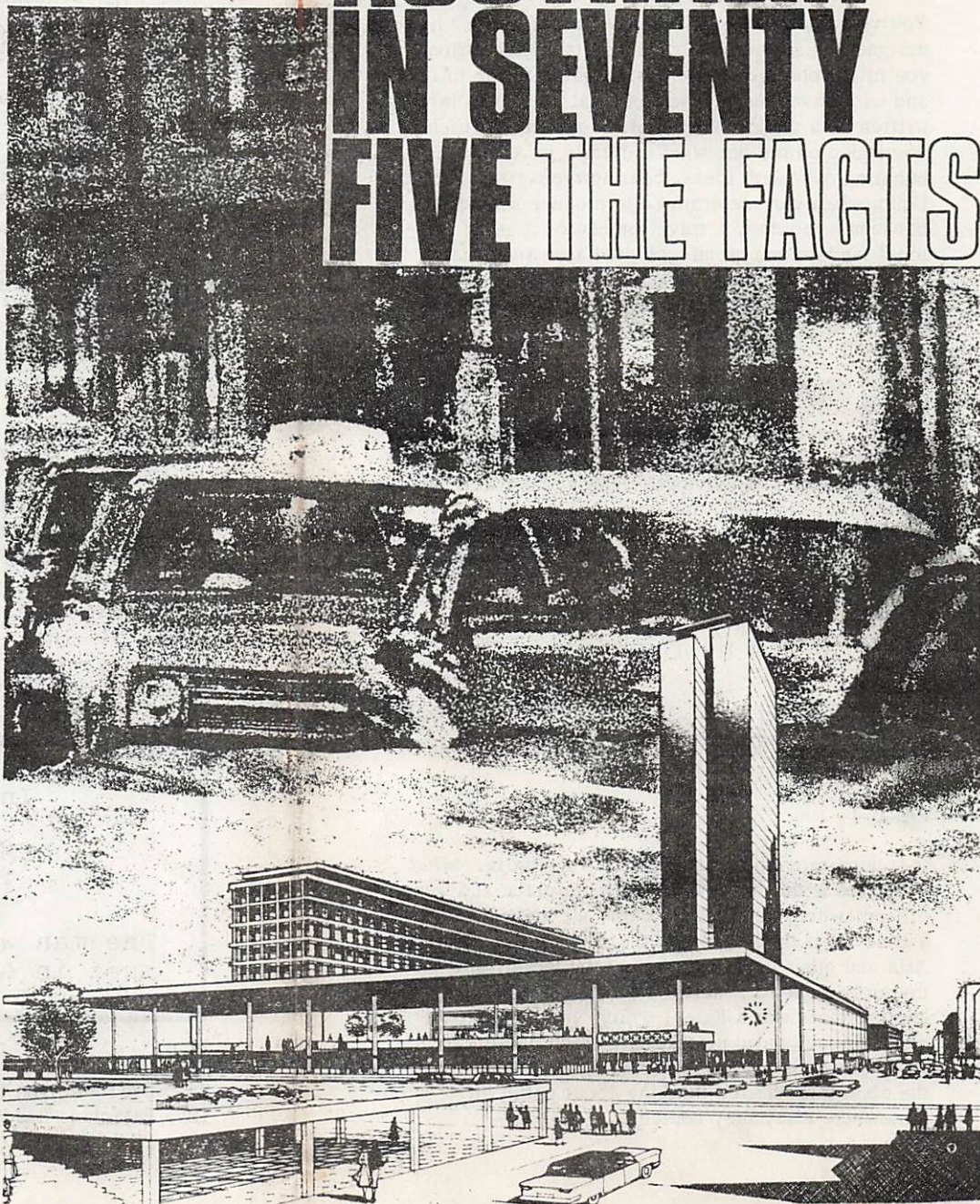


AUSTRALIA IN SEVENTY FIVE THE FACTS



Introduction

The facts. Yes. Well. The trouble with facts, as someone has remarked before me, is that they so seldom tell the whole story. This little booklet has been carefully designed not to tell the whole story - and there's your first fact. Here's another:

AUSTRALIAN FANDOM IS BIDDING FOR THE 1975 WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION.

