

November 10, 1980
I suppose there isn't any real objection to presenting Thursday
in diary style - at least it will certainly work. This way, and
I can write a little less about the order in which the material
appeared, for that matter. This leaves all right in a wide-open
space, a lot to choose from, but I'm going to try to choose what
of it. Let's start off with the first which was on Friday.

THEY LAY IN A TWO THICKNESS
Last October: Steve Palmer
Last October: David Palmer
Last October: David Palmer
Last October: David Palmer
Last October: David Palmer

When Jack first arrived on the
boat tried to ignore it, pass it off as a misadventure, a phase
that would quickly pass. The critics had not counted on a
phenomenon just as critics fifteen years later had not counted
on four boys from Liverpool.

In 1979 a group went onto the
propositions of what was a few short
months. The Daily & The Times had
and a few hastily-formed words
remains a short-lived passage
to be done. No longer was
writing for the whole world.

Throughout 1978 Palmer and
of Palmer to come with a
UNIVERSITY THE ARTS.

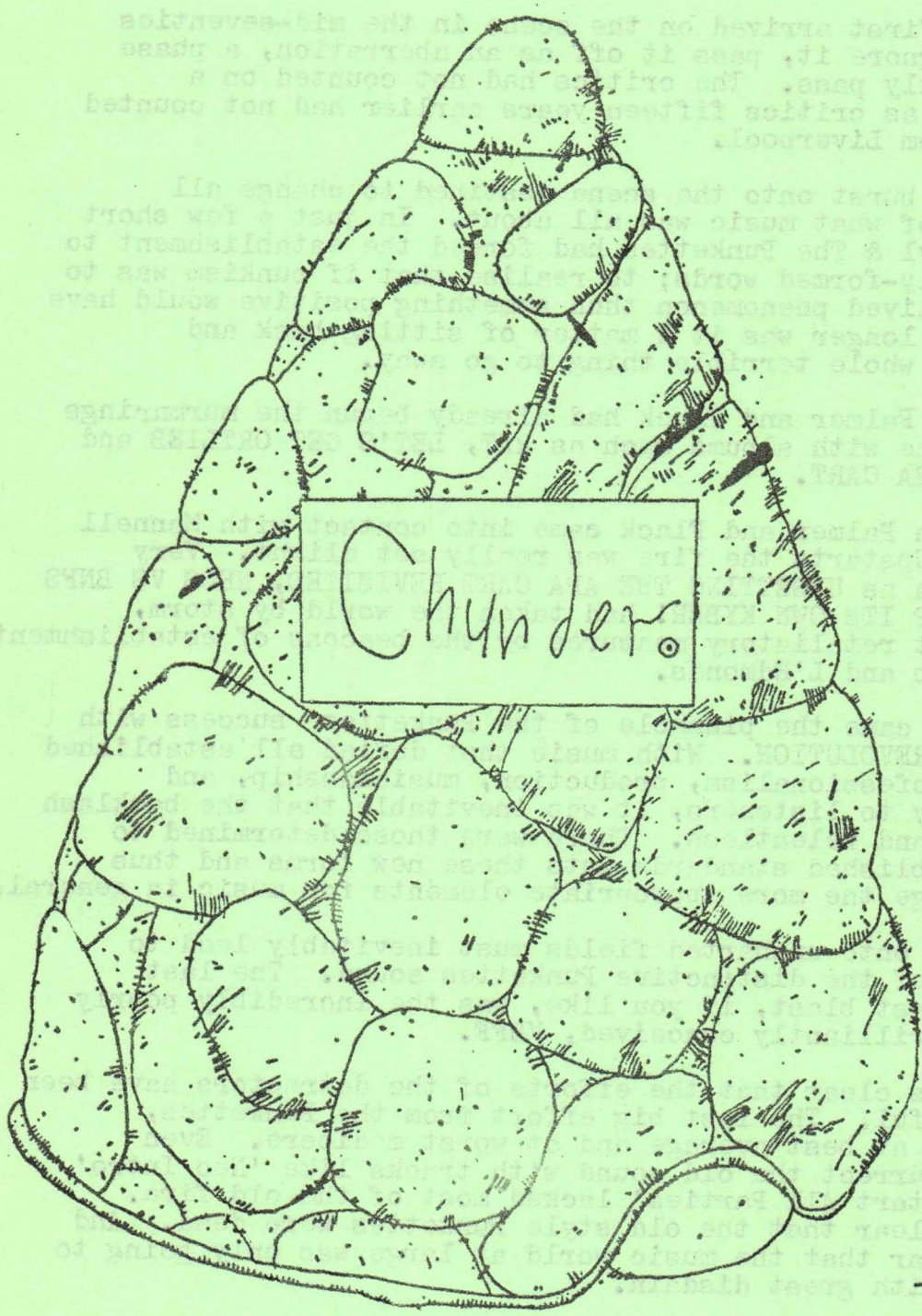
But in 1979 when Palmer and
and the London University
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and FAYTON IS UP IN
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There is also '99 and
VIX 1979 KARA REVOLUTION.
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Since then it has
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So it is that after a great
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November 10, 1980

I suppose there can't be any real objection to presenting Chunder! in diary style - at least it will actually appear, this way. And I can worry a little less about the order in which the material appears, for that matter. This issue will really be a grab-bag; there's a lot to choose from, but I'm going to try to choose most of it. Let's start off with the item which got me going.

TINY DARYL & THE PUNKETTES

Lead vocals: Steve Palmer
Lead Guitar: Daryl Mannell
Bass Guitar: Gerald Smith
Drums: Alf Katz

Keyboards: 'Harpo' Stewart
Backing vocals: John Flack,
Roger Croft, & Angus

When punk rock first arrived on the scene in the mid-seventies most tried to ignore it, pass it off as an aberration, a phase that would quickly pass. The critics had not counted on a phenomenon just as critics fifteen years earlier had not counted on four boys from Liverpool.

In 1979 a group burst onto the scene destined to change all preconceptions of what music was all about. In just a few short months Tiny Daryl & The Punkettes had forced the establishment to eat a few hastily-formed words; to realise that if punkism was to remain a short-lived phenomenon then something positive would have to be done. No longer was it a matter of sitting back and waiting for the whole terrible thing to go away.

Throughout 1978 Palmer and Flack had already begun the murmurings of things to come with albums such as RAT, LET'S GET ORTLIEB and UPSETTING THE APA CART.

But in 1979 when Palmer and Flack came into contact with Mannell and the Monash Upstarts the fire was really set alight. Very soon albums such as UPSETTING THE APA CART REVISITED, NEOS VS BNFS and FANDOM IS UP ITS OWN KYBER! had taken the world by storm, prompting urgent retaliatory measures by the beacons of establishment Foyster, Ortlieb and L'Edmonds.

Then in mid '79 came the pinnacle of the Punkettes' success with THE GREAT ZAPA REVOLUTION. With music that defied all established standards of professionalism, production, musicianship, and general courtesy to listeners, it was inevitable that the backlash would be swift and relentless. There were those determined to assimilate established standards into these new forms and thus hopefully salvage the more appropriate elements for music in general.

Such blundering onto uncharted fields must inevitably lead to disintegration of the distinctive Punkettes sound. The last vestiges, the last blast, if you like, was the incredibly poorly received, but brilliantly conceived, VSFF.

Since then it is clear that the efforts of the detractors have been largely successful. The last big effort from the Punkettes, UNICON SIX, was at best average and at worst mediocre. Even attempts to resurrect the old sound with tracks like 'Neo Intro' and 'Party To Start All Parties' lacked most of the old fire. By now it was clear that the old style Punkettes were dead. And it was also clear that the music world at large was only going to treat punkism with great disdain.

So it is that after a short but brilliant life we now see the end of the most exciting phenomenon in music since Moorcock and the New Wave in the 'sixties. The impact in the end has been minimal,

the cracks opened in establishment thinking smoothed over and all things returned to normal. Such is life.

D. Prior Fosdick-Jones
(Reprinted, with permission,
from Malady Maker)

JF continues

No question about it, lead items in Chunder! are becoming more and more esoteric. What's it all about? the readers cry, except for last time when they just cried. For my part, the problem is what to turn up with in the next issue.

Now a lengthier item - chapter 1 of my GUFF Report. There may be some revisions in the final version.

GETTING THERE ISN'T ANYTHING LIKE HALF THE FUN

The Get Up-and-over Fan Fund (GUFF) was the idea of Chris Priest and Leigh Edmonds, at least so far as I understood it. A lineal descendant of the TransAtlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) and the Down Under Fan Fund (DUFF), GUFF must have been conceived during Chris Priest's visit to Australia in January 1977, or possibly soon thereafter.

TAFF had by then been running for almost a quarter century, and although it experienced occasional vicissitudes it had assisted the transatlantic passage of many science fiction fans in the Northern Hemisphere. In the early days these fan-financed trips were written up extensively - partly because the winners felt an obligation of sorts, but rather more because the winners were, by nature, fan writers. Taff tended to be won by fan writers simply because most fans were fan writers, one way or another, and nothing was more natural than for a winner to turn around and immediately document her/his travels. Since most fan writing is about fans, a trip is a natural source of inspiration, especially when your next deadline is last Tuesday. Most of the trip reports are eminently readable today, if you can find them, but the greatest, John Berry's THE GOON GOES WEST, wasn't a consequence of Berry's winning TAFF at all, but rather of his losing. THE GOON GOES WEST will be discussed again in several chapters' time.

In the early 1970s I was heavily involved in Australia's bid for the world science fiction convention in 1975. One of the notions we had then for spreading information about Australia back in those pre-Pette Midler days was to establish a fan fund to transport fans across the Pacific on a regular basis (a couple of Japanese fans were helped across the Pacific to American worldcons in earlier decades). Like many of the developments of the 'seventies this was a realization of a notion from the 'sixties, for such a fan fund was occasionally tossed about as an idea by fans in Melbourne and Sydney around '61 and '62. In a similar way ANZAPA, which wasn't founded until October 1968, had forerunners in joint mailings of fanzines of John Baxter, Bob Smith and myself, and in round-robin letters in which Bert Weaver was also involved.

DUFF was born when I found someone in the United States dedicated enough to help us out - Fred Patten, who has done so much for Australian science fiction and comic fandom both before and after his involvement in DUFF. By dint of Fred's hard work and my occasional assistance we managed to organize a fund which resulted in Lesleigh Luttrell coming to Australia for the 1972 SYNCON. Lesleigh wasn't the first US fan visitor to Australia by any means - in recent years Hank Davis and Mike Horvat had both made contact with Australian fandom while on R&R from Vietnam, and by coincidence Bruce Townley was in Australia at the same time as

SYNCON '72 - but Lesleigh was a genuine fanzine fan who, though not as rowdy as some later visitors, made a very great impression on the Australian fans she met. Afterwards she wrote a delightful trip report - LESLEIGH'S ADVENTURES DOWN UNDER - which helped keep the idea of DUFF alive.

In 1974 Leigh Edmonds won the reverse trip, and his report, EMUS OVER AMERICA (published as an issue of Boys' Own Fanzine), was of the same high quality. And DUFF was off and running. DUFF has financed a transPacific trip every year since then, but the winners have not been trip-report writers, much to my own disappointment, and probably to the disappointment of some of those who voted for them.

Contact between Australian and English fans were less substantial. John Baxter and I had been members of OMPA at one time or another during the 'sixties, and of course plenty of fanzines were traded. The most extended contact was probably the Bangsund-Lindsay-Porter CoProsperity Sphere, with each of the principals acting as agent for the others' (prominent) fanzines. But the strong contact in the 1970s, partly due to DUFF perhaps, was with the fans in the United States.

In early 1977 Chris Priest was invited to take part in a writers' workshop in Melbourne, along with Vonda McIntyre and George Turner. This was a follow-up to the very successful one held in conjunction with AUSSIECON and was organized largely by one of the AUSSIECON workshop participants, Kitty Vigo. The workshop itself seems to have been a success, but a major side effect was the development of a strong bond of friendship between Priest, who managed to combine professional and fan writing uncommonly well, and a wide range of Australian fans. One of the byproducts of that workshop was GUFF. GUFF took me to SEACON in 1979, and this report is one product of that trip.

