to be in Leigh's green Valiant, headed towards Sydney.

And so I was. We stopped off at Goulburn for a light lunch in the park - a couple of fistfuls of the dozens of sandwiches Helen had packed for us and a half-flagon of burgundy - and suddenly I felt awake and at peace with the world. "Leigh," I said, "I feel awake and at peace with the world." "Uhuh," he said. He had a mouthful of corned beef sandwich and was three-quarters of the way through a paperback he'd started reading when we pulled up. So I said to the nearest seagull, "Birdie, I feel at peace with the world." The seagull said he/she was hungry, which I felt rather irrelevant, so I turned to Leigh again and said, "Where do these seagulls come from? There shouldn't be seagulls in Goulburn, surely?" For a few seconds, as he read the last forty-odd pages of the book, Leigh didn't answer. Then he said, "Lake George".

As we drove on I pondered that answer. Lake George is a semi-mythical stretch of water north of Canberra, containing maybe a few more gallons of water than Lake Eyre but disappearing fast, and I can't quite believe in those seagulls. Maybe they come from Lake Burley Griffin that largish puddle slap in the middle of Canberra. One day I'll go and look for seagulls around Lake Burley Griffin. If I can't find any I'll ask Leigh again why the hell there are bloody seagulls in the bloody park in bloody Goulburn. I mean, it ain't natural. Maybe they're not seagulls at all, but landgulls. I must find out from someone whether there is such a thing as a landgull.

About 4.30 we pulled up outside the Smith's, and Bob regaled us with Mozart and glasses of Shelley's lime. A frig tful drink, but the coldest available and welcome indeed. Lyn and Geoffrey arrived back from a children's Xmas party shortly afterwards, and we sank back into that atmosphere of civilised tranquillity which is one of the essential characteristics of the Smith residence. About ten minutes later we were rudely awakened by the doorbell. I opened the door, said "Not today, thank you", and let Shayne in.

Shayne looked devastating: flowing gown, long silver eyelashes, black eyeliner, lush blonde hair cascading down her back. That's why I didn't close the door immediately: I was momentarily stunned. Was this vision of loveliness the person I had described in print recently as "a sweet kid, in a lovably boisterous kind of way"? It was, and she attacked me for saying it within a minute of arriving. Moreover, she criticized in hurt tones my editing of her article. This was too much! I reminded her of her Shayne-come-lately fannish status, the honour I had bestowed upon her by not only publishing her scribblings but also putting her photo on the cover of the issue, and &c. It didn't get me anywhere. Sensing defeat, I turned to Bob and said nonchalantly, "Bob, remember back in '45 when...?" That put the lady in her place, but it was a cruel, inconsiderate and last-resort way of doing it.

I fear for the future of fandom. The Trekkies - remember them? - those crazy pig-tailed teeny-boppers? - are growing up and taking over the place. Ah me! - fandom is no longer an occupation for gentlemen.

Which is just as well, because I was never cut out to be a gentleman anyway. (Well, maybe I was, but it's much more fun the other way.)

Lyn Smith has criticized me for saying nothing but nice things about her. Dammitall, it's almost bloody impossible to say anything else, but I've promised her I will try so now I will say something derogatory and critical about her. We had dinner, and Lyn's cooking was good and her conversation of some interest. (Will that do, Lyn? I really tried, honest.)

Shayne took off, after Bob had pushed her VW halfway down Jersey Avenue (at least, that was his excuse for his long absence), and we sat around waiting for a taxi. The party was due to start at 8.00. At 8.30 Margaret rang and asked if we were coming. We assured her we were. About 8.45 the cab we had ordered for 7.45 arrived, and we wended our way in silence through the sleazy no-man's-land between Mortdale and Glebe. I don't know what Bob and Leigh were thinking about, but I was wondering whether all the grog would be gone before we arrived and we would be forced to drink the rotten stuff we had with us.

I needn't have worried. Somehow I hardly had a drop all night. I mean, we were there for just over four hours and I only had three glasses of red in all that time. (I hasten to explain that I have been feeling a little off-colour lately.) On Sunday morning I felt peculiar: sort of wide awake and no headache - at 7am! But I am anticipating a little.

