



Preliminaries to Thylacon 2005, the 44th Australian National Science Fiction Convention



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Civic Reception for Thylacon guests in the Court Room,
Hobart Town Hall on 9 June 2005



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Lord Mayor Valentine welcomes guests
to the City of Hobart



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Chair Tansy Rayner Roberts welcomes special guests Marianne de Pierres, Anne Bishop and Merv Binns to Thylacon 2005



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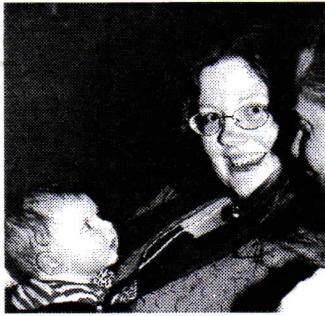
Rob Valentine, Allannah Turner-Hughes, Steve Lazarowitz, Zara Baxter and Cary Lenehan
open the panels with "The Green House"



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Zara Baxter and Cary
Lenehan/Mutant Thylacine

Opening words from the Chair's Pen



*G*reetings all... it hardly seems like any time has passed since we were all together at Thylacon 2005! When we were still in the planning stages, we knew that we wanted to have a souvenir book that actually recorded the event, rather than pre-emptively guessing what the highlights would be. We wanted to have an opportunity to print photos, con reports and a genuine response to the event.

I hope you enjoy the contents of this book - there's a little bit of everything in here: chat, speeches, costumes, laughter, and a moment or two of sadness. As always seems to happen, the con went far too quickly, and I hope this souvenir book is for you - as it is for us - a chance to revisit memories of the event, and preserve all the best bits for posterity.

For those of you keen for an update, our good little con baby is now a big girl of 16 months, not just toddling but running, climbing and spinning around until she falls over. She has seven teeth, and can operate the remote control on the TV. (these two facts are not, we hope, related) Thanks everyone who was there for her first con, and can happily remind her of this when she's sixteen.

See you next time,
Tansychair xx
May 2006.

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Inside Cover and Colour Inserts: Photos by
Monissa Whiteley, Cat Sparks, Frank Strk and Helena Binns.
Cover and internal artwork: Mark Dewis

Guest of Honour: Anne Bishop



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Guest of Honor speech given at Thylacon

Hobart, Tasmania

June 12, 2005

Truth was a beggar. He wore rags the poorest man in town wouldn't wear. He begged for scraps of food. He slept wherever he could find shelter.

When Truth approached the people in the town to tell them the things he knew, they would turn their backs on him, or cross the street, or go into their houses and close the doors.

After a while, Truth noticed there was a woman in the town that everyone wanted to talk to. People greeted her on the street, and she was welcome in all of their homes, from the

poorest shack to the finest mansion. Sometimes her clothes were simple, sometimes elegant, sometimes frivolous, and sometimes fantastic.

Truth didn't know who she was, but he knew she was very special.

One night, when Truth was wandering through the streets looking for something to eat, he passed one of the fine big mansions where there was a party going on. He peeked into the window and saw all the people laughing and talking, saw the banquet table loaded with all kinds of wonderful food. He knew if he knocked on the door, they wouldn't let him in, so he sat on the steps, in the cold, shivering in his rags.

After a while, the door did open. The woman came out, sat down beside him, and asked him why he was sitting out there in the cold.

So Truth told her about how people didn't want to listen to him, how he wasn't welcome in any of their homes.

The woman thought about this and then said, "Why don't we become partners? My name is Story."

And so, from that day to this, Truth and Story have been partners--and they are welcome wherever they go.

Stories have a purpose. They explain and define the world. They give us the lessons we need to survive.

The *pourquoi* stories tell us why some things in the natural world are the way they are. Folk tales and fairy tales provide the moral lessons to guide us safely through the woods.

Stories give us a reason to laugh--or to cry. They give a shape to things that fear awakens in the deep hours of the night. And they give us people--human and otherwise--who stand against the shadow creatures. Sometimes those people are heroes who are larger than life, and sometimes they're the bumbling everyman we can recognize in ourselves. They face what is dark, what is dangerous, what is fearful. And most of the time, they win.

This is one of the reasons we tell and read stories: to watch characters overcome external

difficulties and internal conflicts in order to triumph.

We're gathered here at Thylacon because we read and write speculative fiction--the stories about dragons, wizards, ghosts, demons, spaceships, alien races, futuristic visions of what our world might become. We are the creative descendants of those early storytellers who gave fear a name and made it tangible in order to make it something that could be conquered; who looked at the hills surrounding their villages and imagined who might live in the land beyond; who created flying carpets and magical talismans to represent the things that come to us and help us along the way.

But our castles and spaceships and futuristic cities are all the stage we, as writers, choose for one thing: to give us a place in which to explore the journey of the heart.

This is why we tell stories. This is why we read them. Through stories, we see our fears, our grief, our failings, and know those things are not ours alone. Through stories, we find a reason to laugh and put aside the real world's troubles for a little while. Through stories, we take journeys and face dangers we wouldn't want to face otherwise. Through stories, we learn to be more than what we believe we are--and we understand a little better what it means to be human.

So we tell our stories about other people and other places. We cloak them in magic or the speculation of what our world may become.

But if you listen carefully, underneath the fantastic you will always hear a whisper of the heart's truth.

Anne Bishop / June 12, 2005

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Guest of Honour: Marianne de Pierres



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Dear Thylacon members,

You made my Guest of Honour role so enjoyable that Thylacon 2005 will forever be a shining place in my memory. I made terrific new friends, enjoyed the company of old friends, chatted endlessly on my favourite topics and was looked after in an exemplary fashion by the wonderful committee. I am still talking to people about the fun we had in the birdcage bar, how Launz ate the translator fish out of my ear at the Masko Ballo, and the CatRob room parties. I can't think of anything more I could have wanted from a Con.

To all of you, my heartfelt thanks
Marianne de Pierres

Nylon Angel (just released in the US) has spent two weeks on the Barnes and Noble SFF bestseller list. Book one of the new series, (currently entitled Crucial) is slated for late 2006, early 2007.

FLASH PARRISH!

A flash fanfic competition was held to celebrate the release of *Crash Deluxe*, the third cyberpunk adventure novel starring legendary heroine Parrish Plessis, written by Thylacon GOH Marianne de Pierres.

The competition was judged by author Marianne de Pierres and her editor at Orbit, Darren Nash, with an open section as well as a section reserved for Thylacon members only.

The challenge was to write a flash fiction of no more than 600 words, taking Parrish out of her world, and placing her in a contemporary setting where conflict arises. The Thylacon winner was Nicole Murphy with her story *Torture* placing Parrish in a very uncomfortable situation. Nicole won autographed copies of all three Parrish books, and her story is published herein.

Torture.

By Nicole R Murphy

It was awkward, trying to rub an arm stinging after numerous needles and trying to hold closed the gaping back of my medical gown.

How I, Parrish Plessis, warlord of Torleys and self-confessed girl to be with in the Tert, ended up in this predicament is a story I don't want to get into. Suffice me to say the angel, the Cabal Coomera, Loyl me Daac and one of Anna's mad inventions. I'm sure you get the picture.

I was led into yet another totally white, hygenically boring room and so at first, missed that this one was a little different. Rather than hold a bed to lie on, or a desk topped with piles of papers and two chairs with ripped seats, it held a machine.

The machine was white, hence the reason I first missed it. It was bolted onto the floor and rose to a point about equal with my head, before turning on itself and finishing around my chest. It narrowed as it turned and finished with a pair of clear plates, each around half an inch thick. On the bottom plate was drawn three semi-circular symbols, each growing from the edge facing me.

The technician who had led me here turned and smiled. "Now, Miss Plessis, I need you to take your left arm out of your gown and come and stand by the mammogram."

I didn't really like the idea of exposing my breast to a stranger, but I hated the idea of having Loyl come in to do it more and I had no doubt he would. Frowning, I pulled the gown down so it hung at my waist. Clutching it to my right breast, I stepped up to the machine.

The technician took hold of my breast and I barely refrained from jumping out of her reach. Then she pressed a button on the machine and the plates began to move forward. As they neared me, she started to press my breast flat against the bottom plate, which soon pressed against my chest. Then she pressed another button and the top plate began to lower.

Ah, I thought, clever idea. Ensure the breast is completely still by holding it, then scan. But the top plate kept getting lower, and lower, and lower, until my breast had been flattened until it was only an inch thick, standing a good three inches from my chest.

I grit my teeth. No one was going to hear how uncomfortable this was. No one. Then the machine released me, and I breathed a sigh of relief, until I saw the plates tilt until they were vertical.