I should say a few words here about the organization of the report, since it does not follow the time-honoured pattern. Trip reports, for fairly obvious reasons, are usually presented chronologically - almost in diary form. That's often the best way to do it, I suppose, but it doesn't suit me too well. If I am to write about my perceptions of and reactions to that trip I need to organize my thoughts in a way which certainly acknowledges the usefulness of the diary format, but also diverges from that style substantially. This opening chapter provides background - obviously. In the second chapter I'll deal with my initial reactions to England by describing the first two days of the visit. Thereafter matters will be less chronological. I'll write about SEACON - the convention and the people. And I'll write about the fanzines I was given or which I bought; as a fanzine fan I feel an obligation to do that. Since I read a few books (including some science fiction) and have occasionally written book reviews, that sort of stuff is in here too. I'll write about the fans I visited in England and, since I spent a couple of weeks in Europe I'll write about that too. It is a great disappointment to me still that I didn't meet more European fans, and to attend a Eurocon, rather than another Worldcon, is now a major aspiration of mine. I'll write about aspects of my trip other than fandom. Much of this might be tedious for some, but I do hope that there will be occasional patches of light for everyone. The Plan of the Work having been outlined, chapter one must be embarked upon in earnest.

The existence of DUFF was something which I was pleased about, but I didn't think it likely that I'd ever stand for DUFF or, having entered the race, won it. It wasn't that I had no interest in meeting fans in the United States - over the years I had probably built up

as extensive a network of acquaintances and friends in the US as any Australian fans, and only a fraction of them came to AUSSIECON in 1975. But on the one hand, having been involved in the founding of DUFF, I wasn't anxious to turn around and make use of it for my own benefit. And on the other my job and income were such as to give me a chance to go under my own steam - and indeed in 1976 I managed to wangle three weeks' work in the United States out of my employers which led - entirely by chance, you understand - to my being in Boston on the weekend of BOSKONE. Unfortunately I couldn't manage to be there all weekend - just long enough to sneak out with Bill Bowers and Andy Porter for a hamburger and, on the way back to the hotel, receive the offer of a good time from a most solicitous young lady in Boylston Street. Since Bowers and Porter are offset reproducers while I'm an ink-and-stencil man I'm not sure how she would have handled us.

But at any rate I wasn't too interested in standing for DUFF because I didn't think I needed it. (However, despite having bought attending memberships in most recent Worldcons, I hadn't managed to get to one of them.)

Another reason for not standing was that I doubted that I'd have much chance of winning. I'm not one to go out of my way to curry favour, as we'll note soon enough below, and there's not much point in starting in a race you're certain to lose.

And so when Leigh Edmonds announced in Fanew Sletter in early 1978 that he and Dave Langford were administrators of this GUFF thing which was going to take an Australian fan to England for SEACON I had little personal interest, other than trying to work out what the letters stood for. But there was someone I wanted to see nominated for GUFF.

By the time GUFF was thought of John Bangsund had been around fandom for fifteen years, although his fanzine publishing career had commenced only in 1966. Like many of the most noted fan writers John achieved success because he was able to put so much of himself into his fanzine - those who read him knew him. He was very popular with almost everyone, but although he had once stood for DUFF he had withdrawn rather late in the campaign. John's problem was simple - money. John shared Mr Micawber's economic theories but not his optimism. More serious than this was the fact that he was self-employed, and the holiday pay for self-employed people is rather too low - especially for someone with regular bills to meet. A fan fund might pay for travel and accommodation, but it couldn't handle John's creditors.

By 1978 I felt that John might have been able to see his way clear to making such a trip, especially since it would be possible for him to make side trips to two countries which are important to him - Norway and Eire. So I suggested to John that he stand. He wasn't sure. We would talk about it again. We did, for a couple of weeks. But eventually John came to the decision I feared he would. No, he couldn't consider it. The money just couldn't be found. But, he said, why don't you stand?

I'm not sure now what my reaction was. I suspect it was along the lines of 'No, er, wait a minute'. The hesitation resulted from the simple fact that at that time I shared John's plight - self-employed and little money. SEACON, the target for GUFF, was a convention I really wanted to go to, but there was no prospect of it. I said I would think about it, but not for long.

I didn't have much time, since nominations closed at Easter, and

John's suggestion came only a few weeks before closing time.

Eventually I said yes, and asked John about nominators - specifically whether he would agree to be one of them. His answer was yes, so we got down to talking about the others. He suggested Ethel Lindsay, and I had in mind a couple of others in the UK as well; we agreed, given the little time there was, to follow the maxim that there was safety in numbers and go for some kind of overkill. Even then people would only just have time to reply. The Australians were to be Carey Handfield and Robin Johnson.

I drafted a platform and waited for 'interesting mail' from England. Since Easter 1978 was also to be the time for a 'big' convention in Melbourne, with Brian Aldiss and Roger Zelazny as Guests of Honour, there were a few other things to worry about. Nevertheless by Easter I had heard from Peter Nicholls and Chris Priest agreeing to be nominators. (Ethel had been on holiday and her letter didn't arrive until after the closing date.)

By Easter I had also done some calculations. I now saw clearly the extent of John Bangsund's predicament. It isn't just that you can't earn while you are making the trip - you also lose income because you have to refuse jobs that would run into the holiday period and you aren't around to pick up jobs while you are away. The penalty is thus much more than forgone income during the trip period, at least in my kind of business.

I tried to develop a strategy to cope with the financial needs. If I won I would have to be in England around Easter 1979 (you'll note that I hadn't even had time to check on when SEACON was to be held) so probably that should be taken as a central date. There seemed to be three possibilities. Since I preferred to work on contracts of around a year, if I got a one-year contract in April or May then I would get through the job in time to travel in April 1979 - if I won. Not only that. If I lost, I would know in time that I had lost, and the next job could be lined up smoothly. On the other hand, if I couldn't get a year-long job in those months then I would have to take a series of smaller jobs - usually a month or less - for a year. This would be annoying if I won - and maddening if I lost, since presumably I would have to continue knocking back long term jobs (which I liked) in favour of short-term ones right through to the beginning of 1979. The third possibility was to get a regular job.

All of these possibilities and difficulties were surging through my mind as the convention drew near. Other people had other problems. The 1978 convention had some publicity problems and Leigh Edmonds, as editor of Fanew Sletter, found himself either reporting these or having them reported to him. The growing animosity of the convention committee towards Leigh made him distinctly uncomfortable, and his friends came to share his feelings. By the time Easter came many people were expecting a disaster. It's almost surprising to look back now and realise that so little actually did go wrong. Nevertheless that Easter convention was the most amateurishly-organized Australian convention in years, and visitors such as Brian Thurogood and Deb Knapp from New Zealand were probably encouraged to think of Australian fandom in those terms rather than AUSSIECON terms.

There were other consequences, the most painful of which was Leigh Edmonds' decision not to continue publishing Fanew Sletter. Australian fandom had come to rely upon Fanew Sletter over the years, and a replacement, several people felt, would be necessary. When the dust settled I wound up as the editor of a replacement newsletter.

But at the convention the GUFF race began to ~~sort~~ itself out. There was a bit of toing and froing about who would stand and who would nominate but in the end the candidates were John Alderson, Eric Lindsay and me. We were a very mixed bunch, but all fanzine fans.

In some ways it seemed to me that John or Eric would make a better choice than me. By comparison with them both I am somewhat shy, and for a trip of this kind an ideal traveller is someone who makes friends quickly. On the other hand I had been around longer than either of them and had been able slowly to build up some friendships. Perhaps long-term performance might also be desirable. (I don't suggest that either John or Eric is flash-in-the-pan, by the way. That's obviously false.)

So be the end of the convention the race was on, there was no regular newszine in Australia and, er, perhaps I had better look around quickly at the job market.

This last took precedence, for the moment. I had been 'offered' a half-year job, to the extent of 'for Christ's sake don't take anything else - I'll just get the paperwork done and contact you at the end of the month', but more than a month had passed by. This wasn't encouraging.

Next on the list was a job running for about a year which looked as though it was in my line. The pay was a bit low, but I figured I could do the job in four days a week and use the spare time for other jobs. The interview went well and a discreet enquiry next day suggested that it was only a formality. I didn't ever hear from them again either.

Now the crunch came. I would seriously have to consider being an employee again, after eighteen months of being my own boss. A worthwhile opportunity did come along, but the salary was about 15% below what I was making as a free-lance. On the other side of the coin lay paid holidays, the lack of which had always effectively prevented John Bangsund from ever trying seriously to go overseas. I figured it would probably be worth the risk, but to cover myself I started working towards another one year job. By coincidence both interviews were on the same day - and in fact I almost walked out on one to get to the other. My present employer made the first offer, and I was stuck with the drop in pay but paid holidays. (And a private assurance that my pay would be 'fixed up'. Two years later it hasn't been, but that's another story.)

That solved one problem. Oh, there was still the minor problem of winning the race..... and the death of Fanew Sletter.

Back in 1970 Leigh and I had started Norstrilian News as the first fortnightly Australian newszine in years. Later on it passed through the hands of David Grigg, Bruce Gillespie, and Robin Johnson before finally dying quietly: Fanew Sletter was Leigh's replacement. Fanew Sletter had a most distinguished career over five years due to Leigh's hard work and could not readily be copied by anyone. But in 1972-73 I had published half a dozen issues of Chunder!, a news magazine rather than a newszine, and a revival of that might be possible. Chunder!, however, had not been a sweetness-and-light magazine like Fanew Sletter. But I wasn't going to be imitating Leigh and Chunder!, I reckoned, was about what I could publish. So on Anzac Day, 1978, Vol 2 No 0 of Chunder! appeared.

Now so far as GUFF was concerned there would be pluses and minuses. I was likely to offend quite a few people, if my previous track record was any guide, which might lose votes. But there would be plenty of publicity just from the fact that I was publishing regularly

- at least people would spell my name right. I couldn't then work out how things would balance, and it didn't matter all that much to me. At the time publishing Chunder! was more important than either winning or losing a GUFF race.

One interesting side effect of the first few months of publishing Chunder! was that I got a quite undeserved reputation as a knocker of Sydney fandom. It was certainly the case that my criticism of fannish doings, whether in Chunder! or elsewhere, wasn't exactly inhibited, but neither was it directed towards any one geographical region. I wonder whether the Sydney fans have yet realized that the reason they were rubbished so often in Chunder! is that they were the only fan group in Australia doing anything of much interest at all?

As it turned out the rest of 1978 was devoted to publishing Chunder! and getting used to working nine-to-five again. GUFF wasn't thought about too often, except for one glorious moment when the ballot appeared and, on reading it, I discovered that SEACON was in August, not at Easter. My fannish interests definitely lay with Chunder!, which came out every two or three weeks for the rest of the year, published an occasional interesting item, and won a Ditmar as best Australian fanzine of that year. More important than this, for me, was the fact that it got me interested in reporting on SF conventions, and I wrote quite a few convention reports over the next twelve months. (SEACON defeated me, putting a firm end to my run of successes.) In many ways the most interesting of these conventions to report on was the first - a STAR TREK convention in Melbourne. I was anxious to report it, but I was also invited to speak there. I am probably the only person in the universe who has ever addressed a gathering of STAR TREK fans on the political thought of George Allan England.

I enjoyed producing Chunder! during 1978 and 1979. But by the end of 1979 the greatest interest in Chunder! was shown outside Australia, although Chunder! was supposedly produced for Australian fans. Somewhere I had gotten off the track, or Australian fandom had changed. Producing a fortnightly or even monthly fanzine on one's own is rather time-consuming, and I didn't find myself thinking much about GUFF at all, except when Leigh produced a flyer, and that was annoying because it meant I had to re-calculate the pages or else go into a higher postage bracket.

The real impact came when Leigh telephoned me one night a couple of days after voting closed. 'How would you like the money?' is about how he put it.

Now I'd done it! The problems and the planning, once theoretical, now became matters of real urgency. There were of course minor problems like getting away from work, but also what to do about the trip - who, where, and what to see. And there was the house problem.