There were at least five parties going on simultaneously at 123 Hereford Street. Most of the people I didn't know. What's more, most of the people didn't know me, which was partly gratifying, partly mortifying. I went upstairs, led not unwillingly by Shayne (whom I have already described) and Margaret (who was dressed in a sort of sheer, see-through, little-girl mini-nightgown: on her bosom was a card which explained why she was so attired, but I found it difficult to concentrate on the writing). I sat down next to Margaret, and within seconds was surrounded by a horde of devotees. I said to Margaret, "Let's move to yon couch", which we did, and within seconds the horde had moved after us. Unwilling to discover whether it was Margaret or myself who attracted this attention, I stayed put on the couch, with Miss Oliver on my left and Miss McCormack on my right. After a while Shayne left us, and Mr Ronald L. Clarke's fiancée, Miss Sue Smith, sort of lept into the space vacated by Shayne. I can report that Miss Smith is very cuddly and Mr Clarke not as dumb as he looks.

Some moments later Miss McCormack returned. Now I don't know exactly how this happened, but when Shayne came back I discovered somewhat to my surprise that Miss Smith and Miss Oliver had managed to entwine my arms about their persons. Miss McCormack discovered us thus, and said (if I remember correctly) "Hmph!" I don't know why Shayne said this, since I believe that Shayne has some concern for my well-being, and I certainly felt good right at that moment, but she said it, and she moved off in a rather petulant manner and commenced to make eyes at a Sydney fan whose name escapes me, every now and then throwing me a Hmph! sort of look when she thought I might be looking in her direction.

I pause to remark that I don't explain this kind of thing: I merely record it.

Life is full of new things, to be wondered at and pondered privately at length. For example: there I was, with the delectable Miss Oliver nestling under my left arm and the delectable Miss Smith under my right, and I felt good. I really did. I wished I had a third arm, under which the delectable Miss McCormack might, if she so pleased, place herself in a nestling position. But, even more than that, I wished I had yet another arm with which to reach my grog and fags! You have no idea the torture I went through, trying to decide whether to disengage myself from one of those ladies in order to reach a cigarette or a glass of burgundy, and if so, which lady. The torture continued until someone turned off the lights, and Jenny Stevenson started showing slides of Syncon '72. Since these slides were projected onto the wall above my head, I reluctantly released my grip on both Sue and Margaret and walked across the room to watch the show. I recall making uncomplimentary remarks about Lee Harding, Bruce Gillespie, John Foyster and other people Jenny had photographed rather than myself. I consoled myself with the thought that perhaps she thought it might be somewhat blasphemous or something to take a photo of me.

After this turgid entertainment (during which someone remarked, when my countenance accidentally appeared on the wall, "Who the hell is that?"), I

allowed myself to be led out onto the balcony by Miss Oliver. There we engaged in a deep conversation of an intellectual nature, interrupted every few hours by some evil-minded scandal-monger who said "Aha!" in a nasty tone, or Miss McCormack, who said "Hmph!" in a patronizing tone. Certainly my arm was about Miss Oliver, because it was stiff and weary from driving all afternoon and she knew this and allowed me to place it where it would be both rested and invigorated. Miss Oliver is an extremely considerate young lady. Sydney fandom in general placed a quite different meaning upon this act of kindness on Miss Oliver's part - more shame to them.

Eventually Mr Oliver arrived to claim his daughter. She departed, and with her the magic of the evening. Suddenly I was alone amongst a bunch of fans in an old house in Glebe. I snarled at Alex Robb. I snubbed Eric Lindsay. I cut Blair Ramage. I argued with Kevin Dillon. I insulted people I've never met before. I felt myself returning to reality, and I hated it. Miraculously, Bob found a taxi at the end of the street and we drove back to Mortdale. I couldn't have cared less. It had taken me over a third of a century to get on that balcony with Margaret, and we'd hardly begun to talk, and suddenly the party was over. Tempus fugit, as someone once said, and there's nothing fugs along so fuggin fast as tempus.

As I said, I was up bright and early on Sunday morning, and Lyn and Bob sort of looked at me with a puzzled look, when they got up. I was abnormally normal over breakfast: barely cracked a single pun. I caught them looking at each other. Immediately I made a funny which was so immediately comprehensible that they looked at each other, questioningly, again. I said I was nervous about the lady journalist from "Cleo" magazine who was coming to talk to us around 10, and they accepted that.

