

CHICON Issue

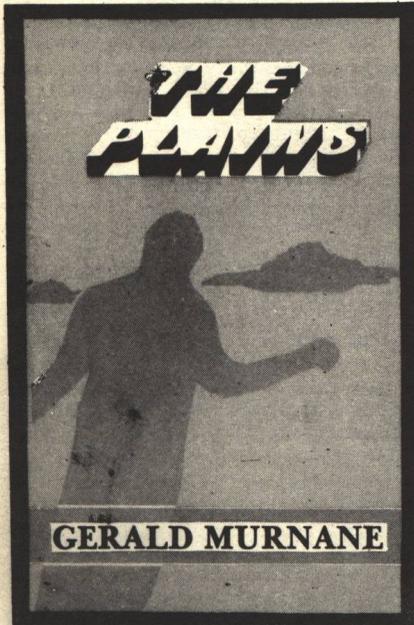
Free To A '85  
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# AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS

EXTRACT FROM ISSUE No 30

July-August '82

## AUSTRALIAN PROFESSIONAL NEWS



### NEW NOVEL FROM NORSTRILIA PRESS

Norstrilia Press launched their latest publication, **THE PLAINS**, by Gerald Murnane at a party held on Sunday August 15th. Although it is science fiction or fantasy, **THE PLAINS** is expected to appeal to a more general audience, as did this authors previous two books, **TAMARISK ROW** and **A LIFETIME ON CLOUDS**, neither of which could be classed as f or sf. **TAMARISK ROW** came close to being the best Australian novel of the year in 1974 and **A LIFETIME OF CLOUDS** was also well received in 1976.

**THE PLAINS** is set in an alternative Australia, where a different culture has developed to that of the coastal areas. As George Turner puts it in his review in this issue; "... a vision of what we Australians might have become if we had based a culture on our surroundings instead of importing our thinking from Europe and America".

**CORY** and **COLLINS** have announced their forthcoming programme. It will be David Lake's **RING OF TRUTH**, Jack Wodham's **FUTURE WAR**, and Wynne Whiteford's **THOR'S HAMMER**. Their next anthology (not titled yet) has been suspended until early '83.

**JACK WODHAMS** has sold stories to **RIGEL**, **FANTASY BOOK** and **OMEGA**. His most recently published story has appeared in the hardcover anthology, **LOCKED ROOM MYSTERIES**.

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## FAN NEWS

### DON'T PANIC

WORLD SCIENCE FICTION  
CONVENTION  
DOWN  
UNDER



(MELBOURNE OR BUST!)

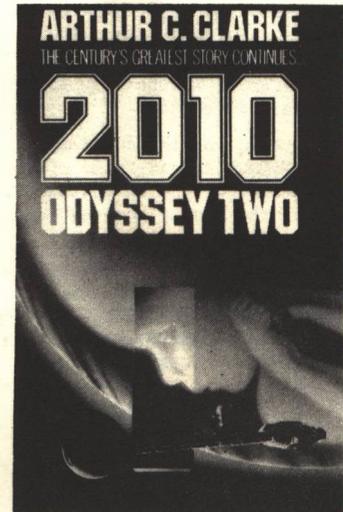
Artwork for sew on patch  
by Mike McGann

## MELBOURNE in '85

AUSTRALIAN FANS attending the World SF Convention in Chicago next month will be going all out to convince attendees that they should vote for MELBOURNE IN '85. May we remind all Australian fans in particular, that the voting for '85 will almost be all over by this time next year, so now is the time to tell all our overseas friends that MELBOURNE'S THE PLACE TO ARRIVE IN 1985.

Among those attending this years World Con will be Guest of Honour A. Bertram Chandler and his wife Susan, John Foyster, DUFF winner Peter Toluzi, Eric Lindsay and your editor Merv Binns.

## INTERNATIONAL SF NEWS



**2010: ODYSSEY TWO** by ARTHUR C. CLARKE will be published by GRANADA late 1982. It is expected to be on sale in Australia late 1982 or early 1983. Clarke has sold a collection of short stories to Byron Preiss Visual Productions, which will be presented as a "lavishly illustrated" book with an autobiographical introduction by Clarke. Berkley will publish in the U.S.A.

