



CONVICTION

(SYNCON 88 - 27th Australian Science Fiction Convention)

PROGRESS REPORT 2

DATE: June 10th to 13th, 1988

VENUE: The Shore Motor Inn, Pacific Highway, Artarmon

GUESTS OF HONOUR:

**SPIDER & JEANNE ROBINSON
CAREY HANDFIELD T.R.O.**

THEME:

Song and Dance and Science Fiction

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Attending Membership: \$35 until 1/1/88
\$40 until 1/6/88
Supporting Membership: \$20
Voting : \$5

CONVENTION COMMITTEE:

Jack R Herman [Convenor]; Cath McDonnell [PP]; Ron Serdiuk [Promotion]; Ray Gleeson [Treasurer]; Shayne McCormack [Hotel]; Rod Kearins [Technicals]; Gerald Smith [Awards]; Margaret Hilliard [Art]; Peter Anderson [Videos]; Gordon Lingard; Sharon Brien; Jessica Southon; Terry Frost; Karen Warnock; John Gaspar; Kevin McLean etc

CONVICTION [SYNCON 88] IS AN ENDORSED BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITY

COMMITTEE ADDRESS: Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, Australia 2006.

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OUR GUESTS OF HONOUR

A BRIEF LOOK AT SOME OF THE THEMES AND INFLUENCES IN THE NOVELS OF SPIDER ROBINSON

by TERRY FROST

Perhaps more than any other writer now working in SF, Spider's themes are right out in the open where even a semi-educated person like me can see them. His approach to such classic SF subjects as post-disaster survival, tele(m)pathy and alien contact is clearly his own and his work is addictively readable.

TELEMPATH, his first novel, sets the foundation for some of the major themes later developed more fully in STARDANCE and MINDKILLER. Like the galactic Spaceseeders in STARDANCE, the Muskies which threaten the survivors of the hyperosmic plague are intangible aliens. No solid bug-eyed monsters, they are ethereal beings, invisible except on a radar screen and only able to be sensed by the superacute noses of the humans. They have the freedom of the skies and their elders, the High Mistrals, are wise and philosophical beings, attenuated empaths riding the wind.

JAPANESE INFLUENCE

The character of Isham Stone, the man who becomes the telempath, is interesting, too. He is a trained warrior and loses an arm on his way to becoming 'a person who approaches telepathy by way of empathy'. As he says in the novel, "From assassin to Zen Master in one easy lesson." He parallels the ronin of a series of Japanese movies [starting with THE SECRET OF THE URN] who is one armed. Samurai movies have a tradition of heroes who are physically handicapped and, for all his western culture traits, Isham is a ronin-figure, outcast by his people and, whether he is always aware of it or not, seeking enlightenment.

Charlie Armstead, the protagonist of STARDANCE, reminds me of the lead characters in several John D MacDonald novels written in the 50s. At least to start with. Kind of a romantic drifter, perceptive and somewhat kicked in the guts by life. JDM's influence on this collaborative novel and on MINDKILLER, is acknowledged in the foreword of each book and references to MacDonald and his marvellous creation, Travis McGee, are numerous throughout Spider's work. [Joe Templeton's nursing of Karen Scholz in Chapter Two of MINDKILLER echoes a similar scene in the first Travis McGee novel, THE DEEP BLUE GOODBYE.]

STARDANCE continues the theme of humans maturing as a species in the direction of a telempathic gestalt, this time combining it with the freedom of space granted by the Starseeders' symbiote. It makes a hell of a punctuation mark in evolutionary equilibrium and is even more interesting as a fictional example of Ilya Prigogine's 'dissipative structures': a far-from-equilibrium system [humanity] avoiding a descent into chaos by a small part of it forming a new, stable system. This theme recurs in "The Mick of Time", the ultimate Callahan's Bar story, where the group create a telempathic jam-session in order to defeat a cockroach from space. [As with all true villains of Spider's work - Silver man in STARDANCE, Amesby in MINDKILLER and Shaw, the rental agent in NIGHT OF POWER - the most obvious traits possessed by the spacebug are an absence of empathy and no sense of humour.]