"Now, Miss Plessis, just hold still..." The technician grabbed my breast and began to pull on it. "Just a little more."

"There isn't any more," I gasped. "You'll be scanning my ribcage soon."

Then a murmur, and the machine released me. I rubbed my aching breast, wondering at a world that could do this to their women. "We're done, right?"

Wrong. Two more scans on that side, then the whole process repeated with the other breast, during which I grit my teeth, looked to the heavens and swore I'd find a way to pay him back for this.

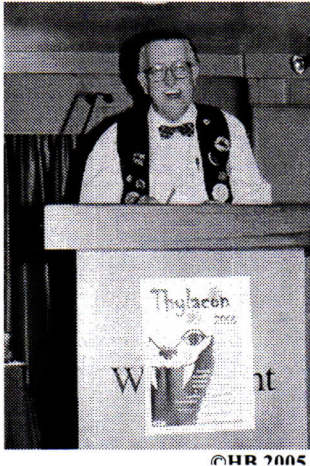
Finally, I was allowed to dress. I pulled on my vinyl and mesh, ensuring my breasts were comfortable. Then I stormed through the waiting room. I went down the street, around the back of the building and without checking, stepping into the small box standing there and back to Torleys.

I chose Nicole Murphy's work because I found her idea of putting Parrish in a situation where she was having a mammogram absolutely hilarious. I also liked the fact that Nicole had a good grasp of the characters and places. Congratulations Nicole!

Fan Guest of Honour: Merv Binns

How I became a Science Fiction Fan

And what is SF Fandom at any rate?



First of all I want to thank the THYLACON committee for inviting me to be their Fan Guest of Honour. I am not used to making speeches though and I usually find it difficult to find the appropriate words in normal conversation, but when I get behind a keyboard the words and phrases seem to come a little easier. So I have written my speech on my computer and I will read it to you. Truthfully it took numerous re-writes and revisions...

How does one become involved in science fiction fandom, you may ask, and get to be a Fan Guest of Honor at a SF convention? Well, in my case my claim to fame is mainly that I was one of the founders of the Melbourne SF Group in 1952 and finished up running it and the library for about twenty years. Following that I ran my own bookshop, Space Age Books, from 1971 to 1985, which became the hub of fan activity in the 1970s and the information centre for the first World SF Convention in Australia, AUSSIECON ONE, held in Melbourne in 1975. I ran a number of conventions myself along with other Melbourne fans and I have been involved in producing fanzines on and off ever since I became involved with fandom.

From 1953 to about 1959 I helped my Melbourne SF Group friend Ian Crozier produce the group's magazine ETHERLINE by contributing book lists and such but mainly just turning the handle of our Roneo duplicator. In the 1970s I produced *AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS*, while my bookshop Space Age Books was in full swing and I still do an issue infrequently, mainly listing and reviewing books. I did a contribution to the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Press Association in its early days, which I called *The Rubbish Bin(ns)* and I resurrected it a few years back but put it on the back burner again. Helena and I later started doing the smaller, intended to be more frequent, personal zine *OUT OF THE BIN*, now working with computers provided by friends such as Dick Jessen and Bill Wright.

Helena designs and formats our publications, takes a lot of the photographs for them and corrects all my errors. We are also working on my *SF Fandom Memoirs*. Part One, covering the period from 1952 to 1970 was published in 2002 in time for the Melbourne SF Clubs 50th anniversary, but we are revising it currently, with more photos and such, while Part Two, up to 1975, is also well on the way. I made three overseas trips to attend world cons and along with those and my other fan activities I have a lot to tell and lots of photographs to reproduce. Producing fanzines is no doubt an integral part of fannish activity, so I guess I fill the bill there.

Leading up to my era and it is probably still true today, there seems to be certain paths of interest that lead people to become interested in fandom. Many of us older fans started reading comics back in the 1930s and 1940s such as *Buck Rogers*. Then moved up to reading publications such as the boys adventures magazines from England, *Champion*, *Adventure*, *Hotspur* and such, not that they carried much that you could call SF. Some of us would have been lucky enough to find Jules Verne or H. G. Wells novels or even the pulp magazines at an early age. I had read a small Sydney written and published little booklet titled *Spaceward Ho!*, when I was very young, which my father bought for me when there were no comics available early during the 1940 to 1945 World War. It was based on a radio serial and written by a guy I found out twenty years later, was one of the founders of Sydney's SF fandom, Vol Molesworth. However my search for other stories like it was in vain. When attending primary school, I went to the Preston Public Library and asked for science stories, but instead they gave me elementary science books for young readers. Those got me interested in all aspects of science and I did well in the subject in High

School, but my interest in science in general has remained, with astronomy and space travel still being to the fore. I share this interest with Helena and we are regular readers of *The New Scientist* magazine. My reading had consisted mainly of second hand novels such as *Swiss Family Robinson*, British navel adventures, *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson and other titles that my father bought for me at six pence each. In high school the English teacher suggested John Buchan whose tales were the precursor to *James Bond* and they were getting closer to what I was interested in, but why he did not suggest Wells or Verne I do not know. I was also fascinated early on by King Arthur stories, but I cannot recall exactly what books I read in that line or any other fantasy adventures as such. There was a small illustrated book on the "Knights of the Round Table", which my mother must have given away I now realise. In later years I tried to read *The Once and Future King* by T. H. White but I hated the style of writing and gave up. I did sort of read a lot of classics, but in comic strip form in the Classics Illustrated series. An early interest in comics faded a bit when I could not get hold of any Buck Rogers or similar items.

My mother started taking me to the movies when I was very young and I loved the Disney classics like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Pinocchio*. I did like fantasy movies such as *The Thief of Baghdad*, *Stairway to Heaven* and westerns – and I even read Zane Grey novels in due course– historical adventures, serials such as *The Phantom Empire* but I always wanted see *Flash Gordon*, and when I did catch up with that in the 1970s is a long story. I wanted to see horror movies, not that we could see much of those prior to the 1970s and I actually did not see my first horror movie, a Bela Lugosi effort, until the early 1950s. In the 1970s I enjoyed the Hammer Films with Christopher Lee hamming it up as Dracula. It was great to see him in *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* but much of the current offer of blood and guts is not for me. Movies have always been as big a part of my life as reading if not more important, I must confess.

I did not know what science fiction actually was, until I was well into my teens and I started reading a locally published magazine called *Thrills Incorporated*, which I found out later was ripping off stories from the overseas publications and changing the titles and authors. When I started work at McGills Newsagency booksellers at the age of sixteen, I discovered *ASTOUNDING Science Fiction* magazine, now known as *Analog*. Soon after I met other readers of "Science Fiction" and I had discovered fandom. I never tried to hide my interest in SF, as many fans tell me that they did, and I took the ribbings from the mundanes of "Do you read that Buck Rogers stuff" and "when are you going to the Moon, Merv?". I particularly copped it when I was doing national service in the army, when I was reading a series of small locally published zines, reprinting first class stories from overseas. They had marvellous cover illustrations by an Australian artist, Stanley Pitt, who had produced the *Silver Starr* comic strip, modeled on the famous American strip *Flash Gordon*. I was told to get rid of them by an officer, but I gave them to my father next time he came to visit me in camp at Puckapunyal and I still have them. Consequently it gave me great satisfaction to recall those knockers' comments when Neil Armstrong and his mates actually did go to the moon.

According to a chapter in American author and bookseller Frank M. Robinson's book *SCIENCE FICTION OF THE 20th CENTURY*, - a large well illustrated volume published a short time back – most fans, like himself, share a common path into SF fandom. Our interests began with comics and then the magazines, which was where fandom actually started. Readers wrote to the editor and their letters were published and then the writers wrote to each other and organised meetings and conventions. Comic fans and movie and TV fans following *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* in particular have become part of SF fandom also. But I believe we also share attitudes to the world and life in general and it these things which I think more than anything else make us soul mates.

It was not surprising though that most SF readers were reticent about making their interest in "that Buck Rogers stuff" known to one and all. Though people had been reading H. G. Wells and

Jules Verne, which were perhaps recognised as having some literary value, well before the pulp magazines started. But their writings were not called "science fiction" initially, though Wells stories were published in the magazines. Only the pulp magazines published SF, the people who did not appreciate it said and the magazines themselves, initially by editor and publisher Hugo Gernsback, had actually introduced the term at any rate. As an example as to how people thought about reading SF, Dick Jensen told me that his late father had been a reader but did not disclose his interest even to Dick when he knew that Dick was well into it. I might add that award winning author George Turner who had written a number of mainstream novels and won the Miles Franklin Award and who was introduced to fandom by John Bangsund, had been reading SF most of his life. John and others I believe induced him to write some SF and he did with great results. He also became a leading critic of SF writing and did a lot to increase the quality of its writing by others.