BRIAN ALDISS became the first author with a number-one science fiction best-seller in England recently when the first part of his trilogy, **HELLICONIA SPRING** hit the top of the list, beating out such books as **NOBLE HOUSE** and **CUJO**. The American edition published by Atheneum was sold out within a few days and the publisher obviously underestimated the demand. Aldiss reports that the second volume, **HELLICONIA SUMMER** is near completion in first draft. The third title will be **HELLICONIA WINTER**. He said that it is not a trilogy in fact, but a three part novel, which all takes place in one year ---- 2,592 Earth years long. He chose the cover design which he thinks is great. The second volume will have a map and he hopes to produce a **Helliconia Encyclopedia**, making it virtually a four-volume novel.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

INTERVIEWS WITH:  
A. BERTRAM CHANDLER  
AND JOHN FOYSTER  
NEWS, REPORTS, REVIEWS,  
AND LETTER COLUMN

PAUL COLLINS has sold stories to FANTASY BOOK, COLD BEER (with Leanne Frahm), INFINITY CUBED, and the Australian magazine PM.

WYNNE WHITEFORD is now reviewing science fiction for the Melbourne Herald. He has so far written five columns. On Tuesday 13th of July he flew to Japan where he will research his forthcoming novel, THOR'S HAMMER. He will be away for two weeks.

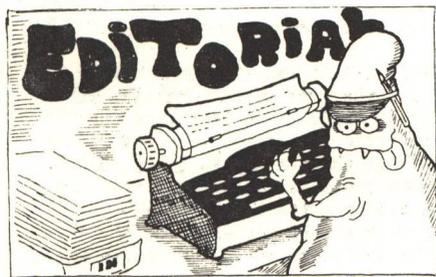
VAN IKIN reports that his PORTABLE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION anthology, due from the University of Queensland Press later this year, is now at the page-proof stage - the last phase of checking before printing begins. The book runs to 361 pages in all: 41 pages of introduction, and a further 320 pages of sf stories and excerpts.

TERRY DOWLING, hard-working co-editor of SCIENCE FICTION and Jack Vance enthusiast supreme, is the new permanent sf reviewer for the Sydney Morning Herald, with a column appearing on a quarterly schedule.

KEITH TAYLOR'S latest published work is another collaboration with Andrew Offut in the CorMac MacArt fantasy series, THE TOWER OF DEATH, from ACE.

GEORGE TURNER'S novel YESTERDAY'S MEN, has been put back by Faber till early in 1983.

In the last issue we quoted a price in this column on Rick Kennet's A WARRIOR'S STAR as \$2.95 retail. This was a tentative wholesale price given before the book was available, which we took at that time as retail, but the price recommended now is \$4.50. Our apologies to Alternative Production Company and our readers. Allbooks are now distributing this title throughout Australia.



This is being typed on the eve of my setting off for the good old U.S. of A. for the World SF Convention in Chicago. I will also be attending BUBONICON in Albuquerque, New Mexico and seeing friends and book suppliers on the way. Going to world cons is not something one can expect to do every year from Down Under, as it is getting a little expensive, but I will do it as often as I can.

Just a few weeks ago, or couple of months to be more correct, Jan Finder said in a letter that he had only got to 22 conventions last year. That is half as many as I have seen in my whole life, not that I have kept accurate count, including three World Cons in Toronto, Melbourne and Brighton. Some have been great, like the Aussiecon in Melbourne here in '75, Toronto in '73 my first World con, Sydney in '70 when with a casual remark to Ron Graham Space Age Books was born, the National

Australian con in Melbourne in '73, when we did a musical show called JOE PHAUST, about a fan who sells his soul to the devil to win a Hugo and many more. I have many good memories of people and events in conventions and in fandom also for that matter, built up over the last thirty years, that I would not trade for anything.