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

In MINDKILLER, a different approach is applied to the problem of enabling people to truly communicate with one another. This time the solution is technological and linear where the gestalt in STARDANCE is biological and holistic. Rather than an alien symbiote crosspatching minds together for an easy hop to the next evolutionary plateau, Jacques LeBlanc's 'mindfill' is a homegrown product, developed over years of work and self-sacrifice, with a high price to pay in human terms. It is a tape recorder aspiring to be a computer network. I find it a more emotionally satisfying novel than the 'learn to communicate with the fireflies and they'll hand it to you on a plate' approach in STARDANCE. Also, it is nice to get away from the someone-dies-but-not-really twists involving Jacob Stone and Shara Drummond in TELEMPATH and STARDANCE, respectively.

Norman Kent/Joe Templeton is the most interesting protagonist in Spider's work [with the possible exception of Russell Grant in NIGHT OF POWER]. He has the widest emotional range of any Robinson protagonist, from suicidal despair through meglomaniacal obsession to streetwise high-tech thief and, finally, high-stakes gambler in the confrontation with Sergeant Amesby in LeBlanc's hide-out [which is as tight and tense a piece of writing as you'll get anywhere in the genre]. And, as with almost all of the major climaxes in Spider's novels, it is Norman/Joe's teamwork that defeats the baddy, not gung-ho individual action.

HEINLEIN

NIGHT OF POWER has an interesting foreshadowing in "Antinomy", which has as part of its background an unsuccessful revolution by black Americans. NOP's revolution is left open-ended with no win/lose resolution. This novel shows a shift of emphasis from pair-bonding to family-closeness, right up until the daughter Jennifer becomes an adult and pair-bonds

with Jose Johnson at a precociously early age. The character of Jennifer parallels the traditional Heinlein teenaged (girl) genius who manages to acquire more savvy than most of us do in twice as much time. Her solution to the problem of the mutants is a variation on a new style of bondage used on Ruffino Marino in the last Travis McGee novel, THE LONELY SILVER RAIN. McGee holds off killing the bloke [a policeman tells him it builds character], Jennifer Grant does not.

Another interesting sideline to these four novels is that the two charismatic leaders that appear in them are black: Jordan, the Aggro leader in TELEMPATH and Michael, the revolutionary leader in NOP. The latter is an archetype figure for Black Pride, a symbol around which the people gather, but one thing about Jordan always baffled me: if he was one of the faceless one, burning off his face rather than letting the Muskies suffocate him, how come his speech isn't even slurred by scar tissue?

MUSIC

The latter two novels (MINDKILLER and NOP) have musical references as a part of the mood setting: a slightly dodgy practice if the reader is unfamiliar with John Hendricks, Tom Waits, King Pleasure or PORGY AND BESS. (Yeah, there are people like that in the world.) However, I am a jazz buff and I found that the name-dropping enhanced the reading, especially at the end of NOP when Russell Grant hears on a car radio Ray Charles singing "There's a Boat That's Leavin' Soon for New York". It ends the novel on just the right optimistic note, like it does this article.

TERRY FROST

PROGRAM

PR3 gave some details on the items and style of program we are looking to develop. PR3 will present an outline of the day-to-day activities. Meanwhile we can give you a pretty good idea of what is happening and the sort of things to expect in the various strands of the Program. The major program divides into two parts: Participation and Performance [PP] and Serious Science and Literature [SSL], the former featuring workshops and round-tables directly involving attendees, the latter being in the format of talks or discussions. However, there will be several other things happening as well:

- An Art Competition and Display [details elsewhere in this PR]
- A Mucksters' Room - tables are available for \$30 each to any attending member of the con.
- A Video Programme which will run almost continually [stopping only for special events] and which will have a fair amount of user-demand time built in.
- A Fan Lounge where one can relax, have a cup of coffee and a quiet chat and where there will be some items of Fan Programming - talks on fan history, discussions of overseas fandom and cons, and a number of workshops, one each day, leading to the production of a fanzine at the con. The Fan Lounge will be available for large-scale parties on Saturday and Sunday nights if any group wants to use it.
- A Fan Fund and General Auction - On Sunday morning, we will have a general [cheap and silly] auction which will entertain and offer bargains. A Commission of 10% will be charged for items not donated for Fan Funds or other fannish charities.
- FIT FOR FANDOM meets THE FAN OLYMPICS - Monday mornings celebration of excess as the Heavyweights, undefeated champions of fandom, are met in combat by the SYNCON champions and representatives of the Westralian Wimps. Additional teams are encouraged as well, if you can face Horizontal Mountain Climbing, Ditmar Bobbing, Ego-Boo and Cosmic Wimp-Out.