The attitude of the literary establishment has gradually changed a little in due course, to SF, fantasy and horror, though some authors such as Kurt Vonnegut, wrote it but refused to call his stories such as *Slaughter House Five*, science fiction. Incidentally I think fantasy had acquired a good reputation over many years and authors such as William Morris, Lord Dunsany, Robert Louis Stevenson, The Brothers Grimm and many others were treated with respect. Mary Shelley's *FRANKENSTEIN* is regarded as a literary classic but is looked at by the SF historians as one of the seminal books of the literary genre that eventually became classified as science fiction. Bram Stoker's *DRACULA*, although a much reprinted and "used" plot is perhaps not exactly great literature, though American horror writer of the 1930s and 1940s, H. P. Lovecraft has been recognised as a significant figure in American literature. And do not let us overlook Edgar Allen Poe. In the SF category Ray Bradbury is highly regarded by one and all, for his work, though Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein and others may have to wait a while, though we fans love them whatever.

I found that some reader friends of mine were into fantasy in a big way and regarded SF as more or less another type of fantasy. I guess a lot of so called SF by such as Andre Norton or Anne McCaffrey, is more fantasy than SF at any rate. There was a lot of fantasy and horror stories published in the magazines, much of which was written by authors who were also writing SF. Fantasy writing of course goes way back and readers pre-war, who were more interested in that were able to find the books by such as E. R. Edson, Lord Dunsany and A. A. Merritt, while pulp magazines such as *WEIRD TALES* and *UNKNOWN WORLDS* were around in the 1930s also, with *THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION* to follow in the 1950s. Then in the 1950s *The Lord of the Rings* was published and since then the writing and publication of fantasy has proliferated. Creating a whole new aspect of fandom but still associated with SF fandom. Even I read *The Lord of the Rings* at the urging of another Melbourne SF Club member, Ian Crozier and I loved it. I could not find anything else that grabbed me in that category though and I have read very little fantasy since, being more of a hard science and space travel fan than swords and sorcery. Most fantasy that I have read in fact being by SF authors I appreciated such as Ursula K. LeGuin, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Poul Anderson, Clifford Simak and even Robert Heinlein. I tried to read the Stephen Donaldson *Lord Foul's Bane* epic but gave up on that very quickly.

Fantasy seems to have taken over from SF as the major aspect of conventions in Australia and I feel a bit like a Thylacine standing here, a member of a lost species. Science fiction fandom originated the conventions after all. Again referring to Frank Robinson's book, "Science Fiction in the 20th Century", he said that science fiction is dead and has been absorbed into the main stream and that fantasy, as predicted by some editors in the field a few years back has taken over. This does seem to be what has happened, with many more books being published in the fantasy genre than SF, especially in Australia. It is quite interesting how fantasy writing has been fostered in Australia, by Harper Collins in particular. And good luck to all the fantasy authors

attending this con, but I personally would like to see more SF like the books I have read recently by Sean Williams and Shane Dix and Maxine MacArthur.

Comics fandom had developed along with SF as many comics fan also read SF and the conventions over the years, that started in the 1930s, by the 1950s were catering for all. Though in later years fantasy fandom and comics fandom, especially in the USA, has I understand become less closely associated. Then came movies. There had always been movie fans and magazines catering for them as far back as the silent movie days and SF&F fans somehow adapted the nomenclature for themselves, but I will not go into the derivation of the word "fan" here. With the advent of the classic *2001: A Space Odyssey* followed by TV's *Star Trek* and later by the movie *Star Wars*, a whole new fandom was born with bigger than ever conventions resulting. Some dyed in the wool readers hated having movies as part of the fan scene and when *Star Trek* fans started swelling the World Conventions to unmanageable proportions, the split came. However I and many other fans have always seen movies and TV SF and all as part of the scene whatever. Yet again another aspect of fandom has been the games players with the fantasy and SF aspects of those attracting SF&F readers. Then there are the fanzine publishing people, who started their activities way back in the 1930s. There are other splinter groups of fandom if you like, interested in their particular aspect, be it particular authors such as Edgar Rice Burroughs or individual books or movies or TV series and so on. Personally I have a lot of interest in SF&F art and art in general. The thing that unites us all though is, to use a well-worn cliché, "A Sense of Wonder".

The best part of being in fandom is meeting people and making friends with those who share your same interests. When I first joined the Melbourne SF Group in 1952 it changed my life completely, simply because I had never had any friends as a child going to school and actually associating with people who really shared my interests was enormous. Recently the MSF Club honored some of their early members by making them Life Members. A number of us said how fandom had changed our lives, simply because SF fans had this particular attitude to life in general and the world around them and making the friendships that have endured over the years made life worthwhile.

In due course I was privileged to not only get to meet many fans from Australia and overseas, but many of the leading authors. One of the best things about SF&F fandom and the conventions we hold is that the authors are also fans, or at least have always been part of the convention scene. Having my own bookshop, Space Age Books from 1970 to 1985, enabled me to meet many authors and some, both here and some overseas have been my personal friends. I attended three overseas World SF Conventions in Canada, England and the U.S.A. and I have attended the three Australian World Cons held in Melbourne, plus numerous smaller cons all over Australia and three overseas including the first SF con in New Zealand, as Fan GoH as well there I might add. The one I enjoyed very much organising and attending was CINECON in 1981, which was devoted to both my loves of SF&F movies and we had the late Robert Bloch, author and fan as our Guest of Honor.

My wife Helena and I can only afford to attend Melbourne cons these days, so it was great to get the invitation to attend THYLACON 2005 as your guests. I have only visited Tasmania once in 1974, with Robin Johnson, when as members of the AUSSIECON ONE World Con committee we came over to invite SF fan and bibliophile Don Tuck, to be Fan GoH at our con. Don won a Hugo for his *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction & Fantasy* and I will assume you all know what a Hugo is. Still regarded as a reference work without equal, for the period of SF&F writing and publishing that it covered. Don is now living close to Melbourne, but he certainly put "Van Dieman's Land" on the world SF fandom map then. Robin showed me a little of Hobart and the surrounding area, even took me to see Port Arthur in 1974, but Helena and I are hoping to see a little bit more this trip. Meanwhile we are very pleased to meet old friends and make new ones here at THYLACON. Thank you!

MERV BINNS

Con Report From the Scrapbook of Susan and Graeme Batho

10th June, 2005

The weather today was gloriously sunny and warm, so we decided it would be the best time to look at the Tasmanian Royal Botanical Gardens and Salamanca. We caught a bus to the city from the local stop using the Metro Ten tickets we had purchased earlier. It let us out at Franklin Square, next to the tourist information bureau so we bought some more postcards.

When we walked up to the bus stop we found that the next bus to the gardens was more than an hour wait, so we decided to walk.

Just down the road was the Government Archives office, which had photographs of old Hobart in the foyer. Sue was curious, so we went in. A helpful young man managed to print off some information about the family so that I can order copies of the originals from the National Archives in Canberra. It was fun and since it doesn't cost I will be able to look up the stuff on my Alexander Seaton who I wanted to find in the Hobart newspapers. But I enjoyed browsing and having someone there to guide me and let me know what I didn't know before about the system.

From there we started to walk, and walk and walk. It didn't look far... honestly. We knew we had to go over the common, past the aquatic centre and the tennis courts to the only public toilets listed on the maps for the common area. Straight up the hill. Lord, I am proud of myself that I managed to make it.

Then it was over the hill, and past the powder magazine (I think that's what isn't called, isn't it, Graeme?). A bunker of a sandstone building – understandable considering its purpose. And the wonderful corridor of soldiers' trees – each tree dedicated to a soldier from Tasmania. And down further until we found the grand black and gilt wrought iron gate that opened into the gardens.

A pleasant, green realm – gently showered and golden sun-tinged in alternating moments – and dotted with visitors – from children to the elderly – all intent on enjoying the grounds. We ate next to the quiet splendour of the conservatory (closed for cleaning and restocking) on a sun-warmed stone seat with whatsonia blooming around us, pansies before us, and a strange looking phallic bloom that looked like it had grown from an overgrown silver lambs tongue plant. Shades of early triffidism.

We entered the subartic house to be met by the cold of the area and mists of cold moisture as it recreated the climate the mainly ground hugging plants enjoyed. It was smaller than I expected but enjoyable and informative and I do hope that I managed to actually get a couple of good photos from it.

We avoided the succulent house --- Graeme joked about the prickly phallic symbols housed therein --- and were disappointed to find that all the fuscias had been pruned except for one lone little flower that was very sad.