The site is Melbourne, the bid Australian. The bidding committee is very large, and we don't mind at all. About half of us are in Melbourne, the rest of us scattered about the continent. You'll meet us, in sordid detail, later on in this booklet.

You've heard the story about the camel being a horse designed by a committee. This little publication, you might observe, has a curious lump in the middle and will travel for days without water. It was largely written by a gaggle of committee members which descended on me one weekend early in August 1971, bubbling over with ideas, bearing typewriters and no liquor whatever, determined to produce something between a fanzine, a travel brochure, a guide to local fandom and an encyclopædia of Australiana. It was a great party, and some of the stuff they wrote was actually sufficiently decipherable days later to be used here.

My job was simply to provide the liquor, tell them what to write about, supply stationery, provide more liquor, heave them all out before the neighbours complained, read the bilge they had written and then try to produce as unobviously lumpy and arid a booklet as possible. I failed, and here it is.

(John Bangsund)

NO, THAT'S US OVER HERE!

A Shortish Survey of Australian History Geography Politics Eating-Habits &c In Several Parts

PART I

It is uncertain who first discovered Australia. What is certain is that they didn't like the place and went off somewhere else. Then came the aborigines - at a time (it is thought) when the country was linked to Asia and other civilized parts of the world, and therefore on foot. Shortly afterwards, as is well known, there was a Flood, which Noah and his lot came through quite nicely, but which had the rather nasty effect of cutting Australia adrift - and when the aborigines started thinking about going off somewhere else, they couldn't.

So they stayed, grumbling a little perhaps, and over the next few thousand years developed a very intricate and apparently quite satisfactory kind of society. While the rest of the world stumbled along somehow, blowing itself up with gunpowder, rotting its mind with printing and its innards with potatoes and tobacco, the aborigines quietly had a lot of fun painting cave walls and each other, telling long, lovely stories about the creation of the universe and the origin of species, and playing about with corroborees, boomerangs, gunyahs, woomeras, nulla-nullas and other curious artefacts.

About two hundred years ago, into this land of beauty and tranquillity there stepped a boatload of Englishmen who, utterly indifferent to the Black Australia policy then in effect, proceeded to take over the place. Oblivious to the complaints of the residents, these people started building towns and roads and things, and introduced alcohol, pollution, history and other evils from the outside world.

Apart from shooting them, the white men had very little to do with the aborigines - except when they needed names for things. When you consider that the aborigines spoke all sorts of different languages, but not English, this would seem an odd thing to do. And it was. As a result, most of the beautiful aboriginal names we use for places and animals and so on really mean "I beg yours?" or "Shove off, sport" or "Pale-face speak with forked tongue".

From there on it was all downhill. Squatters, trams, football, gold rushes, suburbs, Pharlap, the Eureka Stockade, Henry Lawson, election of the first Labor prime minister, Gallipoli, missile bases, the RSL, votes for women, invention of the pie-with-sauce, Federation, the Petrov Case &c &c &c. All very dull, and let's not go into it here.

So much for history. Now, my friend here ((you ready there, Robin?)) will continue this article.

PART II

Australia ((thanks, John)) is that large, rather empty island in the bottom corner of the world map. On the political one it is coloured red, and on the physical map green with yellow patches. Anyone who has flown over it in daytime will agree that red is the more appropriate, although it actually refers to our membership of the British Commonwealth, whatever that might be.

When the newspapers write of the Commonwealth, they mean the Federal Government, centred in Canberra, Australia's only inland city of any large size. The States, ranging up to a million square miles in area, are only six in number, each having its capital in the largest city, which has not helped decentralization at all. The country is the most urbanized in

the world, with 93% of the population in the cities. The move from the country to the cities is not helped by the current bad markets for primary produce, and if major mineral finds had not been made over the past ten years the country would be in a very bad way economically.