Now, you know that I am very suspicious about lady journalists who take it upon themselves to write about science fiction, Mrs Anne Woodham, who writes for "Cleo", is quite a different kettle of lady journalist. She is young, very attractive, attentive, and what is more, knowledgeable about sf. She has read Ursula Le Guin and Chip Delany, think Heinlein is a fascist, and generally is considerably more than one might expect. She arrived about 10.30, and Bob and Leigh and I proceeded to confuse her no end about the present state of science fiction. Bob, of course, is still up to his nostalgic eyeballs in the 50s: he talked of Asimov, Sturgeon, GUNNER CADE and all that stuff. Leigh is unashamedly a space-opera fans, and he spoke glowingly of Doc Smith, John Campbell and other primitives. It was left to me to speak of Disch, Ballard, Sladek, Le Guin, Compton, Aldiss and other more or less contemporary luminaries.

When Anne first rang me at Parliament House(*) I suggested she talk to Bruce Gillespie. She had done that, and was obviously impressed with what she heard. But I sensed that she had become much more interested in fandom than science fiction, and it was a devil of a job steering her away from fandom and back to her subject.

We had a most interesting conversation, and when she left I had that feeling that either we are about to see the best article ever about sf in a mundane

John Foyster here: it seems to me that the clause before the asterisk must at least be in contention for the title of Top Name-drop of 1972.

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publication or that she would give up the project is despair. Between you and me, the lady gave me the impression that the former is more likely. She doesn't look the despairing type. (So look out for the February issue of "Cleo", folks.)

Lyn dished up a passable lunch. (Oh hell, Lyn, do I have to keep this up? You and I, and Bob and Leigh, know that it was absolutely delicious. Must I keep pretending like this?) Beef Stroganoff. I wondered idly aloud what Count Stroganoff might have drunk with his beef, but all we could agree upon was that it probably wasn't tokay. There wasn't a drop of alcohol in the place, and we were back onto the Shelley's lim. "Doodle-oodle-oo-dle-oo (*hic*)", I sang. Lyn and Bob and Leigh looked at me as if the absence of liquor had affected me in some way. "The Shelley's lime theme," I explained. They coughed, modestly.

It was stinking hot as Leigh and I drove back towards Canberra. As we came into Mittagong, I suggested that an icecream might go down well. Leigh agreed. We pulled up outside a milk bar. Not quite noticing the buses also parked outside, I went in and found myself surrounded by most of the members of a touring girls choir - The Linnets. I felt very old and travel-weary, surrounded by all these pretty young ladies in their grey see-through blouses and yellow slacks. When I eventually made it to the counter I discovered that the lady in charge of the shop was very bewildered and hardly spoke a word of English. I emerged with a couple of dismal-looking icecreams, and Leigh sort of looked at me scornfully. I was too tired to explain.

Half a mile along the road, Leigh pulled up for petrol. He always stops for petrol at one particular service station in Mittagong, the one next door to what used to be a theatre. Beside the theatre there is a parking area, and more importantly, toilets. While I christened the gloomy Gents for the fourth time since August, Leigh investigated what used to be the picture palace. We now know what the young inhabitants of Mittagong do on Saturday and Sunday afternoons: they go roller-skating at what used to be the theatre. "They shoot roller-skaters, don't they?" I said to Leigh as we drove off. "They wouldn't be any worse off," he replied.

The road changed and we knew we were back in the ACT. In New South Wales it is quite an art to drive in such a manner as to keep in the pot-holes and avoid hitting the road. In the ACT the roads are as smooth as Harding's auction spiel. I said to Leigh, "I hate Canberra". "Uhuh," he replied. "I hate Sydney, too," I said. "Uhuh," he said. "What have we got to drink with dinner?" I said. "Whisky," he replied. "Oh hell," I said, "let's stop off at my place; there's a bottle or two of red left, I think." So we drove to Kingston. Half a block from my place, I said, "Um, ah, Leigh ... Helen has the keys to my place so we can't get in." "Uhuh," he said, and we continued on into the Woden Valley. "Gotta get some cigarettes," he said, as we went past his turnoff and continued up the road to the shopping centre. We got out. I went into the shop with him. It was a sort of small supermarket. At the front of the shop was a moth-watering display of grog. I groaned. "I wish we could buy some of that," I said. "Go for your life," Leigh said. "You're kidding!" I said.