And we came to the French Fountain which is both organic and man-created. Made of hollowed trees – Doubt seriously if they were genuinely hollowed by nature, from one angle it looked like a tangle of broken limbs from a skeletal tree, from another, it appeared to recreate the stern and fallen mast of a ship. The sound of the running water was incredibly nice and the ducks appreciated the space, but I wasn't at all sure if it was something that really appealed to me.

The Japanese Gardens were a small treasure although there was no sign of koi (or are they only found in Chinese Gardens), and the bamboo fountains were turned off.

We paid homage to Peter Cundall's Gardening Australia's vegie patch which was just as we'd see it every Friday on the ABC. For me, that was a real treat.

And other highlights... the incredible Tasmanian blue gum – the last of the stand of gums that once stood on the shores of the Derwent. Like the whales that were so numerous they kept the colonists awake at night with their numbers as they talked and danced and moved, they were in the way of 'civilisation' and had to go.

The dancing tree, standing on one foot and with boughs outflung joyously made me laugh and I am still carrying that image around in my head and will for a long time.

The sight of the one domestic white duck amongst the flock of fat wild ducks enjoying the lily pond that told us very obviously that obviously the pickings were good around there... that and the ducks had been there a while – quite an aroma.

We even explored the Discovery Centre and watched old episodes of Gardening Australia where the image was framed with an elaborate gold frame. So much fun.

We had missed the early bus and enjoyed ourselves until we found out we were looking at the Summer timetable. No more buses for nearly 90 minutes, so on the advice of one of the workers in the garden, we headed for the lower gate and found the flat footpath that followed the water's edge into town. Now where was this knowledge when we hiked up and over hills and dales? Mind you, we missed the beginning of the walkway and ended up on the grasses at water's edge and there we saw old piers and our first penguin, preening itself and toddling between the shags on the pier. How it got there, we could only guess. Bit it seemed at home there amongst the other birds.

We walked under the Westgate Bridge (now called someone thing else altogether), and remembered what we were told the day before about the sunken ship, the container ship, Lake Illawarra, which still lays in the mud under the bridge --- too deeply to bring up --- yet still a possibly danger, once again, to the bridge. It's covered with sensors to detect any movement in the ship, and lights have been installed to stop traffic when large ships go under the bridge. As we walked we watched the night turn to lilac and pink and the lights starting to come out across the water... its really beautiful here.

The walkway ended near the Cenotaph, and one more hill to walk over. Because I was really lagging by now, we decided on the flatter walk along the waterfront to Franklin Square. The boats at their moorings were reflected in the mirror smooth water.

When we finally caught the bus at Franklin Square, we caught the bus all the way to the Casino – through the dark streets, seemingly further and further away from it!

We finally found our way to the Derwent Room and suddenly it was like meeting your family again. Of course, I was doing it silently, with no voice to talk, but it felt good to see everyone again.

The Opening Remarks by Tansy were said with real feeling and welcome. She introduced all the guests and made it fairly painless for us all. Especially when it was followed quickly by The Green House which sent up the ABCs The Glass House and was very funny indeed --- set in the year 2050 and as one of the movers and shakers included His Honour Mr Rob Valentine, the Lord Mayor of Hobart, who apparently was frozen and thawed out for the occasion – he got right into the spirit of it all and had as much fun as the audience.

We came home and pretty much went “boom” about 9.30. There was a note just inside the door asking me to ring Maria at the Registry where I work. As it's now closed until Tuesday I won't be able to find out what she is calling about until then. I rang home and spoke to the kids and eventually found out that young Graeme had given Maria our contact details, but he didn't know what it was about.

We were awake enough, though, to watch The Glass House on the ABC and appreciate how clever they had been with their portrayal. I fell asleep with the image of Cary dressed as a thylacine with a bow tie....

11th June, 2005

Ah, now you know you are home no matter where you are... Everyone is warm and welcoming and friendly. It hardly seems any time at all since we met even though its been over a year and the conversations we were having then, we continue them cheerfully.

The Fanzine Panel (“Fanzines Then and Now”) was one of the first things that I had marked down as wanting to see. Fanzines - something that has been a long-time part of my life. The Panelists were

venerable in the world of fanzines and included Bill Wright who said something very wise: Ever since the printing press, there have always been fanzines, in fact ever since there have been special interest groups who wanted to self publish. Topics covered are limitless for as many interests as there are in the world, there are people who want to talk about them.

SF fanzines, as we know them, started around the 1930s. Joe Siclari gave us 1928 as a date, in fact. And strangely, Ron has quite a collection from early Australian days of fanzines, even though he is not old enough to be a part of the scene at the time.

Bill has a history in his Interstellar Ramjet Scoop magazine in a current issue, which should be illuminating. I must remember to ask him for a copy as he's a very interesting writer. He does write fluently and eloquently, which sometimes does not translate into the verbal word.

Fanzines were discussed as the site for conversation between fans – where communication may be slow, but the words could be selected, and edited. Too often, with communication in the virtual worlds, it is rapid and rash and not very literate. However, it was pointed out that in the virtual world that space is almost limitless, so that storage becomes not so problematic and speaking as someone who ended up shipping most of her Australian collection to the National Library of Australia because of the fear of losing it to deterioration and insects in the storage at home, digitising all records and making them publicly available is brilliant. All this is airy fairy for me as the time it would take is prohibitive when I am so far behind with my PhD at present.

Another point that Robin Johnson brought up was food for thought as well: with the electronic age with us, the fannish usual will eventually have to change.... Or will it? He also pointed out that, by far, more substantial, more literate commentary comes in letters to fanzines, which implies that the respondents are older fans? So what happens to the lettercol as we get older and older and eventually we can't hold the pen or get the letter to the letterbox... will we see the end of the nice, juicy lettercol where people put in provocative and thoughtful things for digging writing hooks unto. Rather than the typical emailed "me too"...

Which reminds me... Eric Lindsay is putting forward for CORFLU in 2007 in Airlie Beach which seems eminently sensible to me. A Corflu on our shores at last...

Mervyn's Guest of Honour speech, "What It Means to be a Fan", augurs well for his memoirs eventually. It was a trip into the era before I could remember fans and seeing images of them in those days... that they weren't always the venerable ones that I sat at the knees of...

And I really must raid the old albums... it's a case of now I am a greying fan ... and maybe there is some newer fan out there who'd like to see what I have there --- like Bruce Gillespie with a full head of dark hair! You know, conventions are like a time capsule. I look at my fan friends and they don't seem to be any older, even though I know they are! It's the rose-coloured glasses I wear...

We kept Womble, Gerald and Margaret Hilliard company over dinner in the snack bar whilst we waited for the venue to be transformed into the Restaurant at the End of the Universe.

When the time came, we entered through a Hitch-hiking portal – with a "don't touch the button" button, and nice friendly letters that spelt out "don't panic", so we didn't. It was fun. In fact, it was fun watching the costumes that came: Emma Peel and Steed; a pirate wench; a muse with whiskers and fairy wings in an elegant evening gown; Arthur Dent (played by a sardonic Bruce Barnes), and Adrienne Losin as Lady Thylacine... nice costume and a nice change of costume as she portrayed the Lady's alter ego.

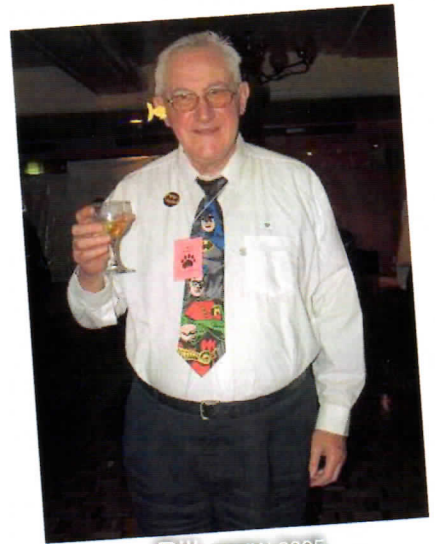
It was a pleasant event, and we left after the costume event, due to me being a piker: very tired from lack of sleep and the coughing wanted to start.