Well, getting away from work wasn't difficult at all. I arranged to take all the paid leave I had, plus a couple of days of unpaid leave, giving a total of just six weeks. Robin Johnson agreed to make all the travel arrangements, but there would be some minor matters to deal with.

House. Jennifer Bryce and I lived in a flat overlooking the sea, in an area in which one simply can't leave a place empty for long. She was going to be able to travel with me. That meant leaving the flat empty - who might be able to help? Lee Harding and Irene Pagram were interested in flat-minding, so that one was solved.

What remained? The dates of travel, I suppose. However, since there was relatively little freedom of choice Robin Johnson was pretty soon able to inform us that we were leaving on Sunday, August 19. There weren't to be any stopovers, but we really didn't want any.

This left only the question of who, what, and where. It was obviously essential to make some accommodation to Jennifer's interests, but in the end I believe that in fact there were only two things we deliberately chose to do because of her requirements.

Two other matters now began to influence the who-what-where question. In a letter Chris Priest noted that British fans were not, in general, outgoing; he reminded me that I shared this characteristic. Since one of my major aims was to establish some long-term relationships with fans in the UK I resolved to spend as much time as possible at SEACON talking to people I didn't already know. This would be especially important at SEACON since I was certain to know far more American fans than Brits at the convention. Then there were the Europeans - I was anxious to talk to some of them; where would they fit into the picture? After the convention I would do the usual stuff, visiting as many people as I could. Once again a note in a letter from Chris Priest organized my thinking - generally speaking British fans did not have vast accommodation. They might be able to put up one person - two would be a real stretch. Then there was the fact that there would be almost literally hundreds of other fans doing exactly what I was doing. But these were matters to be kept at the back of my mind, rather than being determining factors.

The second event was that my mother gave me a few hundred dollars to help with the trip. This made it possible for me to contemplate spending some time in Europe - to go to Munich to see Albrecht Altdorfer's BATTLE OF NESSUS, for example - and what she gave me also covered the purchase of a fair amount of film.

Putting these two notions together, I felt that the best approach would be to go to Europe soon after SEACON (taking in a German convention which, by its date, more or less forced the date) while most other overseas visitors were doing their traipsing around the British fan residences. One advantage (?) of this would be that any plans to visit made at SEACON could be made fairly far in advance.

That seemed to complete the preliminaries, but there was one more. Jennifer plays the oboe semiprofessionally (i.e. for money but not for a living). A couple of months before we left her teacher pointed out that there was to be a Master Class at the Festival Theatre complex while she was in England. It would probably help her playing to get involved in that, and he was sure that Neil Black, who was to take the Master Class, would be pleased to accept her. This led to a rather frantic exchange of letters and, after acceptance, some tortuous negotiations on what was to be played. Eventually all that was settled; Jennifer would play in the Master Class three days after we arrived - the first day of SEACON.

The problems of what to do when we got there were now all dealt with - at least as far as this could be done in advance. All that remained was the trip itself - more or less. Back in 1976 I had been to the United States on business, so I wasn't worried about the complexities of it all. And Jennifer had been to Europe that same year, so she wasn't worried. But I had to admit to one nagging matter; what would I read on the flight? When I had gone to the United States the trip had been about 18 hours and although I had been alone, reading, watching movies and sleeping filled in

the time quite well and even arrival in San Francisco late on a Sunday night wasn't too unpleasant. Maybe one novel would get me through - and there was even a last minute opportunity to pick up something stfnal, for the weekend before we departed was the time for the '79 national stf convention in Sydney.

Just whether or not we should go was a subject for considerable debate. Reasons for included the fact that I would be presenting a bid for the '81 convention in Melbourne. Reasons against were the obvious one that we were about to travel (though many people went direct from SYNCON to SEACON) and, at the last moment, I developed a severe cold. On balance, however, it seemed important enough that I go. I had a miserable time.

We originally planned to spend only the Saturday and the Sunday at the convention, but when on the Friday morning I felt a queasy stomach coming on a few moment's thought made it clear that I was not likely to be frightened of travelling on a plane, nor was I likely to be pregnant, leaving only the certainty that attendance at the convention wouldn't be a bed of roses. During the day things steadily got worse, with first my eyesight and then my head falling victim to the malevolent spirit; the rest of me waited patiently in the queue. By Friday night I was sure that this wasn't going to be the most enjoyable of conventions.

There was some slight consolation in the fact that I hardly slept at all on the Friday night - I would have a preparation much the same as that of the other convention attendees. (Observation on arrival confirmed this hypothesis.) But, and it's a big but, they didn't have to start the day flying from Melbourne to Sydney, which we did, catching a 7.45 am flight from Melbourne and arriving at the New Crest Hotel in Kings Cross at around 9.30 am.

There was to be a preliminary business session at 10 am - if there was any preliminary business - and I was anxious to be there for it. Motions had to be in writing, and in the custody of Chairman Jack, by the start of the meeting and, as I learned immediately I arrived, there wasn't yet any need for a meeting. I scribbled out a couple of motions for Jack while Jennifer tried to check into our room.

The urgent business over, I was able to think a little about the surroundings. As a convention site it seemed very satisfactory; the convention facilities were adequate, though perhaps a little small, and not so easily re-arranged as one might like. The lifts were no worse than those in any multi-storey hotel, and the hotel staff didn't seem to get in the way and were, at times, actually helpful.

Kings Cross itself may have some disadvantages, but not the kind to worry stfnans. The most important single thing, I suppose, was the round-the-clock availability of inexpensive food and drink (well...) outside the hotel. If one really wanted a decent meal, that was quite possible too, and, for example, Satay House can be recommended. The convention committee produced extensive lists of possible eating places.

There were two disadvantages with the site. Firstly, the facilities for showing movies did seem slightly unsatisfactory, though that didn't worry me in the slightest. Secondly, the lighting provisions were slight. It's the first time I've been in a public space like this with more illumination for the audience than for the speakers (of the physical, rather than the metaphysical, kind, you understand). I'm not quite sure what the point of this was, but as an available light photographer I found it somewhat annoying. But overall the convention committee has to get high marks for their choice of site.

One would have to say that the convention committee did pretty well on their general organization, as well. What I found annoying was that the program was always running late, with a quite unexpected consequence. Usually program items run late at conventions because you can't shut the speaker(s) up. This one didn't work that way. The committee could get people off-stage very efficiently - it just couldn't get them to the church on time. The result was that an item would finish at the scheduled time, having been cut short, perhaps with a speaker in full flow. Then the audience would sit around for fifteen minutes (or, later in the convention, begin to drift away) while the committee got the next item organized.

The single item of this kind which annoyed me most was the auction. For many fans - I'm no longer one of them - the auction is the high point of a convention, and I feel strongly that things shouldn't be allowed to get out of hand. On this occasion they did.

Three hours of auction were scheduled for the two days I was there; two hours of auction were actually held. The first session started half an hour late, the second twenty minutes late. On neither occasion did there seem to be much reason for this. The auctioneer (Keith Curtis, who is in fact very good at his job) had an army of helpers who nevertheless just couldn't Do Their Thing. There were two obvious consequences of the abbreviation of the auction.

Firstly, picky people like me began to get mad. If we are so short of time, I'd mutter to myself, why does Keith spend so much time (at most five minutes, a later more rational Foyster inserts) carefully arranging the material just so, in neatly ordered piles, when he conducts the auction by choosing stuff seemingly at random from the different piles? Why not just pile 'em on the table and take them as they come?

Secondly, my more mundane side notes that loss of time means loss of income - for the convention itself, for various fan charities and, increasingly and much to my dislike of this use of convention time, for various individuals who use conventions to make money for themselves.

There was a much more general difficulty with the auction, I thought. The selection of items to be auctioned can be very important. The way it is done can easily lead to dissatisfaction of some customers - like me, for example, to take a non-random example. I'm not trifficly excited by the prospect of buying a Darth Vader mask or a Robert A. Heinlein paperback, but I was interested in the fanzines like HABAKKUK and A BAS and INNUENDO which were available but which weren't auctioned publicly because the people in charge thought it more important to sell DOCTOR WHO paperbacks and masks and similar stuff. I don't claim the right to determine what should be chosen to auction when a choice must be made, but I suspect that too few realize what effect that choice has. If you sell only DOCTOR WHO paperbacks then you encourage DOCTOR WHO fans - and discourage others. The same applies to any identifiable subgroup, including of course fanzine collectors. But for me - well, maybe somewhere in Australia there is a convention for people who find the question 'Are you into media(fanzines)?' offensive.

Back at SYNCON '79, the convention under discussion, there was actually a program, and the reader may recall a reference to a preliminary business session. This was actually held, and at it a couple of silly ideas - the notion that Australia needs to have bidding completed two years in advance, and the idea of Awards subcommittees - are knocked on the head. The second one revives next day, while the first takes a year to come around.

After lunch on the Saturday we have the Guest of Honour speech by Gordon R Dickson. I listen to this for a while, but have to leave to arrange the next item with Marc Ortlieb and Rob McGough. At the end of his speech, on his way to the bar, Gordon R Dickson stands on my foot.

We three form a funny sort of panel on Cordwainer Smith; it draws a few questions. By the end of the panel I feel decidedly woozy and go off to lie down for half an hour - I'm anxious to be back for the auction (but you've already read about that). At the auction I'm not really in top shape, but manage to add one more to my collection of Marilyn Pride rocks. At the auction someone paid \$3 for a set of Chunder! for 1978. I admire the buyer's taste, but have to note that it would have been cheaper to subscribe.

It would be sensible to rest again at this point, but the possibility of eating oneself out of the 'flu arises. Jennifer and Lee and Irene and I find our way to the above-mentioned Satay House. The company is better than the food. We arrived back at the convention in time for me to take some murky photos of costumes; John Straede as a Hoka was very good, in my view, but so were the costumes of Marilyn Pride, Nock Stathopoulos and Rob McGough. I'm supposed to be involved, too, because some Adelaide fans asked me to help with their presentation. I go up to their room and find myself confronted with Jeff Harris, Paul Stokes, John McPharlin and Helen Swift as Foyster clones - and they might have been very impressive if they hadn't been overweight and had too much hair. They nevertheless won a group prize.

But then I really needed to quit. The day had been very long indeed. I got two hours' sleep.

Before going to the business session next morning I watched a couple of Betty Boop cartoons on TV, which set the scene appropriately. There was some monkeying around with awards and stuff, as I've mentioned above, and then Perth got the '80 National Convention. Adelaide rolled Melbourne for the '81 convention approximately 15 zillion to 3. I didn't appreciate this too much.

After that there was an AUSTRALIA IN '83 discussion whose banality we can with luck ignore by forgetting the whole thing. The DUFF item almost qualified for the same sort of dismissal, but the presence of Ken and Linda boosted it a little. (Koichi Yamamoto, by the way, didn't feature in any program items while I was there, but he was certainly visible and busy.)

A funny (?) quiz was held after lunch, following a Gordon R Dickson interview. People threw pingpong balls at each other. Marilyn Pride painted hers before throwing it.

Then the second part of the auction. Boring - no fanzines. Eventually I went out to dinner with Jennifer, Carey, Helen and Damien. We got back just in time for the awards (Ditmars, folks) BELOVED SON, THE WHITE DRAGON, Marc Ortlieb, and Chunder! Susan Wood won the Atheling.

Then it was time for the Paul Stevens Show - scripted this time, so it can't have been quite as bad as usual. One first was that Paul Stevens took a swipe at Paul Stevens (he didn't check the script first). Partway through the show Jennifer and I had to leave. We grabbed our bags, then a taxi, and thus reached the airport in time to catch the last 'plane to Melbourne. We arrived home by 1 am. That night I slept. Possibly this would be a good preparation for SEACON.