NIGHT PROGRAM

After dinner programming is reasonably firm:

FRIDAY - After the Official Opening of the Con, we will have a "Keynote Speaker" whose identity will be announced in PR3. S/he will deliver a serious talk on a matter pertinent to the themes of the con. After that, and any question time, the Convenor and his principal accomplices will hold court, introducing the con, explaining the rituals to new fans and, generally, trying to break the ice. This latter objective will be carried further by the [now traditional] SYNCON first night Cocktail Party. Attendees will be asked to supply a bottle to assist with the party - details in later PRs.

SATURDAY - "Banquet" night. Included in the entertainment will be a dramatic piece presented by CONVICTION's Champagne Committee, a GoH Speech from Spider Robinson and the Award Show. All members of CONVICTION will be entitled to admittance and to share in all food served at the "Banquet". There will be no additional charge.

SUNDAY - The con will climax with a night built around the Masquerade. Before the costumes are shown off there will be some entertainment, mainly musical with a chance to sing-along as well. Then the parade of the Costumes entered for competition [and remember you are encouraged to costume even if not going in the parade]. The theme of the Masquerade is HERE IN THE HEREAFTER - HEROES IN HEAVEN AND HELL. It is not meant to be prescriptive. While the judges are considering their verdict, there will be more entertainment and, when they have finished, prizes will be awarded. Then, a disco and party until everyone is too tired to dance. After that, you'll have to settle for a Room Party.

PP

The major feature of PP will be a series of workshops on Radio Production. Conducted by people with solid radio experience, the sessions are aimed to produce a "live-to-air" production at the end of the Con. There will be material on announcing, interviewing, recording of various media, arranging and scripting programs and some of the equipment involved. Additionally, we will discuss the possibility of 'networking' SF Radio Shows around Australia. Elsewhere in PP: Special Effects; preparing Scripts and Manuscripts; Model Building; Computer v Role Play Wargames; Puppetry; Costuming; and Convention Running workshops and/or discussions.

SSL

Among the items that are confirmed are: Science Journalism/Broadcasting, looking at the responsibility and problems of science journalists; The Nature of Reality; Ideas versus Style, which is more important?; The Future of Hard Science; Future Arts as seen in SF; SF in Music Videos; Alternate Histories, concentrating on those dealing with different outcomes of the US Civil War. Other SSL ideas include: Evolution theory; Nuclear Weaponry/Superpower Rivalry and SDI; Pornography/Eroticism in SF; SF and the Mainstream; Future/Non-Violent Problem Solving; and Education for the Future. Much is dependent here on whether the experts invited accept our invitation.

GsoH

You can expect to see the Guests quite frequently at CONVICTION. Spider will do a reading and some singing for his supper, as well as his GoH Speech and some panel appearance. Jeanne will also appear on a couple of panels. Carey will be used on many of the fannish items, especially dealing with worldcons and con running. At other times, he will wear his publisher's hat.

HOTEL

We are using the Shore Motor Inn, site of the vastly successful SYNCON 83. It is located on the main highway at Artarmon, about 10km north of the Harbour Bridge. Its main function Room, the Julius Caesar Room, is capable of holding 400 and will be the centre of the major Programming and dramatic presentations. The Valencian Room, last time used for Art/Video, will house the Hucksters. We will combine the Athenian and Roman Rooms, SYNCON 83's second program and Hucksters' Rooms, into one space for a second Program room capable of seating 200. The Board Room will be used for Art Show this time. [It was Coffee last time.] Videos and Fan Lounge will be located in Suites to be advised.

We have a booking for, at least, 50 rooms of which only 10 are available as triples. Room rates will be \$85/night for single, twin or doubles. We have no confirmed price on triples. Hotel Bookings must be made through the Convention Committee and must include one night's accommodation fee. All bookings must reach the Committee by May 10th 1988. After that date, we cannot guarantee you a room at the Con rate.

The Hotel will be opening the Raffles Restaurant at 12 noon each day to serve light snacks. And, of course, there are two bars within falling distance of the Program rooms.