Some conventions have been disappointing of course, but this has been mainly due to just personal dislikes in the way the programme was put together, as often as a general overall foul up by the organisers. On my last overseas trip I felt let down at SEACON, and I cannot to this day tell you exactly why, but at the Northamericon in Louisville I had a great time and I did not see very much of the programme at all. People, that is the most important thing about cons. Meeting people. Believe it or not I did not make many new friends at SEACON, there were too many people there and they all seemed to be moving so fast, but Louisville and further back at Toronto, when we won the bid for '75, things were quite different.

Running conventions and helping organise them is an experience in life that no insane person should miss. That is if you are not around the bend before you start, you are by the time the con is over. It was an old joke with me ten years ago that I kept saying never again would I be involved with running a con, but I have been, with Aussiecon, which quite seriously was worth every minute put into it and last year a film con, CINECON. The latter was a very successful show, but very expensive and left me out of pocket by quite a large amount. Never again!

Well all except MELBOURNE in '85. I thought I was keeping out of the way there, but I already have been roped in to help with local publicity and no doubt other items when things get down to it. I hope at CHICON that along with the other Aussies attending I can convince everybody to vote for us for

1985, and to come down and see us again, and sample a little of our hospitality. I am certainly looking forward to CHICON and BUBONICON for that matter, and renewing old acquaintances and making new ones and enjoying myself in general. CHICAGO, HERE I COME!

## ALIEN HUNTER

AN AUSTRALIAN MADE SF MOVIE AT LAST

We have just been advised of a project to produce an Australian sf film. It is to be produced by Richard Bradley and Brian Rosen. The director is Mike Robertson, who will work from a script written by Valerie Parv. Great interest has been shown in the project by Hoyts, C.I.C., The Toho-Towa Company in Japan and others. Preliminary work has been going on for two years, but the producers are now looking for additional assistance, talent to develop this major Science Fantasy project, which is now in the pre-production stages. They need artists with imagination, especially those with established track records in fandom and/or professional or semi-professional work. They do not want people who just want to work on a film. They only want to hear from people who have experience and have genuine talent. If you are interested and feel you can meet these requirements you can contact Richard Bradley (02) 3312660 Michael Robertson (02) 9223968 or if unsuccessful there try Valerie Parv on (02) 4383300.

The original story by the way, "ALIEN HUNTER", is an idea of Richard Bradleys, and we wish him and his associates the best of luck in getting this film made.

OUR THANKS TO LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE and ANSIBLE and their editors and correspondents for allowing us to reprint news and reports from their pages.

### AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS

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ADVERTISING: Professional Rate - Full back page \$60.00. Interior page \$50.00 Quarter page \$15.00. Half page \$30.00. Full page copy ready size is 360 mm V x 275mm H. Half page 180mm V x 275mm H. Quarter page 180mm V x 135mm H. 10% discount is applicable on all professional advertisements placed on a regular basis. A 50% discount applies to fan advertisements for conventions, clubs, fanzines and other activities.

N.B. A 10% discount is allowed to subscription agencies other than our official agents listed above, but payment must be sent direct to us. We suggest that any additional costs be charged direct to the subscriber.

We are Australian Agents for:

LOCUS: Subscription rates: \$27.40 12 issues Airmail \$51.30 for 24 issues Airmail. \$17.50 12 .. Sea 'mail \$32.50 .. 24 .. Sea Mail

SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE: \$24.00 for 12 issues Airmail / \$42.00 for 24 issues.

SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS PUBLISHED IN BRITAIN: \$2.45 for 6 issues

# An Interview With A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

## Chicago World Con Guest of Honor



Photo by Susan Wood

CAPTAIN A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

### INTRODUCTION

I don't remember exactly when I first met Bert Chandler, but I have known him almost as long as I have been in fandom. The Chairman of the old Melbourne SF Club, Bob McCubbin, introduced him to me on one of his frequent trips to Australia, as a ship's officer and later Captain. All his Australian friends were very pleased when we learned that he was to settle here on a permanent basis. I have always enjoyed his company very much and a trip to Sydney would not be on without a meal with Bert. It has given me great pleasure to see his increased popularity as an SF writer over the last few years, and even greater pleasure to see him receive recognition from the SF field in general by being invited to be the Guest of Honour by the organisers of CHICON. Congratulations Bert and keep up the good work.