With so many people living in suburbs of major coastal cities, the stereotype bronzed-surfer image is not too surprising. (In Melbourne it is easy to forget the proximity of the sea, as the land is mostly flat.)

The reason for the low country population is not hard to find: this is the world's driest continent. Less than a million people live more than a hundred miles from the coast, although there are places a thousand miles from the nearest sea. Nevertheless, many Australians retain the self-image of the hardy pioneer, struggling against vast natural forces to develop his selection of land. The average Australian, who probably works for General This or Consolidated That (headquarters New York or London), is interested in sport (to the extent of spending Saturday afternoon at the football in winter, or bird-watching at the beach in summer), in paying off his house and car, and in winning the jackpot, either on the pokies at his club or on the ponies at the Tote Board.

Given this, it is not too surprising that politics is pretty unreal to most Australians. In the past, major social advances were pioneered here (votes for women, state pensions, workers' compensation), and more recently a real attempt has been made to increase the proportion of the population of other than British descent. The rate of migration has been as high to Australia as to the USA in recent years - around 170,000 per year. Many of these people have come from Italy and Greece, and there are now about ten thousand coloured migrants per year.

We are also catching up in the pollution race. With only thirteen million people, the attitude has been that we do not have to worry - but we must be just about the thirteen million messiest people on Earth. It might take a major ecological disaster to change this attitude. Several are waiting in the wings. I hope there will still be some coral on the Barrier Reef for you to see in 1975; if the ravages of the crown-of-thorns starfish are only temporary, even, it will be decades before the damage is repaired. Unique terrain formations north of Sydney are expected to be destroyed soon by rutile mining, and several species of Australia's animal life are headed for extinction.

Cities here are pretty much like those in California, allowing for wider climatic range. Melbourne has a recognizable centre, with wide, tree-lined streets, and many new buildings are replacing the ornate palaces of commerce erected towards the end of the last century. It still has trams, sadly no longer cable-drawn, and a dense railway network, but in

other ways is very reminiscent of Los Angeles. The rectangular grid of streets extending tens of miles through suburbs of private houses on their own land make the city one of the most extensive in the world, and the reasons for this development are very similar to those for Los Angeles'. (According to Reyner Banham's recent book, these were the Pacific Electric interurban rapid transit system, and the individualism and desire to own their own land of the early Southern California settlers from the Midwest.)

Melbourne has gone the furthest of any Australian city towards the development of a freeway system, but that isn't very far.

From being in the 1880s an "American" city, with the brash go-ahead qualities that implies, and the confidence to build to a plan, Melbourne now is usually regarded as a fairly staid, "British" place. Nevertheless it has become a civilized, major city, with only minor hang-ups, such as the civic rivalry with Sydney. (Sydney is now larger than Melbourne and has compensation for its lack of planning in being spread around the shores of one of the great natural harbours of the world.)

One major difference between Melbourne and Californian cities is that shop opening times are more restricted: there is no late evening shopping, and the sidewalks are rolled up at 12 noon on Saturdays. (But there are some indications that all this might change by, say, 1975.)

There was a time when Australian eating-places seemed to offer nothing else but steak-and-eggs or pie-with-sauce. No, that's being too nasty; there have always been excellent restaurants here, but they maybe took a bit of finding. With the influx of migrants in recent years all this has changed, and there are countless restaurants, large and small, cheap and expensive, offering an incredible variety of fare. Then there is Colonel Sanders... but let's not talk about that.

((Is that all, Robin?))

((Ah, no. I just happen to have twenty thousand words here about Melbourne Airport...))

((Over to Bill, then!))

PART III

Melbourne is bigger than most American cities - in area and population - a sprawling metropolis of two and a half million population.