To make it easier to reach the nearby restaurants at Lane Cove [c800 metres away] and Chatswood [a couple of kilometres], we will run a minibus shuttle service at mealtimes, doing a regular run to and from the hotel to these places.

CHILD MINDING CO-OPERATIVE/KIDS' POLICY

Warren and Margaret Nicholls and a couple of other Sydney-based parents have volunteered to organise a Child Minding Co-operative for younger children. If you are likely to be bringing a young child, write the Committee for details. At present it is envisaged that parents will share the responsibility for looking after the children and the Convention will make sure there is a room for them.

Otherwise, for children under 12, a "Child-in-Control" policy will apply. Kids under 12 will be admitted free of charge provided they are, at all times, under an adult's care. The parent(s) of a child who is a disturbance or nuisance and is not under control will be asked, by the Committee, to take him/her away. Any person over the age of 12 will be charged full membership as at the time of purchase of that membership.

ART SHOW

There will be both an Art Display and an Art Competition at CONVICTION, which we hope will be interesting and representative of both professional and amateur artists from Australia and overseas.

The Art Display is available for those who do not wish to compete for prizes, but wish to display their work. The main requirement is that it be science fiction or fantasy based.

COMPETITION CATEGORIES

It is proposed that the three main categories for the Art Competition be:

1. Sketching/Painting - separate sections for professional and amateur
2. Three Dimensional - possibly separate categories, dependent on entries
3. Photographic

RULES

- The artwork must be
- a. science fiction or fantasy based
 - b. original
 - c. a first entry, i.e. not previously entered in competition

Also, only one artwork may be submitted on a single topic by any individual artist, i.e. only one elf, Dr Who, Captain Kirk etc

ART DISPLAY

The Art Display is open to all media and should be a lot of fun. I hope to have displays running continually on computer animation and normal animation. There is no standard of excellence, or originality, and all who wish to display their work are encouraged to do so.

SECURITY, RESPONSIBILITY etc

There will be constant security for the Art Show in addition to the normal security. The room is enclosed and lockable. Anything which is small and transportable should be enclosed or firmly pinned down. Display arrangements can be made with the Co-ordinator.

The convention and the committee cannot take any responsibility for the safety of artwork, but all care will be taken.

All mail and maintenance expenses must be borne by the artist, i.e. if anyone is into carved ice as an art-form they have to take full responsibility for its preservation. This applies to edibles such as chocolate as well. [See 'security' above]

Cameras will not be permitted in the Art Show area unless with the permission of the individual artist concerned, and the approval of the Art Show Co-ordinator.

Further details on entry/hanging costs and selling of art will be in future PRs. Meanwhile details are available from MARGARET HILLIARD, the Art Show Co-ordinator.

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FUTURE PROGRESS REPORTS

We will be pubbing two further PRs for the information of members of CONVICTION. We are interested in submissions for either MY CITY OF SYDNEY [100-250 words] or SYNCONS PAST [c500 words]. Articles dealing with any of the matters listed under SSL or illustrations relevant to matters raised herein are also welcome as are letters of comment.

PR3	copy due 1 January 1988	publication date: late January 1988
PR4	copy due 1 March 1988	publication date: Easter 1988

These PRs will be produced by mimeo from LaserWriter generated copy. Ads will cost \$50 [pro] and \$30 [fan] for a full-page.. The PRs will be A4 in size.

OTHER COMPETITIONS

T SHIRT

We are looking for a black-and-white design suitable for use on a Con T Shirt and/or Sloppy Joe. The winning design will be used on the Con T Shirt and it should reflect the ideas, themes and/or guests of CONVICTION. Additionally, it should be a design suitable for screen printing. Entries close on 1 March 1988 and a prize of \$50 is offered.

ANTHEM

Here we are seeking a song with original words [although not necessarily original music] that reflects the ideas, themes and/or guests of CONVICTION. Make it simple enough so that a group of fans could sing it after only a few hours of instruction. Either tape or written form. The winning anthem will be used at the con and revert to the originator thereafter. Entries close 1 March 1988 and a prize of \$50 is offered here as well.

PHOTOGRAPHIC

To the general theme of "Faces of Fandom", this comp will be offering prizes in cash or kind for black-and-white or colour photos, at least 8x10 and mounted in the usual competition manner. The Comp will close at the Con and entries may either be submitted thereat or sent by mail. Details of costs will be given in PR3.