Merv Binns

A regular feature of ASFN in the future we hope, will be interviews with Australian SF writers. We have already had some of course, but there will be more. On the occasion of his trip to Chicago as World Con G.O.H., we thought it appropriate to pin down Captain Chandler and ask him a few questions about his writing and views on Australian SF and so forth.

ASFN: What made you start writing and why did you choose Science Fiction?

CAPT. CHANDLER: I wanted to write from a very early age. I was a Science Fiction addict from a very early age. When I started to write fiction I just naturally wrote the sort of fiction that I liked reading. However, I have had straight sea stories and even crime - a perfect murder - in print.

ASFN: Your earliest stories, such as GIANT KILLER, were published in ASTOUNDING SF magazine. What influence if any, did John W. Campbell have on your writing at that stage?

CAPT. CHANDLER: It was John Campbell who set my feet on the downward path by suggesting that I make the transition from Faithful Reader to Regular Contributor. As an editor, John always wanted things right. GIANT KILLER, as finally published, was my third attempt to handle the mutated rats theme. The first was from the viewpoint of the crew of the ship that boards the mutated-rat-infested derelict. The second was from the viewpoint of the crew of mutated-rat-infested ship. The third, of course, was from the viewpoint of the rats.

ASFN: What influence did your work as a ship's officer have on your writing, in the time you had to devote to it early on when you started writing?

CAPT. CHANDLER: You could have asked Joseph Conrad the same question. Many seamen have hobbies. I have sailed with a Bo's'n who played around with the higher mathematics as I play around with crossword puzzles. A Captain who spent his spare time making wool rugs. A Chief Engineer who did embroidery, and another Chief Engineer who painted in oils, and another Chief Engineer who wrote - and sold - the occasional short story. A Radio Officer who made quite a few dollars as a freelance journalist, another Radio Officer who was a water colourist. A Second Officer whose hobby was photography and who is now a successful commercial photographer. And so on, and so on.

ASFN: Your maritime career has certainly added an obvious bias to your stories, and your most popular character is without doubt John Grimes, but just how much of John Grimes is A. Bertram Chandler and vice versa? And when did Grimes first appear in print?

CAPT. CHANDLER: That man Grimes... A few years ago in Beppu, in Japan, I was being interviewed for the local rag. The interviewer said, "Tell me, Captain, what would you have thought if Grimes had been one of your officers?" I replied, "More than one Grimes per vessel is far too much!"

Grimes appeared as a minor, background character in quite a few stories. Finally, in INTO THE ALTERNATE UNIVERSE - first printing Ace Books 1964 - I gave him a novel all to himself. After that there was no stopping the bastard.

ASFN: What prompted you to settle in Australia and what influence has living here had on your writing?

CAPT. CHANDLER: What prompted me to settle in Australia? Well, the only

reason that I was born in England was that I wanted to be near my mother. I settled in Australia because I wanted to be near the lady who became my second wife. For quite a few years now I have regarded myself as being an Australian writer and have been fascinated by Australian history. We haven't much measured on the Time Scale, but we've crammed one helluva lot into a very few years.

ASFN: THE BITTER PILL was obviously Australian. Australia with Australian characters but yet not full of kangaroos and galahs and yet this has not seen an edition outside Australia. Why do you think this is so?

CAPT. CHANDLER: THE BITTER PILL was rather a disappointment. Although it was well reviewed in both the U.K and the U.S.A., no British or American publisher would touch it. I don't know why. Oddly enough, the short story from which the novel was expanded was anthologised this year - in Hungary.

ASFN: Your new novel, KELLY COUNTRY, which has been a labour of love on your part and for which you have put a lot of time into research, is also very Australian it seems, but you have brought a lot of international flavour into it as well. It obviously should appeal to Australian readers as well as overseas readers, even if they have not heard of Ned Kelly. What comments can you make on that?

CAPT. CHANDLER: KELLY COUNTRY? To date it has not sold, either in this country or the U.S.A. Such Australian publishers who have seen the novel in manuscript have liked it, but... I think that the Science Fictional element, involving Time Travel, has scared them off. It should appeal to overseas as well as to Australian readers. My New York agent likes it. I have no doubt that he will find a good home for it before too long.