The development of the city has been along an extensive network of suburban railway lines which terminate in the busiest rail terminal in the world (no cause for boasting, we assure you). The lower part of the cover of this booklet is an artist's impression of a proposed redevelopment of Flinders Street

Station. The present structure has to be seen to be believed (and the chances are you'll still be able to see it in '75).

((Can I butt in for a moment, Bill?))

((Be my guest...))

((It's just your mentioning railway stations. We're pretty well supplied with architectural curiosities in this line. One of them is at Maryborough, about a hundred or so miles north-west of Melbourne. Mark Twain described Maryborough as "a railway station with town attached" when he passed that way some years back. It seems the Member of Parliament for Maryborough was also the state's Minister for Railways and he somehow managed to have the proposed Spencer Street Station for Melbourne built in his home town. On another occasion, he...))

((Ahem!))

((Sorry. I'll save it for Scythrop. Carry on.))

There are fourteen major hotels and motels within a five mile radius of the city's "Golden Mile" - a built-up centre bounded more or less by the Yarra River to the south, the Port of Melbourne to the west, and parklands to north and east.

Normally in Australia a hotel is a place to have a beer. Some even provide accommodation. What I call "major hotels" are just that, providing accommodation with private facilities of a very high standard indeed. And there are more being built.

Motels are a comparatively recent development. There are some cheap-and-nasty places here and there, but by far the majority provide superior, even luxurious, accommodation and service.

Tariffs in the near-city area range from about \$7.00 to \$20.00 per day for single suites.

The Savoy-Plaza Hotel, where we plan to hold the 12th Australian Convention in 1973, has its entire first floor reserved for conventions and other functions - an area of 5160 square feet - for a rental of \$150 per day. The theatre capacity is 500; the banquet room seats 450. If three-quarters of the 144 rooms are booked by convention members, these facilities are thrown in free of charge. This kind of arrangement, where the convention facilities are booked separately, is the usual thing in Australia: I understand it is rare in America. It does mean that we have these facilities entirely to ourselves, and there is no trouble with management when non-residents attend convention sessions.

There is much more I could tell you about Melbourne - a lot of it good, too. I think you'll like the place. Even if you finish up agreeing with those people in other parts of the country who say, "A great place for a holiday (but I wouldn't want to live there)".

Certainly you'll like the people.

AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

A Brf Hstry by Lgh Edmnds

From the beginning Australian science fiction fandom has had to depend upon the American market mainly for its reading material. Though there have been various attempts to publish sf professionally here, none has been successful. There is not, therefore, a large number of writers. Those we have are jolly fine fellows, of course, but there is not the infinite variety of stimulating personalities we imagine you have. Without a market, with few writers, fandom here has developed in a special way.

For many years the American magazines were not imported. Australian fans had to rely on the British magazines and reprints. The scarcity of material led to the formation of clubs which centred around their precious libraries.

Fandom in Australia more or less began with the Futurian Society of Sydney. This club exists still, but has little connection with the mainstream of contemporary fandom. You can read about its early days - the feuds and so on - in Harry Warner's book. It conducted the first few Australian conventions, published fanzines, and inspired the formation of the Melbourne SF Club, from which all present activity in Australian fandom descends.

The MSFC was formed in the early fifties. Until recently it was the centre of Australian fandom, organizing all the conventions, producing most of the fanzines. In 1966 the club held the first local convention in eight years, and out of this came the fanzine Australian Science Fiction Review which started the resurgence of Australian fandom. Through it the Sydney SF Foundation came into being; from it came, eventually, the Brisbane F&SF Association and the various other clubs. Through its inspiration many other fanzines came to be published. The circle continues to widen: new groups, new fanzines, and just about all of them can be traced back to ASFR and that momentous convention just five years ago.

With the resurgence of fandom came also an emerging of writers, helped on mainly by the now unfortunately defunct Vision of Tomorrow. Ron Graham, long-time Sydney fan and collector, published Vision. His Australian editor, the ubiquitous Bangsund, dug up writers all over the place and encouraged their efforts. Some made it into print, some didn't; some now publish fanzines, most appear in them from time to time.