12th June, 2005

I am so manually dexterous, that I am unable to open the pack of Royals for our morning tea! We decided on some us time this morning and its been great. Shortly we will be heading for the convention



Jilli, James, Cassandra and Allannah ©FS 2005



Bill ©MW 2005



Rob, Cat, Richard and Marianne ©FS 2005



Nicole ©CS 2005



Judges Joe, Merv and Helena ©FS 2005



Bruce ©CS 2005



Cary ©MW 2005

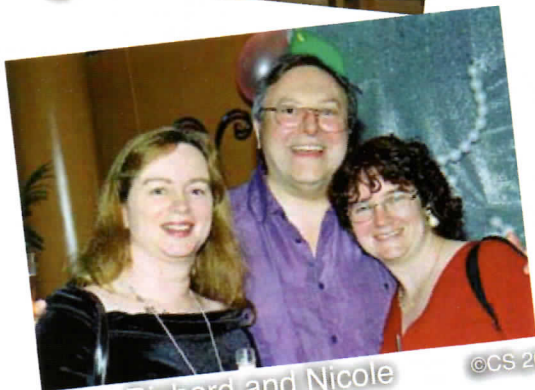


Adrienne ©CS 2005

Lady Thylacine (Masquerade Winner) ©HB 2005



Cary ©HB 2005



Donna Richard and Nicole ©CS 2005



Rob, Cat and Maxine ©CS 2005



Zara and Alison ©CS 2005



Zara, Finchy and Sheila ©FS 2005



Jilli and Tansy ©HB 2005



Dirk and Cat ©CS 2005



James, Cassandra and Mr Darwin

©CS 2005



Robert and Kate with Ditmar

©CS 2005



Eric and Mariann

©CS 2005



Dirk, Marianne, Clare and Maxine

©CS 2005



Julian, Janice, Rose and Joe

©CS 2005



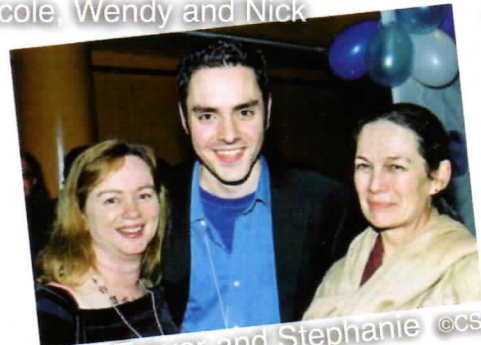
Nicole, Wendy and Nick

©CS 2005



Kate, Rowena and Kirstyn

©CS 2005



Donna, Trevor and Stephanie

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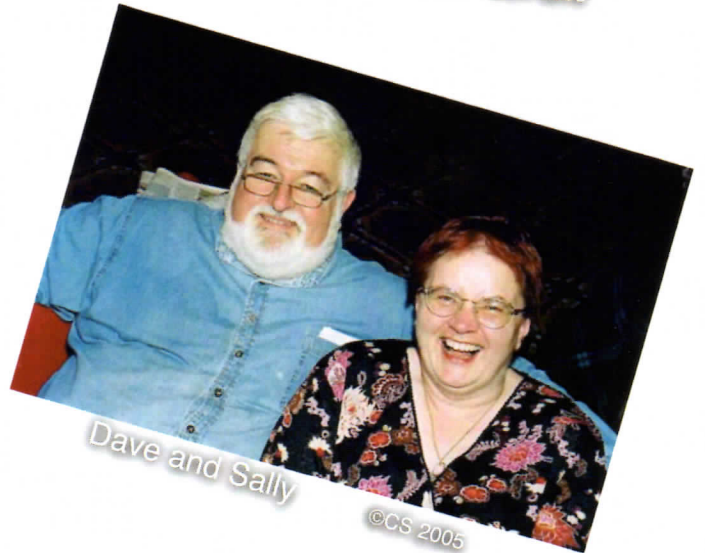
Jason, Mark, Michele and Kate ©CS 2005



Justin, Terri, Zara, Janice and Joe ©CS 2005



Dirk and Marianne ©CS 2005



Dave and Sally ©CS 2005



Rowena, Anne and Marianne ©CS 2005



Merv, Alicia, Bill and Robin ©CS 2005



Angela and Shane ©CS 2005



Tansy, Aurelia and Finchy ©CS 2005

again.... But for the moment, we are sitting back, watching the news, enjoying chocolate biscuits and coffee.

We ended up walking to the Casino though.

We socialised when we finally got to the Casino... couldn't help ourselves... starting with lunch at Sails Restaurant which was half-price roast which went down very well thank you.

No, actually we started with Anne Bishop's reading of her take on the fairy tale about Rapunzel which she delivered with a great deal of sensitivity. She is a story teller in every sense- delivering the oral story to induce in her audience an empathy for the characters and their development.

Which was followed by the launch of Conflux 3 to be held at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. They had hot nibbles for that... and the fannish locusts descended, as expected, and very soon, the con was launched and people were cheering. Sir Arthur C Clarke, my hero and the hero of most SF fans, will be appearing virtually via a satellite link with the convention. Given his fear of travel, this is as good as it will ever get for a fan.

We also listened and were enlightened by Julian Warner, Nicole Murphy, Merv & Helena Binns, Steve Lazarowitz about the gentle art of tactful, insightful and not too revealing reviews. Of course, its been years since I've written any reviews - who has time these days? I wish I did! Anyways, they one thing that they did not answer adequately, just what do you do with all those review copies? Keep, store, ebay?

Then we had lunch.

After lunch, I went down to the GoH Speech, and once again, it was amazing. She started the speech off by telling a story about Truth and Story Telling that I couldn't possibly do justice to here. She's one of these writers that once I listen to them, I wonder where I thought I could ever find the talent and creativity to even approach the level of these people. Never

Where was GB at this time? Following his other interest: wargaming.. This is the kind of convention he really enjoys - he can indulge both sides of his personality --- the gaming as well as the fannish fan side. That, and he had a chance to win a copy of a game "Six Billion", offered to the winner of a tournament game. He came second by five points.

Lured by the promise of a free drink, I had agreed to meet Rose in the Birdcage Lounge which was a nice cosy round bar with lots of comfy lounges. It turned out to be a blatant attempt to buy our votes the next morning at the Business Meeting for the Convergence 2 Bid --- with fluffy penguins and free alcohol. It worked for me.

We ended up catching a cab home because it turns out that over Sunday and holidays, the friendly Busy Bee Bus doesn't run after 5.40 pm....

13th June, 2005

The early morning walk to the Casino was brisk and bright

As we came to the driveway to the Casino we looked across the Derwent to see this serpent of fog moving sinuously out to sea. Thick, white, like a very real and living creature The Bridgewater Jerry is actually a tunnel of fog that moves from Bridgewater to the sea...

Business Meeting started very promptly in the Board Room chaired by David Cake. It was very well attended - in fact one of the better-attended meetings that I have been to.

The Convergence bid was very business-like, including a very nice publication with letters of support from the Mayor of Melbourne and the State's Premier. The Swancon Bid for 2007 pulled out, so Convergence won unopposed.

Ditmar Standing Committee report by Cary L brought up some clarification that is needed for the William Atheling Award to take out "body of work" to a piece of work. He also pointed out that only 29 people

voted for the Ditmars which brings forth the notion then that perhaps it is not as representative as it could be. Also, David C and Cary brought forward the possibility of allowing people who were members of the previous natcon should be allowed to vote. Also, there were amazing amount of nominations. Discussions went back and forth about how the new media could be used to help people see and read the nominations for the Ditmars so that more people could actively appreciate the work and see and appreciate it and perhaps, vote for it.

The Natcon Standing Committee reports – Conjure says that they have 2 bedroom apartments for four nights... about \$150 a night... which may be perfect if Tim & Jess would like to come and do this with us. I am getting the feeling it would be a good thing for us to do.

Graeme paid for his membership to Conjure at the special rate for Thylacon members of \$125.00. As there was no discount on student concession tickets, we can still pay Susan's membership for the same amount up until the end of July (when we can afford it).

“How Star Trek Changed the World”: a great topic and I really looked forward to this panel, with Mervyn and Helena, and Steve Lazarowitz. The audience looked lean and hungry for words about their favourite show. So the fact that the topic was not handled fully, did not come as a surprise. The fact that people jumped in with their favourite shows and actors, etc... well, it needed tightening as a panel. But it was still good to hear Star Trek acknowledged as a powerful, motivating force in lives.

We had lunch in the snack bar, won a few dollars towards some groceries, and headed back to the fan lounge.

The future of the Media with Cary Lenehan, Richard Harland & Nicole Murphy was quite a lively discussion, which sometimes descended (or should I say ascended?) into pure sociological theory. A lot was said about the future of paper which is dear to most of us fanzine eds, but perhaps not enough about the binding of people to the technology. How we all seem to be married to the technology (says she carrying around her computer to the con each day!) and we actually see it as part of our own personality, part of our functionality as a human being.

A real surprise for me at the convention was some of the faces I had not seen for a long while and one of them was Keith Curtis who had been a good friend and colleague in the past, especially with his auctioning skills.

We caught up and enjoyed a good conversation and hope to do it again some time.