But first - a few days in Melbourne. One good thing about SYNCON had been meeting Ken Fletcher and Linda Lounsbury the DUFF winners. Like all DUFF winners to date they were wonderful people. They were coming to Melbourne this very week, which was a change from their previous plan. In that previous plan they were to stay with Christine and Derrick Ashby a little later, and the Ashbys were taking the opportunity to get some plumbing overhauled. Things were a little tight, so Jennifer and I offered to put up Ken and Linda for a few days. They were very pleasant guests, but we couldn't take much time off to escort them around Melbourne. Fortunately the Melbourne fans were able to look after this end of it. By the Saturday morning we were quite reluctant to say goodbye to Ken and Linda, but Christine Ashby, her eyes with that usual steely glint, came to take them away to Healesville. We could thus return to the serious business of packing for the next day - and to preparations for my mother's early and surprise 70th birthday party. She would actually be 70 during SEACON, but the rest of the family had agreed upon an early and secret celebration. Early in the afternoon my parents arrived - and so did the rest of the family. It was the first time we had all been together for years.

Eventually we finished celebrating, threw them all out, and collapsed into bed, not exactly well-prepared to fly around the world.

We were due to depart at 1.00 pm on Sunday August 19. There was the usual vast gathering to farewell us. It was a cloudy day, but the winds were moderate for Melbourne and at least there was no rain. The 'plane glittered fairly impressively on the tarmac. We wandered through the various checkpoints, with no one showing much interest in our baggage. We sat for a while in the transit lounge talking about what would become of us during the trip. We had never been away together before, discounting two conventions in Sydney, and it was going to be a large adventure. The Australian Tourist Commission was conducting a survey of passengers returning overseas so we watched a couple of these. Then at last it seemed sensible to get aboard the 'plane.

We took our seats on QF 1 - a 747 of course - and set off to Sydney. About an hour later we arrived in Sydney. I had finished my book.

This was a serious business. There was still an hour of sitting around in Sydney before we took off again - an hour in which to worry about how I was going to get through the next 24 hours with virtually nothing to read. The problem was and is that my reading speed is rather variable, and the only rational solution is overkill. My kind of reading matter, however, is rarely to be found at airport newstands. I prowled up and down. I glanced at all sorts of insignificant and irrelevant books. I bought and read a Sunday newspaper. Finally I decided upon the only strategy which would minimise my discomfort - I bought the longest book available. I don't think I would necessarily have read David Bergamini's IMPERIAL JAPANESE WAR CONSPIRACY(?) under normal circumstances, but its 1300 or so pages did meet some of my criteria.

I took some 'photos of 'planes partly for my own interest and partly in case Leigh Edmonds cared. Finally, at 3.30pm, we left on the CITY OF ELIZABETH for London via Singapore and Bahrein. At 4.30pm, I noticed as we passed a sign, a UTA flight was leaving for Paris via Jakarta, Bahrein and Athens. Another time, that will be the one for me.

When I travel by aeroplane I like to concentrate my energies on getting from A to B. So there is no worrying about getting window

seats, no disembarkation at refuelling stops (no matter how interesting). I like to imagine myself in an oversized 'bus or train, admittedly with movies and food and other amenities, but basically just a cylinder for travelling in. Jennifer, however, is more daring. So when we arrived at Singapore in the middle of the night she got off with all the other passengers to look around. I gathered from Jennifer that it wasn't too interesting. A couple of minutes after we took off for "ahrein Jennifer drew herself to my attention by fainting.

I am not too good with people who faint. In this case there wasn't much to be done so I went looking for a stewardess. By the time we got back Jennifer was coming around slowly. We never worked out what caused her to faint, but it was unnerving, since she had never done it before.

Otherwise the trip was uneventful. I read the Bergamini, and actually found parts of it interesting. There were aspects of it which it seemed to me would lend themselves to the construction of plots for science fiction novels, so when we arrived in Britain I gave it to Chris Priest. We watched the two movies, and that's how I came to see SUPERMAN - THE MOVIE on the small, small screen. And the music program included a Mahler symphony which I listened to a couple of times.

But really it was all rather uneventful until we touched down at Heathrow. It was a grey, foggy day as we walked along the various concourses, avoiding the moving walkway (due to my dislike of Robert A. Heinlein, of course), but eventually struggling up to the customs and immigration lines. As colonials, we had our own queue, naturally.

(Part of chapter 2 of this report appeared in A BIT OF A TRIP RIP in ANZAPA, December 1979.)

November 29, 1980

Well, it's taken me a little longer than I expected to get this far. Next up is a SWANCON report from Richard Faulder which I've only been hanging on to for a couple of months....

TRIUMPH OF THE BIONIC SWAN

(By Richard Faulder)

Many people are describing SWANCON 5, held in Perth at the Park Towers Hotel, August 15-18, as the greatest Australian con since the fabled AUSSIECON. If they aren't, they either weren't there or must be temporarily struck dumb.

For some fans the con started up to a week before the official date, as fen flew in ahead of time to take advantage of the various budget fare arrangements the airlines were offering. To a large extent this was only made possible by the generous hospitality of the WASfen. Incoming Eastern States fen were billeted at the various Perth slanshacks. This gave them a chance to see Perth and/or the other fen gathering for the con. One can only hope that Eastern States fen extend similar hospitality to any WASfen desirous of flying over for cons.

Arriving fairly early at the hotel on the Friday morning (about 0900) we found that our rooms wouldn't be ready until 1030. Not to worry. We just dumped our luggage near the registration desk, registered and received our program and freebies in their little screen-printed hessian bags, then stood around talking while we waited.

(Those hessian bags were another nice touch. Presumably cheap to provide, they nevertheless were attractive to look at, and sturdy enough to see years of service afterward as carrybags.)

At 1200 there was a suitably brief official opening by Chairthing Julia Curtis, notable for its informality and friendliness. Everyone then trooped off in various directions into the city for lunch.

Now the careful attention of the concon to programming showed itself. By scheduling the first program item at 1430 they had allowed an adequately long lunchtime. This allowed time for people to have their lunch and get back in time to hear Lee Harding, noted Australian author of ~~KiddieLit~~ juvenile science fiction, interviewed by the Faster Than Light Radio Show Team (Grant Stone, Julia Curtis, and Rob McGough). (For matching many of the names of the participants to the events I am indebted to the retentive brain - not to say rapid pen - of the inimitable Jack R. Herman. Unfortunately the program did not include the names of many of the panelists - a minor oversight, and one really of importance only to those of us given to writing conreports.) Lee was in turn humorous, amorous, and serious - and always entertaining.

That item lasted its required 30 minutes. Then the panel on 'Give Me Organ Banks Or Give Me Death' stepped up for the first sercon program item. Jeff Harris ably chaired a panel in which Warren Hughes dealt with the scientificfictional examinations of the problem, Don Griffiths and Barbara de la Hunty were the expert witnesses, and yours truly acted as biological dogsbody. Given the complexity of the subject, things stayed well on course.

At the panel's conclusion there was a short break, before Julia Curtis took the stage as the delectable Fanny Galactica. Assisted by Bobo Gden as her chef, and Zebee Johnstone as the somewhat unique garbage disposal unit, she demonstrated the basics of fannish cooking. These included the preparation of tribbles and triffids, and making a pan-galactic gargle blaster, to the delight of the audience.

Sercon time again, as Jack R. Herman, George Turner, Grant Stone and Russell Blackford, under the chair of Ian Nicholls, discussed 'Teaching SF'. an almost obligatory discussion item. The panel's attitudes varied from a belief that SF should not be studied as literature, but as a demonstration of principles, to one which held that it should be studied as genre literature, exempt from ordinary literary criticism. Not surprisingly, there was plenty of audience response.

After all this deep discussion, dinner was definitely on the agenda next. I don't know what the rest of the assembled multitude did, but thirty or so of us trooped off to a local buffet Chinese eatery, generating a marvellous sense of fannish community in the process. Being Perth, where two or more are gathered together in anyone's name it's illegal, so that at one stage a group broke off from the main body to explain to a bemused pair of policemen what was going on.

I arrived back at the hotel in time to catch the end of the neofan introduction, with Rob McGough asking questions of George Turner (as the Pro), Jack Herman (as the BNF), and John McDouall and Steve Dedman (as the mundane and the neo). If the trufen had known this segment was going to have been so enjoyable, more would have made the effort to attend.

In a way, it was fortunate that the audience was in a lighthearted

mood at the beginning of the Anne McCaffrey solo spot that followed. She chose to read THE SHIP WHO SANG, and at the end of the reading there was at first only an awed hush, broken only by some quiet weeping, before the audience rose to give her a standing ovation. Any description of the sensation of becoming part of the emotions tied up with an author's work would be inadequate.

Following a suitable pause, the house assembled to debate the motion that 'A woman is only a woman, but a good light-sabre is a phallic symbol'. Anne McCaffrey led the defence of the motion well, but Julia Curtis and Alethea Peel seemed too occupied with playing femmes fatales to support her adequately. Jack Herman led the opposition to the motion in his usual splendid debating style, and Ian Nicholls, the last to oppose it, adopted a suitably missionary position, but Sally Underwood, in attempting to prove that a light-sabre was anything but a phallic symbol, managed to totally confuse the audience. Nevertheless, the double entendres flew thick and fast, and were marvellously entertaining.

Most of the fen then retired to the hospitality suite, which the concomm had thoughtfully provided, for a giant room party. I don't know when (or if) it finally finished, but things still seemed to be going strong when I left for bed around midnight.

Saturday morning I arose late, and so missed the A IN '83 segment. However, talking to people afterwards, I gained the impression that Vera Lonergan, Merv Binns, Peter Toluzzi, Andrew Taubman, Dallas Jones, and Roy Ferguson had restored people's confidence in the viability of the bid.

Due to a last minute glitch, the ANTIFAN films failed to arrive, so that the only activity running between 1100 and lunch was the auction. Tony Peacey tried hard, but he was no Keith Curtis. Even though the prices were much more reasonable than those at UNICON, there was a notable lack of interest in the auction. This would have been partly due to the absence of the usual auctioneer, but also due to a reaction to the trend of the auctions at previous cons.

Another satisfactorily long lunch break, and Anne McCaffrey gave her guest-of-honour speech. This time around she was both entertaining and informative. She gave her audience a different view of the trials and joys of being an author, giving advice and encouragement to any who would follow her, and delighting her audience with references such as those to 'John W. God Campbell'.

An hour later (though it didn't seem that long) the finals of the SF Mastermind competition were held. These were conducted in deadly earnest, with the finalists obviously under considerable strain, especially Sally Underwood, who had suddenly found herself the Western Australian finalist by default. Nevertheless, the winner by a convincing margin was Jeff Harris, whose special subject was DOCTOR WHO.

SWANCON departed from the usual convention programming at this point by screening a film (which was at best marginally SF). In effect the concomm seemed to be trying to downgrade the importance of the films by slotting them in at a time when people would either be preparing to go out to dinner, or involved in conversation. However, it seemed to work well as an alternative to the usual practice of slotting in films at the end of the day's program, when they give people a respite before setting off for serious partying. I heard no complaints about the lack of films.

The banquet was well-attended, and the standard of food fairly usual for such occasions. Perhaps the highlight of the evening, though - even more than the DITMAR Awards, almost - was the display of Morris dancing given by a local group of Morris men (and one woman). To say that the audience was highly appreciative would be to grossly understate the case, and unfortunately it was only possible to persuade them back for one curtain call.

After the punctuation to the proceedings given by the Morris dancing, the DITMARS were almost anti-climactic. In truth, there were few surprises, perhaps the biggest being the award for best Australian fantasy or science fiction to AUSTRALIAN GNOMES. There was great rejoicing from the large NSW contingent when Jack Herman carried off the Atheling, and general satisfaction at THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY winning Best International fantasy or science fiction. Other popular awards went to Leanne Frahm for best fanwriter and to Marilyn Pride for best fanartist.

Those of you who remember Teacon I at UNICON VI will be pleased to know that the concomm of Teacon II were able to round up some teapots this time. With Judith Hanna as Dormouse (again, even though she was not able to fit into the teapot) and Jack Herman as the Mad Hatter (naturally - and a far better pseudonym than 'Hatfan'), a non-drinking, non-smoking room party was an excellent way to relax before going to bed. (Since Jack's room was just across the corridor from mine, I was grateful for the lower level of noise generated by such a gathering.) Fortunately, it now appears that Teacons will be an established part of future cons.