In the last year or so, things have been busting out all over, with the emergence of many new personalities, many different ideas. There have been some magnificent fanzines, some wonderful conventions and some unbelievable characters. The future promises to be even more entertaining.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANNISH ACTIVITIES

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Victoria:

MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION CLUB

GPO Box 1267L Melbourne 3001 Sec: M. Binns

MELBOURNE FANTASY FILM GROUP

GPO Box 1267L Melbourne 3001 Sec: P. Stevens

THE NOVA MOB

GPO Box 4946 Melbourne 3001 Sec: J. Foyster

SCIENCE FICTION DISCUSSION GROUP

GPO Box 4039 Melbourne 3001 Newly-formed

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SF ASSOCIATION

Melbourne University Union Parkville 3052

MONASH UNIVERSITY SF ASSOCIATION

Monash University Union Clayton 3168

New South Wales:

SYDNEY SCIENCE FICTION FOUNDATION

GPO Box 4593 Sydney 2001 Sec: G. Mason

FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

GPO Box 4440 Sydney 2001 Sec: M. McGuinness

DUSK (Star Trek-orientated group)

20 Tryon Ave Wollstonecraft 2165 Sec: S. Heggie

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SF ASSOCIATION

Box 126 Sydney University Union Sydney 2006

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY SF ASSOCIATION

(No current information)

Queensland:

BRISBANE FANTASY & SF ASSOCIATION

GPO Box 2268 Brisbane 4001 Sec: D. Stocks

South Australia:

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY SF ASSOCIATION

1 Michael St Lockleys 5032 Sec: J. Hewitt

National:

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

(No current information)

AUSTRALIAN TOLKIEN SOCIETY
158 Liverpool St Hobart Tasmania 7000

AUSTRALIAN STAR TREK FAN CLUB
32 Bulleen Rd North Balwyn Victoria 3104

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND AMATEUR
PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION (ANZAPA)
GPO Box 2268 Brisbane 4001 OE: D. Stocks

CONVENTIONS

Three were held during 1971, two in Melbourne, one in Brisbane. During 1972 three are planned:

1st Adelaide Convention - January 1-3

9th Melbourne Convention - Easter

11th Australian Convention - Sydney, August

(Overseas memberships are welcome. Contact the convention committees care of Adelaide University SF Association, Melbourne SF Club and Sydney SF Foundation, respectively.)

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

SPACE AGE BOOKSHOP

GPO Box 1267L Melbourne 3001 Proprietors:
M. Binns & R. Graham Australia's only specialist
sf shop Australiana procured for overseas clients

PARERAGON BOOKS

GPO Box 4946 Melbourne 3001 Proprietor:
J. Bangsund Fan publishing and duplicating

FANZINES

Most Australian fan publishers will supply sample copies on request. They are all broke, so a small contribution towards postage would be appreciated. Articles, artwork and letters of comment are usually preferred to subscriptions.

A75 BULLETIN

Australia in 75 Committee; circulation restricted to Australia. A general-circulation quarterly fanzine is to be launched shortly.

AUSFAN

Adelaide Uni SF Association Newsletter

AUSTRALIAN BURROUGHS COURIER

Allan Tompkins GPO Box 5465 Melbourne 3001
Circulation restricted to Australia.