The Closing Ceremony was brief and it was really sad to see an end to what had proved to be a short, but incredibly pleasant convention. And we had to dash – the last bus was due shortly and we had food to cook back at the apartment. ■

CONJURE

Thylacon Gaming Report

The gaming stream that was run at the con on Saturday and Sunday went well, with well over a dozen gamers playing a variety of games at various times. Saturday afternoon saw a peak activity of three games in progress involving twelve players. One great feature for me was the number of people new to this kind of gaming that turned up and got into it.

It was originally planned to run some gaming related panels, but in the end it was decided by those present to just keep playing! Such weighty matters such as "Games Workshop: Threat or Menace?" will have to be debated another time.

One highlight of the weekend was David Coutts bringing along his excellent game 6 Billion, along with two copies as prizes. A game of 6 Billion was played for one of the copies, with a lady from West Australia winning (whose name unfortunately escapes me at this late date!). The other copy was intended to be given away at the world building panel, but certain panellists (i.e. myself and Cary) got too involved in the discussion and clean forgot about it. Currently in the safekeeping of the committee (unopened), its fate is yet to be decided.

Games played included Chrononauts, Settlers of Cataan, Targui, Rail Baron, Titan, Munchkin, 6 Billion and Blood Bowl. Special thanks to John for watching the shop and helping new players, to David Coutts for bringing 6 Billion, and to all the gamers who participated for a fun weekend.

Mark Dewis
Gaming Coordinator



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Thyлаcon World Building III

For a variety of reasons the world that has been constructed over the last few Thyлаcons was not worked on this time. Instead, as a follow up to the panels of believable magic and non-Western European fantasy, we decided to make up a magic using race that had no analogues in Western Europe.

We decided that our alien would have multiple stages. After much 'discussion' this was refined to a frog-like cycle with a tadpole or fish-like form and a more humanoid form. The eggs are laid in streams; the young hatch and migrate to the sea. There the non-sentient young (called swimmers) eat various littoral seaweeds until they begin to grow legs and enter a pollywog stage. Swimmers are a major food source for various fish and there is no effort made to protect them. The pollywog young swim up a river. This is usually the same they came down, but not always. This helps with genetic variation. In the river they are usually caught by the adults, brought onto land, undergo a 'bringing forward' in a magical rite of passage that stimulates their communication and thinking and are raised and taught. This takes over ten years. This stage are called trills from a sound they make which is not used for communication, but is appreciated in their culture as an art form.

Once fully adult they have two years of sexual maturity ahead of them. Each adult is hermaphroditic and can both impregnate another at the same time as being impregnated. They hold the eggs only briefly before spawning in the river. Adults communicate empathically and have a neolithic culture where hunting and gathering are the main form of food supply. While there is agriculture, this is only through the use of magic to encourage plants to be fertile and to discourage weeds and pests. There is no conception of family. The group belong to their river and identification is solely through place. A barren area is one where the pollywogs cannot reach (eg above a waterfall). The oldest trills are always in charge in an oligarchic group.

There is also a serious predator in this land. It is bipedal and vaguely humanoid in appearance. It is also empathic and concentrates on a victim who believes that they want the predator to be close to them. We could call it a cuddle-tooth. Their neighbours are not under this illusion so the cuddle-tooth must move fast to secure its prey. Until the end of the period of sexual maturity trills emit a pheromone that usually serves to keep the cuddle-teeth at bay. Once they have bred two or three times this pheromone changes and attracts them.

If a trill is killed by a cuddle-tooth (and through no other reason) then they may 'ascend' and become a shimmermist. The shimmermist are corporeal and mortal, but ethereal and are hard to see and to touch. Perhaps the best description is a dragonfly made of made of gossamer and mist. They are very intelligent and are the gods of this world. They have more powerful magic than the trills. It uses the power of prayer and worship as a trigger to open a dimension gate. Vast power is available there to be used.

For ascension to occur there must be a sufficient number of shimmermist present and the correct rituals must be observed. The best and strongest trills live longest as shimmermist. There is a constant tension between allowing the trills to die so that they might ascend and allowing them to live longer and teach and breed. The trills are scared of, but worship the shimmermist who are even more emotionally (but not physically) tied to their valley. This ascension is not automatic and is not understood by the trills. Communication between trill and shimmermist is hard to achieve and best done when the trill is asleep or in trance.

In many ways this ecology represents a classic water (swimmers), earth (trills), air (shimmermist) and fire (cuddle-tooth) system and the shimmermist understand this.

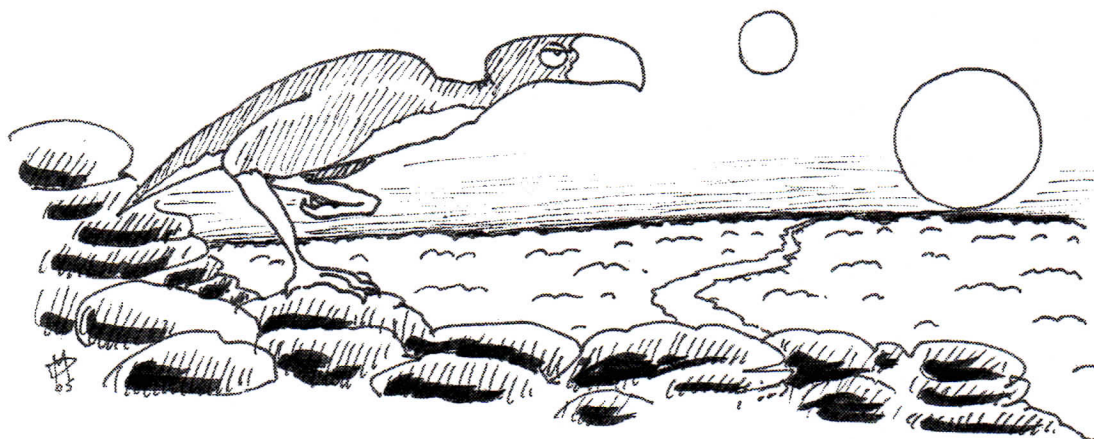
These species live on an island continent in a world-sea that occupies over half of its globe. It has a large number of large and fierce creatures in it. In the other half of the world are a variety

of other island-continent. On these is a humanoid race (we did not detail their characteristics, except that they are intelligent, altruistic and have no access to magic and no reliable access to empathic ability). They have a level of technology below gunpowder, but have, by accident discovered lighter-than-air travel in hydrogen filled dirigibles. They are powered by muscle-powered airscrews, are very inefficient and are easily lost, but are, if used correctly, more safe than the seas. A group of exiles in an airship are blown well off-course and arrive at our island. Any story would be told from their point of view as they crash on the island and gradually discover that it is not like home. They might wish to help the trills live longer by killing cuddle-teeth; this would upset the transition to shimmermist (which they have difficulty detecting). They would definitely want to protect themselves from them, as they have no built in defences. They would, by coming from the sky and with some technology, already have introduced doubt into the ancient belief structure and this would detract from the magic available to the shimmermist.

Panel participants: This is not the total list – but all that put their name down when I put a note on the board. Any mistakes in spelling are mine.

Steve Lazarowitz and Mark Dewis (assistant conspirators), Kirstyn McDermott, Jiří Baum, Dana Hardy, Craig Roberts, Betty North, Adrienne Losin, Matt Carter, James Tischler, Cassandra Lovell, Scott Robinson, Clare Gatenby, Alyson Roberts, Kay Appleyard, Andrew Cowling, Nicholas Calabria, and Bruce Barnes.

Cary Lenehan
June 2005





©FS 2005

Thyлаcon: A DUFF's-eye view

By Joe Siclari

My Thyлаcon adventure started with a call from Robin Johnson after I had won DUFF (Down Under Fan Fund). I was scrambling to arrange flights that would take me to as much of Australia as I could fit into my trip, and Robin called to offer advice and counsel. Because of Thyлаcon, I definitely would include Tasmania and I even had my own Charon as a guide who would eventually take me across the Styx.

But that's a story for my DUFF report; this is about Thyлаcon and science fiction and fandom.

Going all the way to Australia for DUFF is a bit overwhelming on its own. What can you do to be a representative of American fandom to an entirely

unknown group of people? I decided that the only thing to do was to be myself and enjoy the idea of meeting a whole group of new people. But what I didn't consider was that this was S-F fandom – not normal strangers but part of my own, sometimes strange, community.

Cary Lenehan had the transport and guide duty for Thyлаcon and qualified he is, having gone back to school to get a degree in Tourism. After picking up Anne Bishop, Thyлаcon's American Guest of Honor (who I had met a few days before in Sydney) and me at the airport, he gave us a short guided tour around the airport area before going back for more convention guests, and then taking us all on a winding trip back into Hobart. He pointed out the first street, the finest gallery, the oldest house and the roads built by convict labor.