Reference to Hatfan reminds me of one shortcoming of Swancon. Unless it was hidden away, apparently no one saw fit to set up a typewriter to allow for the production of a one-shot. A pity, since these seemed to be becoming a tradition at Australian cons.

Sunday didn't exactly dawn bright and fair in Perth, so that the Fan Olympics. Fortunately Zebbee Johnstone, who had taken the herculean task of organizing them on her shoulders, was able to transfer proceedings to the main hall, which was quite capacious enough. A threatened boycott by the Sydney team fortunately did not eventuate, since they noted that a majority of other teams were attending the games. Given the prowess of Peter Toluzzi, who was eventually awarded Best Competitor, this decision was probably just as well. Recognizing my limitations, I only took part in putting the tribble and the space-hopper slalom, but other people attempted intergalactic flying frisbees, the thread race, and the fannish obstacle race. I was sorry to see that there was only one female solo competitor, although all praise to Sally Underwood for being that one. Given the number of fen the Olympics managed to drag out of bed by 1030 on Sunday morning, they can definitely be accounted a success. By their end they were encroaching on lunchtime, and competitors and audience were starting to drift away, but this does not detract from their success. Nevertheless, I feel that this was one of those program items that it is almost impossible to imitate successfully. Certainly only a Natcon would be big enough to ensure its success. About this time Van Ikin appeared, to my great delight, and he and I, together with Roy Ferguson, Julia Curtis, Roman Orszanski, Cliff Wind and Dallas Jones set off for lunch at a local pancake parlour.

Lunch must have kept me away from the proceedings until 1400, since I missed both the second half of the auction and the question-and-answer sessions with Anne McCaffrey. However, I was back in time to see the panel on technology versus mysticism. Technologists Roy Ferguson and Gregor Whiley confronted Damien Brennan (appropriately garbed as Big Bunny) and Jason Cooper, with Ian Nicholls in the chair.

Somehow the discussion ended up being about technology and luddism, with both sides agreeing to disagree, although I'm not sure if all the audience did.

The program book tells me that this panel was followed by some poetry readings, and a panel on writing and publishing SF. Since I long ago realised my limitations in this respect, I gave these both a miss, although Jack Herman's memory informs me that the panel consisted of Shayne McCormack, George Turner, Lee Harding, and Tony Peacey. Actually, I seem to remember that my time during this and the film was taken up by a staircon above the registration desk, at which we were mainly entertained by Grant Stone, Leigh Edmonds, Valma Brown, and Cliff Wind, while Judith Hanna, Roman Orszanski, Zebbee Johnstone (for a while) and I sat back and enjoyed the show.

Staircon broke up in time for me to enjoy THE NAKED ASTRONAUT SHOW, with Julia Curtis, Roy Ferguson, and Sally Underwood imitating the Naked Vicar Show team as they presented scenes from a fannish household. It dealt with the sort of material we Eastern States types have come to expect from the WASFen, and the audience enjoyed it hugely.

A discussion on directions in ~~KiddieLit~~ children's SF was supposed to be next, but I drifted away at that point. Even Jack Herman's memory fails me here, since the panel and its audience apparently drifted off into a room somewhere.

Then came the masquerade. Although Lee Harding had to be restrained a couple of times by his fellow judges when confronted by some of the female costumes, there was no one to whom they felt constrained to award a best-undressed prize, as has allegedly happened at some previous Swancons. While the judges retired to consider their verdicts, the audience was treated to the eagerly-awaited Dune Show.

To describe the Dune Show as 'brilliant' would be to fail to do justice to it. The long hours of work which had obviously gone into it paid off. Incredibly, the actors managed to perfectly capture the atmosphere and characters - Meddy, Eccles, Bluebottle, et al - of the Goon Show perfectly. At many points the audience was reduced to hysterical laughter. Those not present will have to imagine the reaction of the audience to the transformation of Arrakis so that Little Jim could say 'He's fallen in the wah-ter!'

By the time everybody had recovered the judges had made their decisions about the masquerade. Best group was the trio of Vegemite Junkies, played by Jack Herman, Judith Hanna, and Roman Orszanski. It is a tribute to Jack Herman's thespian dedication that he actually felt it necessary to taste some of the stuff, so that he spent the rest of the evening complaining about the vile taste. (Roman, who was mainlining, wouldn't have noticed this aspect.) Barbara de la Hunty won best female costume, with an honourable mention for Jane Taubman and her Tony Power fire lizard. Tony Peacey's K-9 won a prize, as did the perverted Gollum, whose 'precious' was Vegemite, and Geoff Jagoe and Mark Denbow, whose last-minute decision to come as clones of each other was amply vindicated.

The last day, and I managed to make it to hear Jeff Harris (who I think also only just managed to start at 1030) 'Tapdancing to the End of Time'. Fascinating stuff, like all Jeff's material. On this occasion mostly inspired by an article dealing with the ultimate fate of matter in an open-ended and entropic universe, and how intelligence could prolong its own existence for the giga-giga-gigayears involved, he broke up the verbal segments with slide-

shows covering areas other than his main topic, and maintained the attention of his audience until the end.

Merv Binns, Shayne McCormack, Jason Cooper, and Grant Stone were to have been joined then by representatives of the book distributors, which would have been quite interesting, not to say enjoyable. Unfortunately the latter chickened out, so that I ended up going off to lunch early in a group of about half a dozen to enjoy an excellent vegetarian lunch.

We returned to find the Sydney University Tolkien Society, in the persons of Judith Hanna, Jack Herman, and Jane Taubman, about to start some readings from Tolkien's works. Not exactly being the world's greatest Tolkien fan, I retired to the back of the hall for a while to have another look at the art show, and became involved in a conversation about, among other things, some of the cons coming up in Sydney next year.

The last panel of the con was supposed to deal with the beasts (i.e. animals) of science fiction. With Ray Raspa in the chair, Judith Hanna started with a defence of dragons. Sally Underwood (who dealt with their psychology) and John Packer went onto science fictional creatures, although they tended to confuse animals (non-sentient) and people (sentient) - it was the end of the con after all. However, I was a little miffed to find that it was left to George Turner to treat the subject from a serious scientific point of view. There were any number of practicing biologists present who could have filled this role. Oh well.

Last event before the official close was the slide-and-sound presentation 'Visions' by Mark Denbow and Geoff Jagoe. Those of us who had not seen it previously were enthralled, while those who had seemed equally glad to see it again. A perfect way to hold the attendees' interest right to the end of a con.

And so to the official close. Chairthing Julia Curtis was close to tears as she brought the gavel down to declare the con closed, before handing it to Allan Bray and Jeff Harris as representatives of ADVENTION 81. There would have been few who would not have echoed her feelings or her thanks to all those responsible for the con.

At that point the hotel emptied fairly quickly, with people either going off to catch planes 'n' boats 'n' trains, or to rest (??) at slanshacks prior to doing same. Among those few of us still at the hotel, either staying overnight, or just waiting, about half-a-dozen of us had a quiet meal at a local cafe, where Allan Bray and I were interested to hear another side of the Sydney convention story.

Finally, a few of those remaining gathered in Leigh Edmonds' and Valma Brown's room to wind down. A pleasant, quiet evening with some interesting conversation, the group seemed to mostly break up about 2330.

As a general comment on the con, I would think that an important factor in the success of the con was the way in which the concomm managed to keep the program running fairly close to schedule, although not inflexibly so, with allowances made for short breaks between items. Panels were chosen to appeal to some of the people some of the time, and to neos all of the time, with little recourse to hoary old panel topics. Of course, possibly the major factor was the strong element of humour, achieved through the non-panel items. As a gestalt, the con worked magnificently well. It would definitely appear that the WASfen need to be more deeply involved in A IN '83.

RICHARD FAULDER

November 30, 1980

This year issues of Chunder! have usually had a piece about (science fiction). It would hardly be sensible to discourage that trend at this late stage in the year, but there is a slightly more pressing matter - a large pile of fanzines. To make any decent impression on this I can't really write full reviews, so let's just call it

FANZINES RECEIVED

Ansible 13 (Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW, UK; five for a quid outside the UK)

This November issue is typical; funny stuff, serious news, and all slightly wry. The lead item is a neatly-written report of the 1980 Milford (UK) Writers' Conference by Chris Evans, but this issue consists largely of slightly-extended one-liners. I recommend it highly, even though the editor casts doubt on my ability to trade with him.

Science Fiction Chronicle November 1980 (Andrew Porter, PO Box 1475, New York, NY 10163, USA;

twelve issue for \$18, outside the US - cheques payable to 'Science Fiction Chronicle')

This sixteen-page newszine I actually read carefully each month. I find that most of it - too much perhaps, in terms of my own interests - is related to the hard facts of science fiction publishing, but apparently there are lots of people around interested in that kind of thing. Illustrating the book news with cover reproductions is probably good advertising, but I prefer the people photos that Andy is using increasingly (and, er, the work of the photographer is improving, too - except for the masquerade photos in this issue - not enough light, I assume). SFC is elegantly laid out and well worth-while.

Intermediate Vector Bosons 2 (Harry J N Andruschak, PO Box 606, La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91011, USA; mainly for trade, but available for a dollar.)

Harry publishes a fanzine which reveals awfully varied tastes; this is dittoed and offset, and the content varies about as much. I like it because of the variation, I suppose, but it may not be to everyone's taste. The letters take up a third of this issue, and I find them less interesting than the rest of the contents. This isn't easily categorised, but that shouldn't be held against it.

The Bimonthly Monthly 13 (c/o Robert Runte, 10957 - 88 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 0Y9; \$1 each, or trade)

Used to be The Monthly Monthly, of course. The main things which are admirable about TMM, aside from its regularity, are layout, artwork, longer articles and the letters. The shorter articles and the book reviews I generally find less satisfactory. The movie reviews, which are ever-present, I don't have a consistent reaction to. Special items this time are Dave Vereschagin's cover and an interview with a Yugoslavian fan. All this time I've been worrying about two Croatian dialects and I learn from the latter that there are three. TBM is something which it would be hard to do without once you start reading it, therefore it should be approached with caution. But try it anyway.

Shangri L'Affaires 76 (Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Inc., 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601, USA, Marty Cantor and Mike Gunderloy, editors; thrice a year and \$2.75 for three.)

The trouble with reviving a fanzine like SHAGGY is that you have an awfully hard act to follow. Twenty years ago SHAGGY was very near the

top as a general fanzine; the Redd Boggs and Ken Rudolph attempts at revival were only slightly less successful. Revivals such as this always invite comparisons, and perhaps this is an unnecessary handicap. But although this issue isn't inspiring, there are signs that something might come out of it - and underestimating LASFS is something one can never afford to do. I notice that the newer writers write short articles than the older ones, for SHAGGY used to shine at the greater length pieces.

One Dead Hedgehog (Jim Barker, 113 Windsor Road, Falkirk, Stirlingshire FK1 5DB, Central Scotland; for whom)

One article, five illustrations, but this adds up to one of the most readable fanzines I've come across lately. It's a pity that it took a mild catastrophe to encourage Jim to produce a personalzine like this, and it would be even graver if his short holiday from fanwork became a long one. In some ways the style reminded me of the real John Berry.

Rhubarb 9 September 1980 (John Fox, PO Box 129, Wakemba, NSW 2195; 75 cents a copy, or for the usual)

This is a shortish fanzine which seems okay but somehow is full of contents I didn't want to read - a page about AUSTRALIA IN '83, some book and film reviews of books and films I couldn't care less about, and a few very short stories. The letter column reveals that the readers found the previous issue interesting, and I suppose that is what counts.