ASFN: Do you think readers need a knowledge of Australian history to appreciate the 'alternative history' in KELLY COUNTRY?

CAPT. CHANDLER: I don't think that a knowledge of Australian history is needed to appreciate KELLY COUNTRY. After all, Australian history is completely rewritten subsequent to the Siege of Glenrowan. Too, to a certain extent, is world history.

ASFN: You have managed to add an 'Australian flavour' to the Grimes stories, most noticeable, I think, in THE ANARCH LORDS. Your Australian readers can appreciate these touches, but would other readers get the point? Grimes most definitely appears as your alter ego in 'Lords' and this added to my enjoyment of the story. Do you get much comment from readers at all?

CAPT. CHANDLER: Still on history. THE ANARCH LORDS this time. I don't know about the U.S.A. but my works have stimulated an interest in Australian history in Japan. For example, THE BIG BLACK MARK is practically a rewrite of the story of Bligh's first mutiny, the Bounty affair. The Japanese edition has a long foreword by a Japanese historian all about Bligh. I have no doubt that the Japanese edition of THE ANARCH LORDS will have a similar foreword. I hope that the historian is as much pro-Bligh as I am. But my Japanese readers will let me know.

ASFN: You were very popular in the U.S.A for many years before you broke into the British publishing scene with any force, more recently. That is, we saw the regular Hale hardcovers and a few odd hardcovers before that from such as Herbert Jenkins, but why nothing in paperback?

CAPT. CHANDLER: It is still a mystery to me why English paperback publishers have not signed me on until recently. A short while ago I received from my English agent Xeroxes of reviews of my Allison & Busby/Sphere Books reprints. They were good reviews. I was annoyed, though, because more than one reviewer called me an English writer who just happens to be living in Australia.

ASFN: Has fandom, or feedback from your readers had any influence on your writing and does attending conventions help you as a writer in any way?

CAPT. CHANDLER: One of the beauties of Science Fiction is that authors do get feedback from the readers. This can be either in the form of correspondence or by meeting them at conventions.

ASFN: Can you explain why your books are so popular with the Japanese?

CAPT. CHANDLER: I've appeared in translation in quite a few countries but it is only in Japan that I enjoy personal contact with my translator and with the artist who does my covers and the interior black and white illustrations. When one of my novels is in the throes of translation Mr.Noda and myself work together. He is hooked on the Grimes series and he succeeds in passing his enthusiasm on to the readers.

Among these readers are many young ladies. They are all, they tell me, very impressed by my strong female characters.

ASFN: What authors appeal to you in the SF field if any, or outside the SF field and have they influenced your writing at all?

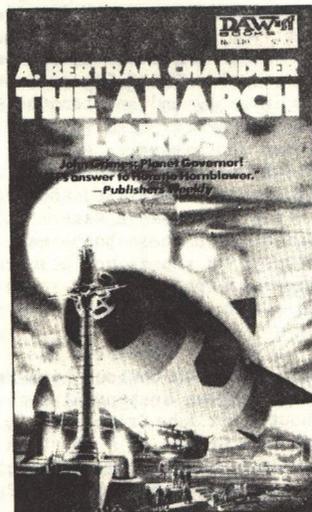
CAPT. CHANDLER: In the Science Fiction field, as in any other literary field, I demand good writing and a good story. I have my favourites, of course. Practically all of Vance, most of Silverberg, most of Le Guin, most of Ellison...And so on.

C.S. Forester has exercised a great influence. I didn't realise this until Susan started to refer to Grimes as Hornblower.

ASFN: How do you see the SF field in Australia at the moment, from an author's point of view? We do need an indigenous SF market, but do you think we have any chance of expanding the very small market for Australian writers of SF in the country, that exists at present?

CAPTAIN CHANDLER: I would advise any Australian fiction writer to try to break into the overseas markets - the U.S.A especially, and England. It is possible to do this without, in our own field, writing what is no more than imitation American Science Fiction. Of course, more than once, my Japanese translator has complained that he is paid to translate from English into Japanese not from Australian into Japanese. But I do, although it is a long time since I did it consciously, try to give my works an Australian flavour.