BOYS' OWN FANZINE

Leigh Edmonds & John Foyster PO Box 74 Balaclava
Victoria 3183 Quarterly 50c

CHAO

John Alderson PO Box 72 Maryborough Victoria
3465 Quarterly 35c

COR SERPENTIS

Monash Uni SF Association Irregular

ETHERLINE '71

Melbourne SF Club newszine

GEGENSCHHEIN

Eric Lindsay 6 Hillcrest Ave Faulconbridge
NSW 2776 Quarterly 25c

NORSTRILIAN NEWS

Bruce Gillespie GPO Box 5195AA Melbourne 3001
12 for \$1.00 Fortnightly newszine

SCYTHROP

John Bangsund GPO Box 4946 Melbourne 3001
Bi-monthly 6 for US\$3.00 (Agent: Andy Porter)

SF COMMENTARY

Bruce Gillespie (see above) 8 for \$3.00 (C. Brown)

TERRAN TIMES

DUSK genzine Quarterly 40c

THE FANARCHIST

David Grigg 1556 Main Rd Research Victoria
3095 Bi-monthly 5 for \$1.00 (B. Bowers)

THE MENTOR

Ron Clarke 78 Redgrave Rd Normanhurst NSW
2076 3 for \$1.00

THE NEW FORERUNNER

Sydney SF Foundation newszine Irregular

THE SOMERSET GAZETTE

Melbourne SF Club genzine Quarterly 4 for \$1.50

TOLKIEN BULLETIN

Australian Tolkien Society Irregular

WOMBAT

Ron Clarke (see above) Bi-monthly No subs

YGGDRASIL

Melbourne Uni SF Association Irregular

ENIGMA

Sydney Uni SF Association Irregular

THE AUSTRALIA IN 75 COMMITTEE

General Address: GPO Box 4039 Melbourne 3001

Members:

LEIGH EDMONDS (Chairman) PO Box 74 Balaclava
Vic 3183; public servant; publisher Rataplan, Boys'
Own Fanzine &c; founder ANZAPA; member APA-45,
SAPS, MSFC, NM, DUSK.

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JOHN BANGSUND (Publicity Director) GPO Box 4946
Melbourne 3001; journalist; publisher ASFR, Scythrop
&c; member ANZAPA, OMPA, MSFC, NM; agent -
Algol, Scottishe, Sweden in 76.

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bookseller; secretary MSFC; agent - Advent &c &c.

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SSFF - en route to Coventry, England.

BRUCE GILLESPIE GPO Box 5195AA Melbourne 3001;
teacher; publisher SF Commentary &c; member
ANZAPA, MSFC, NM, MelUSFA; agent - Locus,
Speculation, Quicksilver, Eurocon 1.

- DAVID GRIGG 1556 Main Rd Research Vic 3095;
layabout; publisher The Fanarchist; member MSFC,
ANZAPA, NM, MelUSFA; agent - Egg, Checkpoint.
- CAREY HANDFIELD 2 Banoon Rd Sth Eltham Vic
3095; student; president Monash USFA; member
ANZAPA, OMPA.
- LEE HARDING GPO Box 1267L Melbourne 3001;
author; member MSFC, NM, SFWA.
- GARY HOFF 125 Calista Ave Calista WA 6167;
clerk; former German fan; member SFCD &c.
- ROBIN JOHNSON GPO Box 4039 Melbourne 3001;
computer programmer; member MSFC, NM, SSFF,
ASFA, ANZAPA, travel fandom.
- SHAYNE McCORMACK (Miss) 49 Orchard Rd Bass Hill
NSW 2197; stenographer; president DUSK; publisher
Terran Times; member SSFF, ANZAPA.
- MICHAEL O'BRIEN 158 Liverpool St Hobart Tasmania
7000; hotel executive; secretary ATS; member MSFC,
ASFA, ANZAPA, SSFF, N3F, BSFA; agent - WSFA
Journal, Carandaith; publisher Tolkien Bulletin.
- JOHN RYAN PO Box 24 Yeronga Queensland 4104;
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Capa-Alpha.
- ALAN SANDERCOCK 1 Michael St Lockleys SA 5032;
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THE COMMITTEE WISHES TO THANK
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Georgia Street, Vancouver, British Columbia.

In Memoriam

JOHN W. CAMPBELL
1910-1971

The man we most wanted to
meet in Australia in 1975

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