LITERARY

The Australian Science Fiction Foundation Co-operative Ltd is sponsoring a Literary Competition at CONVICTION. It will be awarding cash prizes for short stories up to 5000 words in length. This Comp will close on 20 May 1988 and a \$2 fee per story will be charged. Details on submission requirements will be published in PR3.

SPECIAL NOTE: You don't have to join CONVICTION to enter any of these Competitions.

AWARDS

The Australian Science Fiction Awards or "Ditmars" are presented each year, together with the William Atheling Jr Award for Criticism or Review. They are presented by the Australian SF Convention, on the vote of its members, in recognition of excellence in science fiction.

CONVICTION will be presenting the 1988 Awards on the Saturday night as part of the "Banquet". All members of the convention will be entitled to a seat at the "Banquet", where they will be able to see the awards, be entitled to share in all the food served and will also hear the Professional GoH Speech.

Nomination forms for the "Ditmars" and Atheling Jr Award will be distributed with PR3 and also more widely through Australian fandom. Anyone active in Australian fandom can nominate. Criteria for eligibility in each category will be explained on the Nomination Form. Nominations will close on March 11, 1988.

Final ballots will be distributed with PR4 and also more widely. Voting will close on May 31, 1988. All members of CONVICTION, attending, supporting or voting, may vote. Non-members may also vote by accompanying their ballot with the appropriate membership fee.

There has been considerable controversy over the years concerning the categories of award to be given. This culminated in the 1987 awards, where one category was so unpopular as to almost see a protest nominee voted as winner. In an attempt to overcome this problem, we have decided to ask you what categories you think there should be. Included with this PR are the ballot forms. Listed on the ballot are some possible categories of award. We ask you to rank the categories in order of preference. Further details concerning this ballot can be found on the form itself.

DITMAR SUB-COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING AND SITE SELECTION

Any member who wishes to move an amendment to the Constitution MUST submit the full text of the proposal to the Business Meeting Chair (at the Committee address) before April 8, 1988. The Constitution, together with any proposed amendments, will be printed in full in the Convention Handbook.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

There will be an annual Australian Science Fiction Convention, organised by a Convention Committee selected from amongst Bids submitted to the Business Meeting at the Australian Science Fiction Convention, two calendar years before the Convention to be selected.

The Convention Committee for each Australian SF Convention will, by a vote of the Convention members, after a nominating process involving Australian Fandom generally, award up to five Australian Science Fiction Awards (of which, at least, one must be for fannish endeavours) and the William Atheling Jr Award for Criticism or Review.

The Convention Committee will ensure that any surplus accrued by an Australian SF Convention will be applied to the benefit of Australian fandom generally, and shall not be used to reward individuals or groups connected with the Convention Committee.

This Constitution may be changed by this method only: Notice of intention to amend, including the exact text, must be submitted to the Convention Committee in sufficient time to be published in the Convention Handbook (where this Constitution and any proposed amendment MUST be published) and then the amendment must be approved by a majority at the Business Meeting. No amendment will be in order if it has the effect of increasing the number of words in the Constitution.

1990 SITE SELECTION

Committee wishing to bid for the 1990 Australian SF Convention are requested to submit a Bid in writing to the Business Meeting Chair by May 30, 1988. The Bid should include the names of the proposed Convention Committee, the city in which the Convention will take place, and the proposed dates for the Convention. The information submitted will then be available to all members at CONVICTION.

SYNCONS PAST

((Tall tales and true from our legendary past. An aide mémoire for those who were there and cheat notes for those who wish they had been))

... and what is a SYNCON?

JOHN NEWMAN

It's so difficult to write about SYNCONS. They are, after all, illusory and misleading. The name alone, so evocative and bold, surely promises more than is delivered? Or perhaps not.

My first SYNCON was SYNCON 78. I'd spent six months or so attending Sydney SF Foundation meetings, and had some idea of the faces I'd see at the con, but no idea of what would happen there! I knew the names of a lot of people, like Andrew Taubman, Tony Power, Ken Ozanne, Blair Ramage, Jack Herman, Christine and Linda Smith (and others too numerous to mention); but was not really a fan. It meant little to me at that point.

It remains hard to write about SYNCONS. All the best ones are completely lost in a mind fog. Even the small ones, like SYNCON 78, contained more than was, for me at the time, apparent. SYNCON 83 I have not finished yet.