Gryffin 2 August 1980 (Mike Schaper, 211 Preston Point Road, Bicton, WA 6157; trade or whatever)

Here's a fanzine in which the fanzine reviews are actually the most attractive contents. This is more or less accidental, I think, because the other contents all seem to have started off on the right track. The editorial is informative, but just doesn't hang together. I'm not sure why the two-page piece on St-John Perse was published - it's not penetrating, dealing only with a small fraction of the poet's work and that rather superficially, yet the author is presumably impressed. But if that's the case I'd have thought there would have been more comprehensive quotation and more certainty in the evaluative comments. The notes about films and the bad short, short fiction are probably obligatory in Australian fanzines nowadays, but that doesn't make them any more readable. The fanzine reviews are fairly neat if you like lists of contents. This seem to have more potential than performance, so far.

Ankh 8 October 1980 (Seth Lockwood, 19 Coleby St, Balcatta, WA 6021; 30 cents plus postage or the usual)

This has been appearing steadily all this year and getting better and better. I would like to ignore the regurgitated Egyptology and the obligatory bad fiction, but it takes up so much space that the other contents, letters, fanzine reviews, editorial and a funny article by Stephen Edman, are at least a possible casualty of the reader's boredom. The letters aren't all that exciting, really, and Mike Schaper's fanzine reviews (see above) aren't as good as Lockwood's. Ankh's regularity is its main desirable quality, but there's enough other virtue to make it worthwhile.

Ausfletter 9/9/1980 (Roy Ferguson, PO Box 338, Medlands, WA 6009; \$2 for 10)

So far as I know this was the only issue of Roy's attempt at a newsletter to succeed FANEW SLETTER. I expect that lots of those who received it did as I did; said 'yes, what a good idea' and didn't get around to subscribing or acknowledging. Pity: useful.

The Echo Beach Quarterly Fanzine Supplement 4 (Marc Ortlieb, 70
Hamblynn Rd,
Elizabeth Downs, South Australia 5113)

This successor to THE WEST OF MINSTER'S LIBRARY imitates that earlier efforts super-brief fanzine reviews, giving just the barest of details about each item. This time, however, Marc prints a useful article on the alphabetical distribution of fanzine titles.

The Space Wastrel 3 (Loney & Warner, Flat 9, Cara Maria, Shenton St,
Geraldton, WA 6530; \$1 for 4 or trade)

Reacting to this one is tough (especially after Bob Smith, in the letter column, writes 'I can't wait to hear what the kindly but murderous Foyster will have to say on the subject of you two...'; on the other hand, Richard Faulder does refer to the 'apparent demise' of this fanzine, so perhaps I don't need to note this one at all), but it is the sort of fanzine to which people write interesting letters.

Forerunner September 1980 (Jack Herman, 1/67 Fletcher St., Bondi
NSW 2026; \$3 for 12, or trade)

Forerunner appears almost monthly, and there isn't really much change from month to month, so I don't feel at all ashamed to be reviewing an issue from so far in the past. First page is an editorial - usually Serious and Constructive (sorry Jack). Then there are a couple of pages of news and convention info. Then a few pages of reviews - usually filmic. Then Jack has a report on Swancon; he describes the Mastermind quiz (see Richard Faulder's report earlier in this magazine) as 'Fannish' whereas I would describe it as science fictional; does Jack use 'fannish' to mean 'fans talking about science fiction'? More news and reviews, letters and fanzine reviews conclude a typical issue. The only thing which holds Forerunner together is Jack's personality, which is fine most of the time.

Oomphaloskepsis 2 (Sharee Carton, 7116 - 81 Street, Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada T6C 2T4; for trade, mostly)

A chatty six-pager rather than an earth-shattering one; film notes I could have done without, but the snippets between the letters make it worthwhile, I think.

Holland SF March/April, May/June 1980 (Annemarie Kindt, Postbus
87933, 2508 DH Den Haag;
trade or whatever)

Last time I mentioned this Dutch fanzine I suggested that, in English, it would be a Hugo-winner. These two issues confirm that opinion; forty pages of elegant layout, offset printed, make it very easy on the eyes. It is both well and tastefully illustrated. There seems to be a reasonable balance between the contents - some long pieces - for example Brian Aldiss's SEACON speech - and snippets of news. Peter Nicholls' ENCYCLOPEDIA is reviewed in each of these; what mystic powers does Nicholls wield over the Dutch????

SFFAN 25 April-May 1980 (Jean Milbergue, 17 Sq des Carrieres,
78120 Rambouillet, France; 20 Francs a year)

The trouble with this neatly duplicated 52-page fanzine is that I can almost read it (i.e., if I work on it I can read it, but it takes a long time). The contents are very sf-related. I did like the piece about Brian Aldiss rejecting the co-presidency of the European Committee on Science Fiction. Very informative and useful.

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Critifan 2 December 1979 (Ellen Pedersen and Niels Dalgaard,
Tohubohu Press, Horsekildevej 13 IV dor 3,
DK-2500 Valby, Denmark; \$6 for three)

64 pages and - offset, it seems - this is almost as well produced as HOLLAND SF, is in English, but. The but is twofold, in fact. Critifan is awfully irregular, despite a proclaimed three times a year schedule. That makes it hard to build up much momentum, to get the kind of reputation which Critifan deserves. This introduces the second difficulty - I've not seen any reviews of Critifan, so that even those interested in a high-grade magazine about science fiction aren't going to know about it. Well, this edition has a longish interview with Frederik Pohl which emphasises the social-political interests of the editors. Patrick Parrinder's 'The Black Wave' is largely about the social function of science fiction. I suppose if Eric Korn's article had to be summarised one could reasonably fairly do that by quoting his interest in SF as 'an imaginative expansion of possibilities'. (It's a tape transcription, and the editors have fun describing their difficulties in getting it right; there are still some bugs, as the third-last sentence in the article makes clear.) If you enjoy serious stuff about SF you ought to read this one - but my feeling is that there aren't enough such people.

Mimeographed dollarbill etc (Anders Bellis, Vanadisvagen 13, 113 46
Stockholm, Sweden; trade, etc)

Getting fanzines from Anders Bellis is definitely a (mental) health hazard. It's partly that he seems to have too much energy for a human being and must (and I think he's the person in fandom who comes nearest to matching this description) 'gallop off madly in all directions'. If you get on his mailing list you probably won't be able to work out what he is on about half the time, but the other half is readable, funny stuff.

Munich Roundup 150 February 1980 (Waldemar Kumming,
Herzogspitalstrasse 5, D-8000,
Munich 2, West Germany; usually 8 for \$10 from Andy Porter)

When you've got more than 170 offset pages to play with, as the editors did this time, then you've got freedom to include a great variety of stuff (including that sort of scientific stuff which would win from me the Golden Ptooeey Award). I guess MRU is indispensable - well, I'd like it to be - and this time the SEACON photos and report are the single most interesting items. News, reviews, fiction, cartoons - it's all there. A four-page summary in English as well.

Ailleurs Et Autres 33 October 1979 (Laseal J Thomas, 45 rue d'Ulm,
75005 Paris, France; 40 francs
for 12 (a year))

I'm sure I've had later copies of this, but this is the only one I can lay my hands on at the moment. This issue is largely news, reviews and letters spread over 32 moderately well duplicated pages. There's a SEACON report here, too. The writer saw lots of things I didn't see - and in French, at that... I must do something about getting this regularly.

Re Kong 1 & 2 (Bruno Baccelli, Via Carriona, 79-54033 Carrara, Italy;
5 for L 1500)

Bruno sent me these two recently so they've been published some time this year. Broadsheet is the format - they're well printed and, illustrated with short reviews, articles and, er, poetry. There's a reference to INTERCOM, an Italian fanzine I've been interested in, and the address is there, so. Useful, even if like me you have no Italian.

December 3, 1980

Well, I haven't covered too many fanzines - about a quarter of those piled up here for mention - and I do apologise even to those whose fanzines were treated so shabbily. But I have to proceed to the next token item. (Next issue of Chunder!, Irwin Hirsh will be reviewing fanzines again, but I suspect that I'll be doing some too.)

This year Chunder! has begun to have pieces about science fiction. This trend is continued, horrifyingly, by my own hand, this time.

THE LONG TOMORROW by Leigh Brackett

A recollection

Two years after a short atomic war has destroyed the cities of the world, the people of the United States live within a society whose dominant culture is Mennonite: the strongest expression of that view lies in an amendment to the U.S. constitution which limits the size of communities in terms both of people and buildings. The greatest fear in this society is of those - the men of Bartorstown - who wish to return to the old ways of technology. Whether Bartorstown actually exists or is only a way of thinking is a question which few citizens are prepared to meditate upon, much less discuss.

The Long Tomorrow is the story of an adolescent who comes to believe in Bartorstown as a place, and leaves his home in search of it. He finds Bartorstown (both physically and metaphorically) and that is all; he does not change the world, he is himself changed by it. Indeed, when he discovers that the men of Bartorstown are little different from their enemies he seeks to escape Bartorstown, but this he can do only temporarily and physically, for although physical escape is possible (though difficult) the bonds of technology prove too strong.

So also Ed Hostetter, a Bartorstown man working as a trader in the outside world, whose story forms a counter-plot, is unable to escape Bartorstown. The message is clear: when you are hooked on technology, there is no way out.

This work is at once typical and atypical of Leigh Brackett's writing. Although she has long been recognized as the greatest writer of space-opera (of the localised, solar system, variety, not the galaxy-busting kind) the reasons for this eminence are rarely articulated. In The Long Tomorrow are to be found those same traits which make her space opera popular: a concern for human beings and their interactions, a suspicion of the unquestioning acceptance of the machine, a mythically-based plot structure. But the bulk of Leigh Brackett's works were set significantly far in the future, in rockets-and-rayguns societies, while The Long Tomorrow is set upon a near-future Earth with no technology not existing at the time of writing. Why should such a writer choose so naturalistic a setting?

In writing The Long Tomorrow Leigh Brackett sought to deal with two substantial questions: in what ways might humanity survive and atomic holocaust, and how does a particular kind of human being develop in that society?

The assumption made in constructing the novel is that the surviving society will be one based upon small groups strongly bound together by authoritarian religious beliefs (or professions of belief) at both the family and community levels. It is not the case that only groups of this kind survived the destruction of the cities, but that groups of the Mennonite kind are so organized that they will survive best. So, by the same logic, would other groups which are extremely

self-reliant. In this world, however, the Mennonites are likely to become dominant for another reason. It is assumed that immediately after the great destruction there will be a period in which not only atomic power, but all forms of advanced technology, will be rejected by the shocked survivors. Those who have already rejected advanced technologies will be best placed to advise or lead or direct those whose attitudes have been formed traumatically. That the Mennonites have a religious base for their ideas strengthens their hand in providing assistance to those without the prop of faith. In accepting anti-technological beliefs the survivors also adopt other attitudes of those whose self-reliance has best fitted them to survive the catastrophe.

Beyond the meticulous care with which this world has been constructed lies the depiction of the society's reactions to attempts at change. There is a rich range of responses at personal and community levels, differentially motivated (whether by religious belief, social philosophy, or the emergence of neocapitalist economics) but united in conservatism; the actions of the characters not only reflect the world which exists, they explain why the world is the way it is, and where its future lies.

What sort of protagonist would help the reader best to understand this created society? Here is one of the greatest achievements of the work, for the world has been constructed so that the classical hero of space opera (and many other types of science fiction), the near-puberty male, will be an ideal tool for the writer.

The adolescent Len Colter is, however, rather more realistically drawn than his space opera counterparts. Although he appears to take action for self-development, he is almost always the object of other's actions. Thus his interest in Bartorstown derives initially from his cousin's actions, and it is his cousin who steals the old books. It is this event which finally frees the intellectual hero to take action - to run away from home (not towards anything - except perhaps the idea of Bartorstown - but always away from home).

Later, when he does finally set off for Bartorstown, it is again a matter of running away from home - and indeed he eventually runs away from his new adopted home, Bartorstown - but only at the instigation of his new wife. In his relation with women, it might be noted, he is also wholly passive. While the hero of classical space opera changes the world, Len Colter makes little or no impression.

The power fantasies inherent in most of the contemporaneous science fiction are absent - in this case the object is not to change the world but to understand it - and Len Colter, the eternal object, is the vehicle whereby the reader enters Leigh Brackett's imagined world.