My advice is: Try to sell in the best markets - but don't sell your soul. ASFN: We thank you for your time in answering these questions for us Bert, and we do congratulate you on your being invited to be a Guest of Honour at the World SF Convention in Chicago this year and we also hope you have a good trip over to America for the Con.



## CIRCULATION II

26-28 November 1982  
Hotel Ainslie, Canberra

A convention for fans of science fiction and fantasy.

Theme: Transportation

Mascot: WOMBLE (Karen Warnock)

Membership Rates: Attending, \$10 until 31 August;  
\$15 to 19 November; then \$20 at the door;  
Supporting, \$5.

Contact: P O Box 544, Civic Square, ACT 2608.

# Access Workshops

Do you need help with your writing -- how to present stories, how to get them published and basic advice on your work? Then read on!

ACCESS is a non-profit effort of the Canberra Writers(SF) Co-operative, that can be contacted at P.O.Box 339, Belconnen, ACT 2616. It is a continuing series of SF Writers Workshops being held in Canberra, Sydney and more recently Melbourne. The purpose of the workshops is to provide constructive criticism and publication assistance to inexperienced writers, and to provide a pool of information relevant to science fiction writing.

Apart from monthly workshops, the Canberra Writers (SF) Co-operative produces a magazine called 'Access', no less! In this, the efforts of contributors are distributed to other members, who then write in with observations and criticisms in subsequent issues. Lists of markets are also included in some issues.

The Melbourne meetings are held at 2pm on the second Saturday of each month at the AEA Clubroom, 1st floor, CAE Building, 256 Flinders Street, Melbourne. Apart from the activities mentioned above, advice is also available on layout of manuscripts, typing techniques, etc. New members may either just turn up to one of the meetings or write to Sean McMullen, G.P.O. Box 2653X, Melbourne, 3001 for further information. We do not have a Sydney address, but Sean or the people in Canberra I am sure will be happy to supply you with the address in Sydney.

## FAN FUNDS

Keith Curtis reported at Tschaicon that the current DUFF fund had a healthy \$1350.00 in kitty, including the U.S.A. Various promises were made about trip reports, which everybody took with a grain of salt. Peter Toluzzi, the current winner, who will be travelling to Chicago and parts beyond in August and September, promised to do his report within I believe it was seven weeks of his return. Oh yeh! The joke being of course that the last three Australian winners have not yet produced their trip reports.

For details on how to nominate or vote for DUFF write to Keith at P.O.Box J175, Brickfield Hill, NSW 2000 or Peter Toluzzi at 33 Mount St., Coogee, 2034 NSW.

JAN HOWARD FINDER will be one of the candidates for the trip to Australia next year and JACK HERMAN will be standing for the next trip to the U.S.A. The opposing candidates are not known by us yet.

MARC ORTLIEB'S MID ATLANTIC FAN FUND, is a fun fund being organised to help raise funds for other fan funds. Nominations were still being accepted up to SYNCON '82. Details of the final nominees and voting procedures will be distributed by Marc in due course. If you wish to vote write to Marc at P.O.Box 46, Marden, South Australia 5070.

# WHO'S WHO In AUSTRALIA In '85



## John Foyster

Any Science Fiction Convention is a reflection of the interests of the people who are organising it. The success of the Convention depends largely on the enthusiasm and expertise of the people involved also. It is all very well for us to say "the people who gave you AUSSIECON in 1975" invite everybody again to Melbourne in 1985, but who are those people? So here, and in future issues we will be talking to people who are involved in the bid to hold the WORLD SF CONVENTION in Melbourne in 1985.

JOHN FOYSTER has been involved in fandom since the '50s, with fanzine editing, APAS, corresponding with other fans in Australia and overseas, helping to organise conventions leading up to AUSSIECON, as well as that, the first ever World SF Convention held in Australia and some conventions since. He has often been accused of being "The Secret Master of Australian Fandom", but we do not know what is very "secret" about it. But let's ask John how he got involved with SF fandom and why he wants to see another World SF Con in Melbourne, Australia.