They have always had it all. Panels, auctions, lots of parties. Sex and hugs and bagel rolls. A wonderful roll call of creative and diverse folk. The people have changed, adding and subtracting (and some multiplying) over the years, but the flavour lingers on. SYNCONS remain an open window, where we can see the truth about fandom. We are a tribe. We have lives, loves and families in the world at large but still, beneath it all, we have each other.

Have a good time at CONVICTION (SYNCON 88). See if you can find a copy of the "Moiria Crescent" fan board game, or a half empty wine cask bladder I left at a party in 1980. It's all there somewhere. You may even see Peter Toluzzi.

SYNCON 79

GERALD SMITH

SYNCON 79 was not my first Sydney con. It was not even the best Sydney con I have attended (that honour would go to SYNCON 83). Nevertheless, it is the Sydney con which I look back on with the fondest memories. Why? Part of the reason is personal but much of it has to do with the sort of convention that SYNCON 79 was.

To start with, it had Gordon R Dickson as Guest of Honour - and that is one heck of a start. Gordy's wonderfully easy going nature, despite being not all that well at the time, set the tone for a relaxed, fun convention. SYNCON 79 also had Linda Lounsbury and Ken Fletcher. Linda was DUFF winner that year and Ken her 'better half'. For many, myself included, they

represented the first encounter with the whacky, zany Minneapolis fandom. Worse still, they introduced us to *blog* - the evil, wonderful concoction found at the bottom of plastic garbage bins at all the best room parties.

As the icing on the cake, SYNCON 79 introduced Australia to Japanese fandom in the person of Kouichi Yamamoto. From him we discovered that much as we are different - can you imagine conventions run in the manner of business conferences? - so we are the same: we all have the common interest in things science fictional, we enjoy the company of other fans and we all love to enjoy ourselves.

My memory of the actual events of the con is somewhat dimmed by the passage of time. I do recall:

- the feeling of an almost flawless performance from a committee that seemed to be everywhere without being intrusive;
- a wonderful Introduction to Fandom in the form of a dramatic presentation that opened the con;
- the Great Interstate Challenge where a panel of fools parried trivial SF questions and ping pong balls;
- a game of fanzine poker that almost trebled my fanzine collection;
- a vegemite sandwich being auctioned, with the winning bid being on condition that Keith Curtis eat it, and then watching his face as he fulfilled the condition.

My fondest memory of SYNCON 79 is that it is still one of the friendliest cons I have been to. It isn't possible to adequately describe what a friendly con is. It is something that has to be experienced. When you have been to a friendly con you know what one it. SYNCON 79 was a friendly con.

MY CITY OF SYDNEY

"Night folks thirsting for fun,
Meeting most everyone
In the Cross, as they toss
In their merry balloon.

"My City of Sydney, I miss your glow at dark
Miss the Opera House lights from the Bridge
The nights in a quiet Hyde Park."

MY SYDNEY

MICHELLE HALLETT

I suppose my Sydney is in its history, in the feeling that I get looking at the buildings or walking through the streets, that these buildings and streets have seen others like me, dressed in a different style of clothes, perhaps, but worries, like me, about the meaning of life and why it all is. Living as best they can and leaving some sort of psychic mark on the buildings and streets that makes me think of them when I walk past a hundred years later.

I like looking at old pictures of Sydney, seeing some of the buildings I recognise, such as the newly renovated Queen Victoria Building, but next to it are horses and carriages and women walk by in long skirts and petticoats. You can see some of these old photos in pubs around the city or in the Mitchell Library on Macquarie St where several filing cabinets house old pictures of all Sydney suburbs, in alphabetical order. I have a book with a series of drawings and photos of Circular Quay from 1788 to 1980 and looking at them makes me think how the world has changed since this country was first settled by Europeans. In the 1890 picture, carriages are neatly parked where today buildings housing the Urban Transit Authority and Circular Quay railway station sit, with the Cahill Expressway access to the Harbour Bridge perched on top. The boats in the 1874 drawing are very different from those in the 1956 photo though most of the 1956 boats reappear in 1980. Many of the ferries on our harbour need to be replaced.