He wasn't. Ten months and one week after arriving in Canberra I learnt something new and vitally important about the place. You can buy grog on Sundays. For a fleeting moment, as I cradled my Kaiser Stuhl flagon, I felt that maybe, after all, Canberra might be a place I could happily live in.

(John Bangsund)

FAN DEMON'S LAND (2)

I drove over to Lindisfarne last night for the annual gathering of Hobart fandom at Don Tuck's place. Frank Hasler, who always arrives first, was sitting in a corner of Don's study reading through a pile of MONSTER TIMES. John Morrisby and Eric Rayner arrived soon after I did, and joined us in Don's sanctum for a pleasant evening of gab.

Don's young son Marcus wandered in for a few moments and showed us some of his sf comics, borrowing my copies of the latest TARZAN and FROM BEYOND THE UNKNOWN before leaving. Don has great hopes for cultivating a second-generation sf collector in young Marcus, who shows symptoms already.

We inspected the proofs of Volume One of Don's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SF, covered with literally hundreds of queries about various details from the publisher. Talk veered onto stamp-collecting for a few minutes, then some of us inspected the scrapbooks containing Frank's neatly-mounted collection of clippings about sf movies. Don read a letter from Ron Graham describing his visit to America, Britain, the Worldcon and the Ackermansion. All present were fascinated at descriptions of Forry's garage.

Don had a box of paperbacks for sale, and got rid of most of them. I sold a few of the pile I'd brought, but was mostly outclassed by Don's higher quality discards. Conversations wandered over a wide range of topics; television (Don mentioned with a pained expression seeing LOST IN SPACE several times recently), humour (somebody wanted to borrow Don's stack of NATIONAL LAMPOON), politics (of course we all knew that Labor was going to win - 20-20 hindsight) and even touched on science fiction at times.

Don's wife Audrey announced supper was ready at 9.45 and got an absent-minded acknowledgement. Two minutes later she simply yelled "SUPPER!!" from the next room and it finally penetrated through the fannish mist of words surrounding us. Conversation over tea and cakes centred first on pollution, since several members of Hobart fandom are involved in industries currently under suspicion by environmentalists. I mentioned the two questions which I always face at mainland Conventions: (a) when is Don Tuck coming over? and (b) when are we going to have a Con in Hobart?

All present agreed they'd go over to Melbourne for the 1975 Worldcon, but apart from that, chances seem slim. The second query was greeted with the scorn it deserved: "What, with only five of us in the city?" said Frank Hasler in amazement. Somebody suggested we should all chip in and buy an advertisement in the local paper to recruit more members before we even considered such a thing.

The evening wound up around 10.45 and we trooped off, light-heartedly agreeing to meeting again at the opening night of the Hobart Casino, providing we

could persuade Ron Graham to pay our way into the event!

A good time was had by all.

(Michael O'Brien)

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The plan for a North American SF Convention sounds interesting, and the date is quite appropriate. It is, of course, no business of Australians what North Americans do with their own conventions, just as it is no business of North Americans what Australians do with their national conventions.

One must suspect, however, that the 'Nasfic' mentioned by Jerry Jacks is the event discussed at NOREASCON which was erased from the rules at L.A. when the rules in question were not ratified. The non-existence of rules covering a North American convention in the rules of the World Science Fiction Society is, obviously, a very desirable situation. However, this should not prove any obstacle to those U.S. fans who are accustomed to re-writing decisions of WSFS meetings to suit their own purposes. There will be further discussion of WSFS and Nasfic in the next CHUNDER!

OTHER PEOPLE'S LETTERS (2)

I have heard nothing, officially, regarding the fate of LACON Program materials for Australian (and other overseas) members. However, I hear indirectly that there has been a problem with computer labels and that envelopes are being typed out by Fred Patten - some few Australian fans have received their stuff already. Just why Fred Patten should have to do it all is beyond me.