There is more to the Len Colter character than this, however, for the novel is intended also to suggest ways in which the world is changed. While Len Colter does not produce catastrophic change, he is a party to small changes - he has a minor part in an attempt to extend a community beyond the constitutional limit, he is used to change the understanding the people of Bartorstown have of the outsideworld, slightly, by bringing to them the story of his adventures. The catastrophic change, says Brackett, is beyond the powers of ordinary men, who must work together to produce only incremental change. Len Colter may contribute to change - perhaps even become famous - but that is outside the scope of this novel.

Something has already been written of the great care with which the novel has been constructed. A few examples - from many which might

equally have been chosen - will show some aspects of this craftsmanship.

One challenge for the science fiction writer - the real writer - is the writing of the bridge from the real world to the science fiction world: how shall the reader be made aware that the work is one of science fiction? The challenge is often ignored - the writer who begins his novel with "Marsport is hell!" Jarl Conrad swore.' has taken the easiest way out - but this is not good enough for Leigh Brackett in this novel.

The first chapter opens with two boys at a fair, and at that fair Len Colter has a problem. The first page of the book is devoted to an exposition of that problem. Once the problem has been stated the reader's interest shifts to the character and at this point and in an almost cinematic style the text moves slowly in to focus upon his hat - an unusual hat. And then, in one swift paragraph, the reader is transported into the new world. Yes, the hat is distinctive - it distinguishes his sect from others; new sects abound, partly because of course the cities were destroyed and now the world looks like this and it is all done in eleven lines suddenly, without warning, exactly like the war which ended the city. What is done in the novel reflects what was done in the imagined world.

It is impressive writing, but having written the bridge Brackett returns to her story and can hardly be said to show any further interest in it.

A second interesting piece of work is to be found in the third chapter, in which Len finds out about Bartorstown. This chapter commences with a theatrical piece in which Len and his grandmother indulge in a battle of wills - Len wanting to learn about the past and his grandmother wanting to tell him, each outwardly denying that inclination. Eventually Len hears the story but it is interrupted by Len's father, who chides the grandmother and then gives Len an honest and thoughtful talking-to about the nature of Bartorstown. Len believes and loves his father; he sees and understands why Bartorstown must be rejected.

He then goes out to walk in the woods. He recalls the sound of men working, producing the grain. Thereafter the lengthy description of Len's ambling is wholly in terms of shapes and colours and smells - no sounds at all. During this long, visually-rich passage Len's acceptance of the New Mennonite worldview has strengthened; he sees his world and knows that it is good. Finally he sleeps.

But he wakes to the world of Bartorstown, to the sound of a Bartorstown radio stolen by his cousin Esau. His world will never be the same again. (The world does not change catastrophically, but men do.)

In the final section to be considered here, Len Colter comes to understand his relationship with Bartorstown. Having fled from home with Esau, he has established a way of life in a growing community - a dangerously growing community. It has been suggested that he should take part in the activity which will build the community beyond the constitutional limit. He asks for time to think, and wanders along the docks. But his mind strays to other matters - in particular whether Hostetter, the trader he suspects of being a Bartorstown man, is deliberately avoiding him. Once again in the novel all is quiet. Then a voice speaks to him out of the shadows. It warns him that he must return to his own home. The chapter concludes with a sentence which makes it clear that if it is not

actually Hostetter himself speaking then it is someone in a large network of which Hostetter is part which brings him this message.

The next chapter commences two weeks later. All the events associated with the building development would be quite enough to occupy anyone's thoughts, but Len's obsession is now with Bartorstown. Now all kinds of events which have occurred in the recent past (but not described sequentially in the novel) are explained. Not only do the men of Bartorstown exist, it is their intervention which has saved the Colter boys in several scrapes, rather than some more abstract providence. Now Len decides to seek the physical Bartorstown (as opposed to merely continuing to run away from home). But all this thinking takes place between the chapters; Brackett all but avoids the interior monologue and its entrapments.

(Naturally enough, consistently with his character, Len doesn't actually do anything about finding Bartorstown - Hostetter comes and gets him!)

Many other examples of the author's skills could be given, some of them requiring more extended discussion than has so far been used, but these three may nevertheless serve as an indication of what has been done.

The Long Tomorrow is a remarkable achievement. It deals seriously with significant questions, it avoids most of the pitfalls of science fiction writing, and the plot steers carefully between surprise and inevitability. If what it attempts to be it is faultless.

John Foyster

December 4, 1980

I think that's enough science fiction content for anyone. But I can spin this issue out for a few pages yet without even drawing a deep breath; after all, unless there's a section with letters in it Brian Earl Brown won't be able to refer to Chunder! as a letterzine. Some of these letters were written, ah, some time ago. I think I'll put their dates on them, as a guide to the reader. Since some of them just might be from 1979 I'll include the year as well. Just my luck to want to start out with an old favourite, Chas Jensen, who didn't date his letter. At least there's a postmark.

Chas Jensen, PO Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067 (early July, 1980)

It was while I was in Sydney for a few days to see some of my relatives that I ran into the Thursday night group at GALAXY. Jack Herman had a 'phone number for Kevin Dillon who, somehow, got onto the subject of the old Futurian Society ... it was probably me. I've always been curious how come the original club was established so comparatively early and seems to have survived in some fashion to the '60s and '70s, but from which so little is actually heard. He mentioned that you knew some of the story of the later years and that I should ask you. But while he was suggesting that, it occurred to me that I had not seen an issue of Chunder! since January, and that perhaps I had let my subs slip by without noticing it...

Liked Turner's report on SEACON, even if it did sound to me just a little too self-conscious at times. But at least it gave some idea of the sort of traffic that a con attracts, and the mood of the con overall. I think that I like the Friends of Kilgore Trout for their familiarity rather than the high-powered commercialism that seemed to float about at the con - others there being writers, paid critics and, one presumes, fans. I'm always curious to know whether the agents of these people slide around the edges of conventions incognito, or

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is it that no one likes reporting their presence because that would be too boring, and probably commercial? When you think about how much marketing meant and means to the field, I wonder that we haven't dragged a few publisher's agents kicking and screaming onto panels just to see how the business operates. Perhaps they aren't fans and don't attend cos3 they couldn't care less.

(No, that can't be right. Even little A-CON had booksellers and distributors talking about the business on at least one panel.)

To come back to the Futurians: Dillon said to ask you about such people as Graham Stone who is a member of FAPA, and what role he had to play in the club in its recent history. He said you would also know how to contact him, and how approachable he was on the subject. People such as Laura Molesworth, who apparently still has some active role in holding meetings with other old members, Doug Nicholson, for example, who were also mentioned as members who knew much about the later history of the club and why it ceased to be active in the public sense. I wondered whether it was possible to contact these people, and if you knew where to do so. I think that the impression that I collected was that these people were still interested in talking about the club but they did not want an active part any longer. Since I'm still interested in finding out more of the history of the club and how it survived the war years in particular.

While I was in Sydney, at the Thursday dinner, I spent most of the time talking to Robin Johnson and Margie Saunders (being very surprised to discover she now lived in Sydney) and got only a brief chance to talk to other people. Got very annoyed when I found myself in a restaurant that can't handle people who don't eat meat. Can stifle the evening before it gets started since I think I have to be occupied in finding some other way of eating, usually meaning somewhere else (asking a restaurant to change its mind is like asking a train to change direction). I didn't stay very long as a result, but in that brief stay I asked about the sale of Ron Graham's library, a subject that disturbs me since it seems to imply that you can say what you like in the will, but the executors can do what they like. Jack declared it a dead issue as the sale had now taken place and the damage had been done. Probably a very sensible outlook, but I'm still not convinced about the motives of the executors and would think it worthwhile someone checking and publishing the procedures for making such a donation to any library - perhaps the librarian at Murdoch University who has received other fannish Australianiana and should therefore have some clear idea of the subject. It may seem alarmist, but I have a feeling that there are still collections of old pulps in Australia that would like to find their ways into libraries in the not too distant future, with their owners' consent. I know of one such collection in New Zealand but only rumours of any on the mainland. I can't speak for other fans, but I would like to see some of these collections put within the reach of enough people to read them. You don't happen to know the name of the guy at Murdoch University yourself, John?

Going to Sydney and Canberra meant missing the Adelaide con on the long weekend, so I have no doubts that you will have a report to publish on that con, but I gathered from several people who went that it was quite a relaxed weekend. Pity I missed it, but then I really needed the break from work. Social Security is beginning to get at me more than ever. I don't seem to be able to get used to the place, which is just too bad. Have begun looking for other jobs. Maybe the job you're doing at the moment is interesting enough to be likeable, but being the Deaths clerk in the Pension Section is not, I assure you.

THE BLACK HOLE still survives, but I find that I have less and less money to spend on new books at the prices they want for them. Those few I buy are enough to read for now, and others I buy secondhand. Strange: I have this feeling that there is currently one hell of a lot of reprinting going on, and people writing series (which if you don't like the series is tough) with few writers doing a different novel each time. The obvious exceptions are Varley, Coney, Priest, and Cowper. Aldiss is off in another category, as he generally is, and Ballard is writing series, again as he generally does.

Stuff being published in this country by its denizens is sparse, and much of it derivative when it emerges (which is a pity). Tell me, who's importing all the stuff that is new enough to have been read before in some other version, and where are they hiding it? Last year I thought that the distributors had finally gotten a stranglehold on this country and that would only be reprints and glossy books forever, but this year has been particularly lacklustre.

I even went back to reading history for the excitement of the times the people lived in. And found in there facts far more amazing or astounding than I had found in any story or novel for months. I except Phil Dick from the above comments, as I did read about four of his in one hit, enjoyed them immensely, and came away with my reality slightly 'bent'. To the point where it seems everyone I have seen these last two months has been reading Dick at some point or another - maybe Jung was right, and there ain't no coincidence.

CHAS JENSEN

(I do have some information on the later Futurians, but it doesn't compare with Kevin Dillon's. I'll send this issue to Doug Nicholson: maybe he'll write to you. And there's a letter from Grant Stone further on.)

Richard Faulder, Yanco Agricultural Research Centre, Yanco, NSW 2703
(28 July, 1980)

I was touched, no, truly, by your description of me in Chunder! 4(2). Of course, you will appreciate that the reasons for my now using your given name are not connected with this, but with events related in my Applesaucezine.

Actually, your editorial has answered the points I raised quite fully. To quote Perry Mason (remember him?) et al: 'No further question.'

Perhaps I shouldn't comment on Gary Mason, at the risk of raking over old coals, reopening old wounds, etc. However, this is an issue which really does need to be resolved. The point, it has recently occurred to me, is that the Natcon is being regarded by Gary and his ilk as being different from regional cons. Now I was sec/treas of two SYNCONs. Both of these from memory made profits (for which I claim no credit). Yet I recall no call from Ozfandom at large for the profits to be distributed throughout same. Yet, simply because SYNCON '79 had made a loss for donations to support the gallant club which had laid itself on the line, and taken the risks of failure? We all know the answer to that. A resounding silence.

George Turner seems to have set out to prove that, if consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds, he must have one of the largest minds on the continent. Perhaps I'm dense, but to me he seems to shift his stance with the fluidity of water. Probably the best example of this was his early statement that 'One genre cannot be compared with another'. Aha, I said, remembering the different view of George we'd glimpsed at UNICON VI, perhaps he really has stopped

claiming that sf is not great literature because it fails when judged against some other types of fiction. Of course, his case isn't helped by vague statements such as 'A writer's reach must always exceed his grasp.' Such a statement cries out for definition, lest we think the writer is merely putting into words his own vague emotions about the subject. In general terms George's argument boils down to the old chestnut that sf is short on depth of characterisation. One could hardly deny it. Yet he admits the difficulty of having more than 'superficial characterisation where universes and symbols are your backdrop'. Not that sf authors should thereby surrender the fight to produce such an examination of the human condition. Nor have they. Surely not even George would deny that there has been an increasing attempt to achieve this, in many cases surpassing popular mainstream writers. The question is: how much will be enough for George, and will the result still be sf? It is not the function of sf to question the commonplace. Why should it be? There are enough reality-bound mainstream writers more than willing to do this. If mankind's only fascination was with examining the commonplace, we would still be living in caves. Humans are different from animals because they can escape from the mire of the here-and-now, and ask why and how.