There's a lot I don't know about Sydney and its history but where I can I try to discover something about the history of various suburbs. It amuses me to think for example that the suburb of Cremorne, where many of Sydney's more sophisticated 'trendies' now live and the place where the last two SYNCONs were held, was once a giant amusement park with not such a good reputation. Business at the park was said to have fallen after a masqued ball held in 1856 at which the lighting was inadequate and people refused to go there except for daytime picnics. I hear that the next SYNCON will not be held there either.

Another suburb whose history I have managed to investigate a little is Ryde in the northwest of Sydney. It was settled around 1800 by ex-convicts who were given land grants of 30 acres each. Many of them made good, such as James Squire who was responsible for one of the earliest beers brewed in the colony. He settled on 30 acres at Ryde in 1795 and built a small jetty adjacent to his pub on the Parramatta River. Mostly he did well, though his beer wasn't always popular: a tombstone in a cemetery in Parramatta reads, "Ye who wish to lie here/ Drink Squire's beer." Squire is said to have been kind to Aborigines, though that didn't mean the same thing then as it does today. Squire allowed them to work on his property and looked after them. Bennelong, the first Aborigine taken to England, is said to have died on Squire's property and is buried there among orange trees which probably no longer exist.

Ryde and neighbouring Eastwood were, in fact, major fruit growing areas last century. Blaxland experimented here with growing grapes and producing the first Australian wines. This is also where Maria Ann Smith discovered the seedling

growing in her backyard which eventually produced the Granny Smith apple. She claimed it grew from the remains of some French Crab apples she dumped in her backyard which were mutated by the colony's soil. In Australia, we've never had a high opinion of our produce: though discovered in 1868, Granny Smiths weren't grown on a large scale until 1895.

I don't know much about Potts Point, the suburb in which I live. It's named after J.H. Potts, a clerk of the bank of New South Wales, who purchased the land here in the 1830s and subdivided and sold it after William Street was built, connecting this area with the city, then centred around Circular Quay. Potts Point and nearby Elizabeth Bay were considered to be 'exclusive' neighbourhoods with fine gardens and beautiful homes. Gibbs & Shallard's Guide to Sydney in 1882 says of this area, "the rocky headland of Potts Point, where we notice the signs of mercantile wealth, and its attendant advantages, the residents displaying great taste in their botanical surroundings. The double island north of the point is Garden Island, now shorn of its original beauties by being converted into a naval depot. The citizens are demanding that the island shall be made into a 'beauty spot' on Port Jackson's waters, in conformity with the name it bears, and no doubt will succeed in their objective." Gibbs & Shallard were wrong: Garden Island is still a naval depot and has become a place where people go to protest about nuclear-powered ships. Potts Point has lost many of its gardens and much of its reputation. Its proximity to Sydney's 'red light' district, King's Cross [originally Queen's Cross after Queen Victoria], has probably made it the sort of place that decent people stay away from though these days what is 'decent' is different and there are plenty of people living in Potts Point who, like me, are rather proud of the 'bohemian' feel to the suburb and like to think we are a little different from others living elsewhere because we have to keep an open mind about prostitution and addicts shooting heroin in the back lanes. Rents are a little lower than in Cremorne so we're not quite as sophisticated as the trendies living there.

There aren't any gardens in Potts Point [or Central Sydney] now, nor are there orchards in Ryde. Sydney City Council is cutting down trees all over this area and I wonder what the people of the past, surviving now as only as my ghosts, would think. I wonder what they would say for the skyscrapers I see when I look across Woolloomooloo Bay to the City. I wonder how much we have changed in our thinking since 1788.

MICHELLE HALLETT

PROGRAMME BOOK

Copy deadline for the Programme Book will be April 24th 1988. This will be offset printed. Ads will cost \$100 [pro] and \$50 [fan] for a full-page. Size will be A\$ but please not that a margin should be left around the image area. Enquiries and bookings to Cath'n'Ron, at the ConCom address.

ALL PURPOSE FORM

DETACH THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO: CONVICTION, Box 272, Wentworth Building,
University of Sydney. Australia 2006.

I/We wish to join CONVICTION as a supporting/attending/voting* member Enclosed is \$.....

I/We are already members of CONVICTION

I/We wish to book a single/double/twin/triple* room

I/We will be using it on Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday/Monday* nights

I/We will be sharing it with

Please send me more information on

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2001. David McDonnell [Vic]

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