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LETTERS

To Foyster J., I say, "Come, come!
This constant reference to the bum
of Edmonds L. is rather rum.
Desist, or I shall take a gun
and shoot you squarely in the tum.
For we Australians nobly shun
the strange delights and horrid fun
of 'whipping off pants' - really, one
would have to be a low-down scum."

Bill Wright.

(Aleister Crowley) "On CHUNDER! 2/2 I must quote Moester Gri(little Canadian dwarf that he is, you know)gg as having writ "I SAT AND HAD A COKE!!!!" He said it. I can't help it. And one of your fellow countrymen too. Ahhh, sweet misery of that thing we call life, how insidious!

How can such things be? Your whole economy is being ripped asunder down under there. Terrible, terrible. And you have become a subtle party to this fact! You have printed such statements in your fanzine. What can this mean? Outside intervention. Conventional and such, you know.....

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(Bob Smith) "I haven't seen Nos. 1 & 2, but must admit that I do not find Number 3 particularly "fannish" - more like a slightly vicious replica of your NORSTRILIAN NEWS."

(JF. Yeah, well, the owner of Box 26, Mortdale, has just been introduced to fandom via CHUNDER's 1 & 2. Your luck held for a while, though.)

(Helen Hyde) " Maybe there are some things that it is not meet that ordinary fans should know. But whatever way this is looked at, the 'deal' made by Robin Johnson and Bill Wright most certainly looks like a sellout. From what I have heard here in Canberra, and believe me, there is very little heard in Canberra, public opinion runs strongly against this deal. My advice to the A75 Committee is, let us poor 'ole ordinary fans know what is going on. Blind faith may work for some, but where money is involved - uh nuh!

"Hooray for the mass exodusees. (Exodusees?) At long last it seems that Sydneysiders are coming to their senses and moving to that mythical bastion of fandom, Melbourne. Judging from the experiences some Canberreans have had with the Melbourne fans, I really wonder whether there is much point in leaving the Sin City. For over five years one particular gent in Canberra, who shall remain nameless, tried to interest Melbourne fans in Canberra - the result? Absolutely nothing! Most of them didn't even bother to acknowledge his communications. If it comes to that I could name about 4 people in Canberra (as at today's date) and several from other cities who have had similar experiences. Unfortunately this gent has moved on. If my memory serves me correctly he is overseas with the dept. at the moment. Leigh (and I) have both been to Melbourne where our reception was somewhat on the cool side by most Melbournians. Thank goodness there are some reasonably nice people down there. And we had to wait until Bangsund moved here before most Melbournians even acknowledged that Canberra does exist. Fans make me sick at times!"

(JF. I think there's a slight communications problem between most cities, as John Bangsund and I found, for example, when we attempted to correspond with Graham B. Stone who, I understand, lives in Canberra. The only time I saw you in Melbourne was just after the Worldcon, and I didn't have a ticket to stay, but two days later, when I asked people where you were staying and for how long, no one knew and said that you'd shot through pretty smartly, leaving no trail. Because Melbourne fandom is so big, one or two people here or there sometimes don't get noticed. I don't know anyone who tried to interest Melbourne in Canberra for over 5 years.)

(Christopher Holt) "I am Christopher Holt. The world-renowned hunter. I am hunting for a humanoid to claim as a friend. I am 24. In excellent physical shape. Can play a good game of chess. And have a good pair of legs, in case you're interested. I am a gynecologist. I make a fair living. For my hobby, I enjoy writing."

(JF. No man who gets between the legs of young ladies for a 'fair living' can be wholly bad. Please write to him, someone (PO Box 1327, Midland, Michigan, USA 48640), before he blows up Toledo, Ohio. On second thoughts, maybe we'd better hold out for Washington, D.C.)

LEFTOVERS The December Anzapa Mailing ran 212 pages and Leigh Edmonds is still OBE. There are letters from Paul Stevens and Shayne McCormack and Margaret Oliver, a few more fanzines to add to the pile to be reviewed next time, and two rotten pieces from Leigh Edmonds and Michael Creaney which I think I'll throw back in their faces tonight, thereby saving us all a lot of time. This Christmas edition goes to some of you as a card, sort of. Sometimes the earlier editions are coming surface mail. And sometimes not.