Enjoyed Derrick Ashby's UNICON report. I am beginning to see such reports as a way of examining one's own reactions to a con. Thank you, also, for giving credit where credit was due to the efforts, and successes, of those responsible for organising and running UNICON.

And so on to 4(4). (What happened to 4(3)?)

What more can I say about Christine Ashby's story, but that I enjoyed it hugely. Bit of a radical departure for you, though, isn't it - publishing fanfic?

Thank you for extracting the review of Lessing's SHIKASTA from George Turner. An excellent review, and George actually seems to find some literary merit in the book, in spite of its being science fiction. Whether this means I'd like the book or not I don't know, but it does increase the pressure on me to actually go out and buy the thing when it finally comes out in paperback.

Michael Newbery's Wellconreport was less satisfying than Vera Lonergan's. Mainly, I guess, because he seemed to spend so little time at the con.

Hmm, that doesn't seem to have been very much to say about two fairly thick issues of Chunder!. I can only attribute it to the fact that they, especially the latter, were not all that controversial. (Foyster collapses in shock at the thought of not being controversial) Still, that's the way it goes.

RICHARD FAULDER

(The difference between the National convention and the regional conventions which you seem to ignore is that the National convention has a constitution which specifies how the finances of a Natcon shall be dealt with. Committees get awarded the National convention by people who believe that they will operate constitutionally. Shucks, all this time I thought Christine Ashby's piece was a magazine review. Just shows how out of touch I am.)

Gerald Smith, 8 Frawley Street, Frankston, Vic 3199 (22 February 1980)

With regard to the January 1980 issue, I won't go into how Marc's secondhand quote from Daryl is now pitifully out of date because Daryl is going to write on just that point. Marc's point about specific interest apas sounds like a good idea. I would be

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interested to see the John Foyster and Eric Lindsay apas. Alf Katz is considering setting up a computer apa for those now seemingly numerous fans involved in some way with computers. (Or have I jumped the gun there, Alf?) Don't start inundating him yet though - it won't be until UNICON is well behind us.

Vera Lonergan's Wellcon report was absorbing reading. It is this sort of report that tends to make a person wish he had the time (and money) to be a fulltime fan. The feeling of 'happy co-operation' she talks about reminds me strongly of the feeling I had after my first couple of cons before I realised that there could be some self-styled hierarchies in fandom. For you Vera (and anyone else who hasn't seen it) we will be screening DARK STAR at UNICON.

In response to your call for people to say what they are doing to help the AUSTRALIA IN '83 bid, I am personally not able to do that much at the moment due to pressure of organising UNICON (and other personal commitments). Collectively the UNICON committee is bringing out Joe and Gay Waldeman and, hopefully, impressing them sufficiently for them to support the bid in America. A proportion of any profits (hah! hah!) will go to the bid. A full page in the Program Book will be devoted to it and then of course there is the auction.

It is marvellous to see a full TEN pages from George Turner who always is a delight to read (and listen to, for that matter - besides which his Scotch is good stuff). This despite what other fans may say (and think) to the contrary. So often I find myself nodding my head vigorously in agreement with his statements on fans and their attitudes to science fiction. (Probably it is written in one of the reports I have already read but the feeling I get about SEACON is one of it being a very aloof con. John?) Hope we get to read more of George in the future. Particularly liked the nice way he has of summing up conventions. Quote: 'Nobody wants truth at a science fiction convention. The fans get a psychological fix. Science fiction gets nothing. Do you wonder the press laughs?' When you think about it in that way it does seem that we live in a FANTasy world.

GERALD SMITH

(When you think about it, it's fairly obvious that I've lost the next page of your letter, matey. No, I don't think SEACON was an aloof con. And isn't your first paragraph weird? What was it all about, I wonder.)

Bob Shaw, 3 Braddyll Terrace, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0DH, England
(23rd February 1980)

As you will have realised - having been sending me fanzines since time immemorial - I am just about the worst writer of locs in the world. Sometimes, however, this strange urge comes over me when I'm glancing through a fanzine and I feel myself drawn to the typewriter. When you are seated at a typewriter there isn't much else you can do except write something, so...

One thing in Chunder! which inspired some glee was Greg Hills' criticism of SILENT RUNNING. I never liked that film, but for some reason it is well received by a lot of fans, and this has led me to suspect that my judgement was at fault. I have noticed that tried-and-true SF fans are adept at picking holes in the science in a film or story they don't care for, but when a story or film strikes the right note with them, on a kind of instinctive level, nobody seems to mind things which are almost as bad as noisy meteors. For instance, in SILENT RUNNING the ship (as far as I can remember) has five domed gardens - one facing straight ahead, four arranged in a

square around the longitudinal axis. As there was no mention of the ship spinning or tumbling, I assume that one garden would experience perpetual high noon, its opposite number perpetual midnight, and the other three perpetual sunrise or sunset - hardly the best conditions for horti-, agri- or any other kind of culture. And having the ship parked for some incomprehensible reason on the edge of Saturn's rings wouldn't have helped much, either.

Mind you, I do the same kind of double-think about scientific accuracy myself. For instance, ALIEN was a film I really liked (I rate it second only to CHARLY) and the fact that it has a few whopping scientific flaws doesn't matter a damn to me. Of course, one gets the same kind of reaction with people. When I meet somebody I take an instinctive liking, or the opposite, to him on the spot - and once it has been decided that I like somebody I can cheerily forgive all kinds of faults that he may later come to display.

What in the name of Ghu is a 'haere ra session'?

I have just noticed an odd little quirk in the English language. Two paragraphs back I mentioned taking an instinctive liking to somebody, then I used the phrase 'or the opposite'. I have just realised that you can take a liking to somebody, but you never take a disliking - it's always a dislike. Similarly you never 'take a like' to somebody, but you can take a dislike. I guess that's the sort of thing that makes foreigners claim that English is a difficult language.

BOB SHAW

(This letter constitutes the scientific content of this issue.)

Grant Stone, 23 Bondi St., Mt Hawthorn, WA 6016 (19 November 1979)

I followed with much interest the running discussion (argument?) over the nature of the national convention, DITMARS, DUFF, worldcon bids, etc, and remain interested in the outcomes of those debates. I've initiated discussion here amongst fen on these issues too but it wasn't really until after SYNCON this year that we had an informed group with respect to many of these matters.

In many ways the West Aussies are neofans (and how could we be anything else considering our short range of experiences?). The ongoing debates within fandom is one area in which this is true (in some respects, thank ghod!)

I was delighted we won the right to hold the national con here next year and know that although a con here mightn't have the polished sparkle of the latest SYNCON (as I read Ken Ozanne and Gerald Smith in the current Chunder!) it will contain the raw precious metal for which our state is famed. The local fen have some amazing talent with a liberal dash of originality (witness Vegemite Fandom) and as such I'm positive SWANCON 5 will be a roaring success. This should be especially so for you 'Easterners'; I'm sure you'll make a success of it, as no one spends good money to travel the distance to Perth without ensuring a disposition to and expectation of a good time. The final con committee is a mixture of the local experience and raw talent and they have the drive and energy to ensure that the con is a success. SWANCON 5 may be a far cry from the SWANCON 1 I helped organise but even though the cons have been getting smoother and slicker they still retain our local flavour.

Why haven't I commented on the previous issues of Chunder!? Truth is I felt out of touch when I first returned from overseas last November. Just about June this year when I was dusting down my

half-finished fanzine (which was, in 1975, going to be the first WA fanzine. Ha! Ha! I worked on it with Cliff Wind and produced 16 pages and covers but for one reason or another some articles still remain unfinished. "evertheless I've promised Sheryl it will be out of the house by Christmas) - to continue with the real dialogue - having met Leigh and Valma again at SWANCON 4 along with James Styles and the amazing new (for me, not him) Peter Toluzzi. I was really getting into fanac again. (Chunder! was doing its bit to help; your 'zine is a lifeline connection to those things we think matter and would not otherwise hear of in WA except by the much strained grapevine (the elasticity of cellulose to make the 2500 miles staggers me).) What happened, you say! I got landed with a new job - only five months of slog and quite a challenge - setting up a branch library in Veterinary Sciences (my degree in science being biological). I still retain my interest in the SF and alternative collection here at Murdoch but have only now (after things have settled down) started to loc again and pick up frayed contacts.

By the way, I was a little put out to find my name and address missing from PART 6 of the AUSTRALIAN FAN DIRECTORY but could not justify a letter on that point alone as I felt it would be a little too repentitious to complain after remaining silent until that time. Anyway, visiting fen always welcome at the above address.

On a different tack, I'm really enjoying the artwork of Chris Johnston's appearing in pied splendour in 'zines Australia-wide (it seems). Valma was recounting to me at SWANCON 4 the 'sickening' amount of talent Chris has in being able to quickly whip up a cover, in this case for her 'zine, on the spot, on call. The Antifan cartoons for the AUSTRALIA IN '83 bid appearing in AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS I especially appreciate. They are good! When Ken Fletcher and Linda Lounsbury were in WA I had a natter with Ken about Chris's work and it was good to see some healthy admiration from one talented artist for the work of another. It was from Ken I acquired a copy of Chris's DUFF poster which graces my office wall. I love it. As for your Chunder! cover I just wonder what Chris might have concocted for an old RATAPLAN cover.

Con reports I always enjoy reading, especially when those scribbling are up to the task. "en Ozanne and Gerald Smith's views on SYNCON only reinforced my own views (largely established by the local fen who returned like wise ones from the east with a 'new vision' of what we could do locally) that I should have accomplished the impossible and attended.

I always find Leigh's contributions entertaining, however on the subject of PULPCON it was more in the elucidating line. I refer to Leigh's comments on David Lake. I too was wondering what sort of guy he was based on the same disparity I had noticed between the two sources Leigh mentions. I now look forward to eventually meeting David Lake and having some lengthy discussions.

On literature: three times read to qualify? On that basis except for passages of scripture I have read no literature. This doesn't however exclude the possibility that I know from what I have read those writings I've kept because I wish to read them again. Is this lit.?

Your own report was the one that caused me to laugh. Not only was yours a most pleasing report given your full use of language but you captured for me one incident (in the Peter Roberts 'vegie' situation) that rung a response in my own experience and out of empathy I could laugh.

GRANT STONE

(Nice of you to wish me MERRY XMAS, but we're a year out, aren't we?)

AGAIN CHUNDEROUS VISIONS!

CHUNDER!

DECEMBER 1980

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 5

Chunder! is a fanzine about the doings of science fiction fans, and is published four or five times a year by John Foyster, 21 Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda, Victoria 3182, Australia

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OUT OF THE WAY

This issue is a model for the way Chunder! will look in future; no more of this stuff of trying to get it out every month or so. This way I can allow longer contributions, anyway. And, although I have some stuff lined up for the next issue (March 1981) CONTRIBUTIONS ARE INVITED.

Australian readers will find with this issue a variety of DUFF/GUFF flyers. Support Joyce Scrivner for the former and the Pommie Bastard of your choice for the second.

1979 CHUNDERPOLL RESULTS:

Best General Fanzine: Q36 (Marc Ortlieb, 14 points), SF Commentary (10), WASFFAN (7)

Best Apazine: APPLEJACK (Jack Herman, 15), CAT OUT OF ORDER (8) New Orc Chronicles (6)

Best Artist: Marilyn Pride (15), Chris Johnston (12), Michael Kumashov (9)

Best Cartoonist: Chris Johnston (17), John Packer (12), Mike McMann (6)

Best Fan Writer: Leanne Frahm, Marc Ortlieb & Eric Lindsay (10 each!)

Best Letterhack: Richard Faulder (11), Chas Jensen (10), Irwin Hirsh (6)

Nominations in these categories for 1980 should reach me by February 28, 1981 (JF & his fanzines not eligible).

I hope that 1981 is better for all of us than 1980 was, and if there's a nasty cross under this then you won't be seeing any more of Chunder! unless you follow the prescription above. JF, 8 December 1980