ASFN: John, how did your interest in SF fandom begin?

JF: I'm like most Melbourne SF fans - my interest in SF fandom was really generated by Mervyn Binns. When I began to read SF in 1956 I learned quickly enough, from the letters in the SF magazines of the time, that there were SF fans in Melbourne and the first point of contact was one Mervyn Binns, who then lived at 4 Myrtle Grove, Preston. I didn't ever write to that address, but I did find in searching around bookshops for SF, a pile of copies of a newsletter called ETHERLINE,

which I bought regularly from the shop which then employed the same fellow, Mervyn Binns. Eventually, I plucked up the courage to attend a convention in Melbourne (in 1958) and soon after that began corresponding with fans overseas.

ASFN: What influence do you think fanzines have on fandom and would it be quite the same as it is now, without them?

JF: I believe that there is a "fandom" only because there were (and are) fanzines. (Words like fandom and fanzine were invented by people who publish what we now call fanzines.) Fanzines have varying influences on fandom, and their effects vary with conditions and with time. Take, for example, New Zealand. Readers of SF have existed there, and have been known to readers in other countries, for almost fifty years. In the late 1950s a handful of fans in New Zealand began to publish fanzines which they distributed widely and in consequence of which fans became much better known overseas than their Australian contemporaries. But fandom as a mass grouping of indigenous readers only came into being because one person, Brian Thurogood, published one fanzine, NOUMENON, which was widely distributed in New Zealand. As a result of that action there are now many fanzines in New Zealand, and amateur publishing association, and regular and successful conventions - the 1982 NZ National Convention was not much smaller, if the rumours I've heard are right, than the 1982 Australian National!

That example could be multiplied in many ways. STAR TREK fans, DOCTOR WHO fans, and so on, initially and often essentially, communicate with each other through fanzines.

This isn't to say that there aren't a lot of other people who get involved in fandom who don't publish fanzines. In Australia the best known would probably be Carey Handfield, who once, nevertheless, did publish a fanzine or two. Once activities like conventions become established, fans have other ways of making contact with one another. As a result, there are lots of fans around in Australia who are quite well known but who have never published a fanzine or even written anything for one.

Without fanzines, fandom would be, very different. Fanzines are essential if fans of SF are to do more than contemplate their own navels or those of their immediate neighbours. To publish a fanzine means that one must take an action to establish communication with persons unknown, and to attempt to interest and please those persons. (There are lots of fans, nevertheless, who act as though other people should, by right, be interested in them, and never get around to showing interest in others, or even in generating the interest of others.) What happens to a fandom without fan-

zines can be seen quite easily by those who are interested, when a group of fans in one state of Australia (say), or in one country, becomes sufficiently large to be self-supporting. There is then plenty of opportunity to become inwardlooking - to ignore the large world outside. After a while those folks find it less than easy to communicate with the world outside and pretty soon they don't. Most people reading this can think of their own examples!

ASFN: How involved do fanzine and APA fans get in conventions?

JF: To continue the historical discussion I started in answer to the previous question, the first New Zealand convention was run by Brian Thurogood and Mervyn Barrett, both fanzine fans. In Australia, in any given region the conventions have almost always been initially run by fanzine fans, though as time passes people who are not fanzine publishers or readers become involved in running conventions. Because they don't read fanzines they often run a pretty high risk of making the kind of mistakes that fanzine fans have been warned about.

As more and more conventions are run by people who are not 'fanzine' fans the programs become less and less appealing to those interested in fanzines. For example, you don't see too many fanzine fans involved in fancy dress items., at least in Australia. Fanzine fans may be less likely to watch movies at a convention, since watching movies is a fundamentally solitary activity, and fanzine fans, despite the general notion of SF fans as introverted, are mildly gregarious. So I think that fanzine fans are probably highly involved in conventions, though not all aspects of conventions.

ASFN: What attracts the average fan to conventions and basically why do you attend conventions?