After stopping at by the home of Robin Johnson (who I have known for years from Worldcons), we went to the hotel to check in. While I was standing in line, Eric Lindsay came by. Eric and I had first traded fanzines in the early 70s. Soon he brought over Jean Weber, whom I've also known from convention dinners and from her fanzines. After getting to my room, I found it was next to Justin Ackroyd's, my Australian agent for MagiCon. Instead of being among strangers, it was a convention! My family gathering! And everyone else I met was just as friendly and welcoming.

Barely had I said hello to all these people, when Robin came by to take me to the Cadbury Chocolate factory. On the way I got acquainted with Merv and Helena Binns whom he already had in the car. A chocolate factory – just the place for the old and diabetic. But we had a great time touring the plant with eight munchkins and two of their parents. I began to understand why some people say that Australians have the biggest sweet tooth in the world. This one operation made 40 tonnes of chocolate a week and only exported 5 %. With all its vast output, it's only one of several Cadbury plants in Australia. And many Aussies I met distained Cadbury for "better" Australian chocolate.

Getting back to the hotel quickly after the factory tour was a priority as there was to be a reception hosted by the Royal Mayor at the Town Hall. Now this was quite different from a convention in the U.S. In the States, we're lucky to get a letter of welcome from a politician.

Getting a proper catered reception and a guided tour of the finer historical points of the building was an exceptional Thylacon bonus. Finding the next day that the Mayor had been convinced by Allannah Turner to participate in a semi-scripted farcical panel on what would be going on in Hobart in the far future after he had been reawakened from a frozen sleep, was even more unusual.

The entire convention was like this. Familiar and yet different, full of friends, and suddenly full of the unusual. I was on a couple of panels. One 50 minute program on fanzines was moderated by Alison Barton; she had been handed a two-page outline by Bill Wright that would take days to do it justice. We covered a lot of fanzine territory with the help of the Binns' who were also on the panel.

Another early morning panel on Fan Funds started with as many on the panel as in the audience but ended up respectably as fen awoke and attended, whether conscious or not. Trufen endure.

Being asked to be a judge at the Thylacon Masquerade along with Merv and Helena gave me the proper excuse to wear my extraordinarily over-effulgent BEM and Brass-brassiered Bimbo vest. It is very nostalgic, and somewhat reminiscent of an old pulp cover, had the publisher lacked in modest self censorship. It is tasteful in an awful sort of way. At least it garnered some attention as nearly half the women at the con made me stop and model it for them! The masquerade itself was small, but the costumers were enthusiastic (with the winner responsible for two costume entries).

Later in the con I found that Justin Ackroyd and I had similar and compatible styles as I helped him with the fan auctions. For a convention of less than 100, and with only a small fraction of them at the auction, the fans were incredibly generous. We raised over \$1300 for the fan funds.

Sitting around talking and just occasionally drinking with Julian Warner and Zara Baxter and Rose Mitchell and Dave Luckett and Ian Nicholls and Robin and Justin and Bill and Eric and Merv and Helena and many others gave me lots of excuses to indulge my curiosity about fannish history Australian style. I even came home with fanzines and hundreds of photos from fandom way back when. Imagine that!?!

Thylacon chair Tansy wins a prize for juggling the most responsibilities. Besides chairing, she also did the program and was keeping a hungry baby fed; along with husband Andrew Finch (he was also tech) she also did program support. At the closing Tansy was generous in her praise for staff and very graciously thanked the fan fund winners attending the con for the nice con reports they *would* write! Wasn't that sweet of her?

BTW, I had a great time. Thylacon was great fun, full of old friends and new. Thank you all for your hospitality. I hope to have a lot more about Thylacon in my DUFF report. ■





WHITE MICE WORLDBUILDING

www.whitemicegames.com.au

One of the things to come out of Thylacon was that Marianne de Pierres agreed to let Marjorie and I develop her fabulous and dark *Nylon Angel* series of books into a game. This gave us the impetus to start producing games. Thus the Multi-Universe Trading and Investment Company (trading as White Mice Worldbuilding) was born as a real corporation.

The company name had appeared quite a bit over the years (in slightly different permutations) in many books and stories. We chose the trading name of White Mice Worldbuilding for several reasons. The 'mice' are: partly because of the Hitchhiker's reference, partly to honour my father (he collected mice) and partly in reference to our first computer game (probably appearing later this year as an on-line game), which will utilise what was already known as our Multi-Universe System ('mus' is the Latin for 'mouse').

So far we have released a set of table-top miniatures rules, which are unique in that they can be played without actually having any miniatures (which is a lot cheaper for people who want to see if they like the hobby). These are called *Fantastic Battles*. They are beautifully illustrated by local Tasmanian fan artist Cassandra Lovell (you can find her at <http://www.heartofglitter.dragoncity.net/>) who came to Thylacon as her first Con to meet Marianne. Her illustrations are also used on our t-shirts.

Cassandra also provided the internal art for the *Nylon Angel* game. The covers were done by two other fans of Marianne: CJ (Catherine Geaney from Ireland) and Neyjour (Christy Roberts from the USA). We should have links to them on our site by the time you receive this. We are very pleased to use talented fan artists as our illustrators (they now must count as professionals) and the reaction to their artwork has been overwhelming.

Nylon Angel (the game) was released at Conjure in Brisbane. The launch was done by one of the fathers of cyber-punk, Bruce Sterling and by Marianne herself. We are looking at ways to translate the game in German to service some of Marianne's many European fans. *Nylon Angel* is a tabletop role-playing game for a referee and one or more players. To play it all that is needed (apart from the rules) are some six and some twenty-sided dice. Downloads of character sheets and such are available for free from our website. These rules were game tested for three main criteria:

- Did novice players find it easy to play?
- Did experienced players find it gave them enough? and
- Did ex-SAS types approve of the combat system?

We are very pleased to report it passed all three!

We see *Nylon Angel* as the first of many SF related releases and we are also happy to look at producing games (computer, tabletop or board) that other people develop, if they meet our criteria. As a result of Conjure more games are on the horizon, so it looks like we will just have to keep going to Cons.

Regardless of whether you are a gamer, please feel free to visit our website. We're looking forward to seeing more of you all in the future.

Cary & Marjorie Lenehan

<http://www.whitemicegames.com.au/>

2005 Ditmar Awards

Congratulations to all nominees and winners for 2005. A History of the Ditmar Awards for excellence in Australian Science Fiction is now available online at <http://www.ditpillers.com/>

Novel

Richard Harland: *The Black Crusade*

Maxine McArthur: *Less than Human*

* *Sean Williams:- The Crooked Letter*

Collected works

Agog! Smashing Stories: ed Cat Sparks

* *Black Juice: - Margo Lanagan.*

Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine: ed Lyn

Triffitt, Edwina Harvey, Andrew Finch, Baxter,

Robbie Matthews & Tehani Croft

Orb 6: ed Sarah Endacott

Encounters: ed Donna Hanson and Maxine

McArthur,

Novella or Novelette

Simon Brown: *Water Babies*, Agog! Smashing Stories, April

Stephen Dedman: *The Whole of the Law*, ASIM 13

* *Paul Haines: - The Last Days of Kali Yuga, NFG Magazine, Volume 2 Issue 4, August 2004*

Richard Harland: *Catabolic Magic*, *Aurealis* #32

Cat Sparks: *Home by the Sea*, Orb #6, July

Short Stories

Deborah Biancotti: *Number 3 Raw Place*, Agog! Smashing Stories, April

Rjurik Davidson: *The Interminable Suffering of Mysterious Mr Wu*, *Aurealis* #33

* *Margo Lanagan: - Singing My Sister Down, Black Juice.*

Ben Peek: *R*, Agog! Smashing Stories, ed by Cat Sparks

Pro Artwork

Les Petersen: cover of ASIM 12

* *Kerri Valkova: - Cover of The Black Crusade, Chimaera Publications*

Cat Sparks: Agog! Smashing Stories cover

Les Petersen: Encounters Book Cover

Les Petersen: cover and internal ASIM 16

Pro Achievement

* *The Clarion South Team (Fantastic Old - Convenors - Robert Hoge, Kate Eltham, Robert Dobson & Heather Gent): negotiating with the US Clarion people, then promoting and establishing Clarion South which gives emerging writer the chance to work with the best in the business.*

Cat Sparks: editing and writing including winning third place in the Writers of the Future award

Margo Lanagan: for *Black Juice*

Geoff Maloney: for *Tales of the Crypto-System*, his short story publications

Sean Williams for *The Crooked Letter* and efforts in teaching

Jonathan Strahan for work over the year in internationally published reviews and in editing anthologies

Fan achievement

Super Happy Robot Hour

* *Conflux convention committee*

Continuum 2 convention committee

Fan Art

* *Sarah Xu.*

Fan website/zine

Antipodean SF: ed Ion Newcombe.

* *Bullsheets: - ed Edwina Harvey & Ted Scribner.*

Gynaezine: ed Emma Hawkes and Gina Goddard.

Fan writer.

Edwina Harvey.

* *Gillespie, Bruce.*

New Talent.

Chris Barnes. Stuart Barrow. Grace Duggan,

* *Paul Haines.* Barbara Robson, Brian Smith.

William Atheling Jnr Award for Criticism or Review (Tie)

* *Robert Hood: - review of Weight of Water at HoodReviews, asking "is this film a ghost story?"*

* *Jason Nahrung: - Why are publishers afraid of horror, BEM, Courier Mail, 20 March 2004*

Ben Peek: review of Haruki Murakami's work in the Urban Sprawl Project,

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/benpeek/231224.html>

The Peter Mac Namara Achievement Award (presented by Mariann MacNamara)

* *Jonathan Strahan*

Final Words From the Chair's Pen

(or, something vaguely approximating what the Chair actually said in her closing speech)

A good convention is about the moments.

There are the conversations, and the books, and the panels, and the costumes, and the speeches, and the readings, and the old friends, and the new friends.

But mostly, it's about the moments.

When you're on the organising committee of the convention, for the first time ever, and you're the Chair, and you have a new baby, and you really should be getting on with your thesis, and your novel, and your life, it's easy to get overwhelmed. To think, why am I doing this? Is it even going to happen? Will I have a split second to enjoy myself, or will it just be work work work, with a side helping of stress and six panic attacks for dessert?

You ask yourself, am I crazy? And you ask yourself – will anyone really notice if I don't show up? Is it too late to empty the bank account and go to Hawaii?

But then you get here, and you remember. Oh, that's right. You love conventions. And in amongst the work and the fun (and the slightly torturous experience of sharing a hotel room with a 5 month old baby) there are the moments that not only make it all worthwhile, but also remind you how you got into this community in the first place.

It's being told for the first time that the convention is going swimmingly and being unutterably grateful that someone thought to let you know.

It's seeing people actually put cardboard babel fish in their ears.

It's seeing the Ditmar trophies for the first time, at the ceremony, and knowing how much work went into making them.

It's every single sub committee coming in under budget.

It's the people who say 'can I help?' and 'is there anything I can do to be useful?'

It's never getting tired of hearing how beautiful and well behaved and good your baby is, and seeing their faces light up when she smiles at them.

And it's seeing new science fiction fans attend their first convention and really throw themselves into it feet first – people like James and Cassandra who are the future of science fiction fandom. (And by the way guys, you're running the next Thylacon, I'm not kidding about this.)

So thank you, all of you, for providing those moments that make a Natcon what it is, because we really couldn't have done it without you.

I do have some specific people to thank – if I forget you, please put it down to 'milk brain' as Kate Forsyth calls it – I am grateful really, but I'm also tired and a little spacey.

Thanks to our wonderful, friendly and generally fantastic Guests of Honour - Anne Bishop, Marianne de Pierres and Merv Binns.

Also thank you to all our lovely volunteers, those who signed up before, during and after. Anyone who sat on registration, room duty, security, masquerade set up and takedown, or just distracted the baby for five minutes while my back was turned, thank you. You're one in a million.

Thank you to Cary and Marjorie for making this year's handcrafted wood and ceramic Ditmars, and for filling their house with fumes to do so. They also hosted our meetings and fed the executive committee spaghetti, week after week.

Thank you to Allannah for publicity, running the Masquerade and mayor-wrangling.

Thank you to Jilli (the glamma-est gramma) for Masquerade design and set up, sponsorship, publicity, volunteer co-ordination, show bags, babysitting and so many other tasks I can't even begin to be grateful for all of them. (How do other Con Chairs cope without their Mum on the committee?)

Thank you to Robin for being our guest liason, travel co-ordinator (every convention needs an ex-travel agent!) and fan historian.

Thank you to Steve for the Green House event. Thank you to Mark for the gaming programme, and the beautiful cover and internal illustrations of our programme book. Thanks also to the other two Marks as well as Cary for being our security team, to Clare and Kirsty for bag stuffing as well as sundry other jobs, and Monissa for setting up our website.

Thank you to our panellists for being warm and witty and entertaining (and actually showing up, don't think I took that for granted!). It's starting to feel like that nightmare about the Oscars now, but we're close to the end...

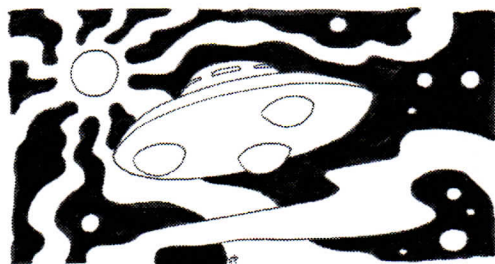
Thank you to Joe Siclari and Zara Baxter for being our fan delegates and writing wonderful things about us when they get home.

And if you think I've been remarkably calm and unflappable over this weekend, we have one person in particular to thank for that: Andrew Finch is not only a wonderfully supportive partner and a great dad, but he also handled all our memberships and treasurership, designed the Thylacon logo and pawprint, handled newsletters, updates, the website and our mailing list, designed and laid out the programme book, arranged the music for the masquerade, acted as tech support and performed dozens of other duties I can't even remember. [Update: he also assembled, laid out and produced the souvenir book almost single-handed] Truly, behind every good woman is a great man doing a ridiculous amount of work and in this case that is definitely Finchy.

It was wonderful to see you all down in Hobart for Thylacon 2005. Aurelia Iris Finch would like to pass on her greetings to everyone who spoiled her rotten with attention all weekend long. When she's Chairing Thylacon 2025, you can all pat her head and say you knew her when...

Love and Hugs,
Signing off as the Thylacon Chair for the very last time...

Tansy Rayner Roberts



Karen Warnock
23 August 1956 – 9 September 2005

The Woman I Knew

It is impossible for me to describe in words my love for Karen. If you have ever loved someone unconditionally then you know what it is like. If you haven't then anything I say will be as if I were describing colour to a blind man.

What I can describe is the absolutely remarkable resilience and strength that Karen possessed, as exemplified by her reaction to the continual trials that afflicted her over that last decade or so. If you were to take any of the dictionaries that Karen had from our copious bookshelves I would be surprised if the word despair could be found anywhere in them. She had no use for such an idea. Life was to be lived and a little medical problem wasn't going to change that.



For many people, to suddenly be unable to continue doing the only thing you ever wanted to do would be so devastating it would be almost impossible to recover. Yet, when Karen was forced to give up teaching because of her sudden blindness, she was able to put the disappointment behind her and move on in a remarkably short time. It just wasn't in Karen's nature to wallow in self pity, and nor was it something she abided easily in others.

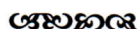
In the years after losing her sight Karen was often asked how she coped. She had a very simple but very true answer. You cope because you have to – what else is there. The unstated assumption is that the "what else is there" is just something you don't ever contemplate.

Karen also had a quirky sense of humour. She described it as a sense of the absurd and the bizarre rather than a genuine sense of humour. If it was just a little offbeat, a little left of centre, then it tended to tickle her funny bone.

Above all else though, Karen had a wonderful sense of others. She genuinely loved people and was gifted with that great knack of being able to judge them for who they were without prejudice. I had the greatest of all fortunes to be the one that she loved the most. That is an honour for which I will always be grateful.

Rest in peace Darling. If ever anyone deserved to do so, it is you.

*Extract and photograph from "A tribute to my wife Karen Warnock" by Gerald Smith
The complete tribute may be downloaded at www.thylacon.com/Tribute.pdf*



James Trakler

Cassandra Love

Mamma Venu

Autographs

Mat full beard

Scott Robinson



Nichelle Mynard

ADRENNE LOSAN

Handwritten signature

Bill Congreve

Vito Reed

Handwritten signature

Helen Binns

Jay R

Robert Hoff

Jim Barton

Ben Jones

Aria Johnson

Donna Fisher

Marjorie Leckie

Kary Applegate

Handwritten signature

David Cobe

Mike O'Brien

Shane Cunningham

Maree Johnson

Jan Wela

Handwritten signature

Handwritten signature

Whitcliffe

Noreen

Zara Baxter xx

Ruler

Kat Spinks

Robert Hood

Gerold Smith

Margaret Hilliard

Nicole Murray

Betty + the 2 marks

Joelida (DUFF)

Carly

Wendy Calabria

Steve Tangaroa

Chris Calabria

Pauline Coker

Nicholas Calabria

Handwritten signature



Ditmar Award 2005, wood and ceramic
by Cary and Marjorie Lenehan