JF: The average fan attends a convention to hear about Science Fiction, or to see something about Science Fiction, and perhaps because she or he wants to meet other people interested in SF. Since quite a few conventions don't do much to meet those expectations, lots of average fans don't bother to come back to later conventions. Non-average fans come back to conventions because they get from them the kind of feeling they seek. This might mean meeting new friends, or old friends, or actually learning something of interest about Science Fiction.

Because I've been around Australian fandom almost as long as Mervyn Binns has, I'm no longer an 'average' fan. In the kinds of terms I've already used, however, I do attend conventions to meet old friends and to make new ones. I'm inclined to despair of learning anything new about Science Fiction, but perhaps this is because I don't learn things very well any more.

But underlying this is a part of my philosophy of practical action in society. I believe that society is a better place **5**

and people form a better community, when people with similar interests are encouraged to meet and work together in a voluntary way. Conventions of the sfnal kind fit this view, and indeed The Nova Mob, which I've backed in various incarnations, serves a similar purpose; providing an opportunity for people with similar interests to meet and, with luck, actually do something. Outside fandom, one of the things I'm happiest with in recent years is my work in establishing an organisation which enables people interested in teaching mathematics and the related research to get together at an annual conference. The purpose of the organisation, as it presently exists, is just to run that conference, but each and every year that organisation does something (it publishes a large volume or two of research reports); it was not just established as a body to coordinate or assist others - it would do something.

This is why I felt considerable disquiet about the Australian Science Fiction Foundation; as established, it wasn't there to do something specific, which folks could get interested in and do something in and do something about, but rather it had general and diffuse aims. Such aims aren't unworthy, but I believe society is a better place because of specific rather than general endeavours.

ASFN: Conventions in Australia are much more numerous now than they were before in 1975. As well as the obvious reasons, what else may account for this?

JF: The obvious reasons - an increase in the number of fans in Australia, and the more regular visits of Famous SF Writers - do explain most of the changes. But the increase hasn't been a simple one. One really needs a sort of critical mass to maintain an active fandom in a given region (always excepting the odd individuals who can keep things going on their own). One consequence of the 1975 Aussiecon was that this critical mass was exceeded in a big way in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, and to a lesser extent in Perth. Those fandoms (!) became self-sustaining, yet had enough contact with the rest of the country to want to meet together - so why not have a local convention? Very rapidly there were conventions being held all around the country. I don't know that we are any better off for having all the conventions, by the way.

ASFN: What influence did Aussiecon or any other conventions in Australia have on the professional SF field?

JF: Conventions, and I include Aussiecon, have not really had any effect on the writing of Science Fiction in Australia. The writers who have risen to substantial international stature since Aussiecon - Damien Broderick, Lee Harding, and George Turner - were all writing long before Aussiecon and didn't really receive any boost from it. (I sometimes think people in Melbourne don't realise how lucky they are to have three worldclass writers like that here. There aren't too many other

cities in the world with so high-powered a group. Sydney is lucky enough to have one Bert Chandler, but there is only one of him.) In the seven years since Aussiecon, one hasn't really seen the emergence of individual writers of similar persistence. One can contrast this with the first seven years of the sixties, which were more productive, for that was when Harding, Broderick and John Baxter made their starts. (They all knew each other, of course!)

Since 1975 there has been a growth in the publication of Science Fiction in Australia, and this is indirectly attributable to Aussiecon. Firstly, lots of people - well, Van Ikin and Nevil Angove - have felt impelled to publish professional or semi-professional magazines about, and containing, Science Fiction. This has provided a substantial boost, and part of this may have been encouraged 'by Aussiecon.

Secondly, grants from the Literature Board, now so much a part of the publication of SF in Australia, were certainly encouraged by the success of the support given by the Literature Board to the workshop held in association with Aussiecon, conducted by Ursula Le Guin. The very large amount of SF published by Cory & Collins, and the lesser amount from Norstrilia Press, would not really have been possible without the support, and the workshop - and the books emerging from it, THE ALTERED I - made SF very respectable in Australia. At the moment, I don't think that money has produced much in the way of great SF, but it has changed the nature of the form of publication that can be expected locally, and it is establishing the base for an expansion in quality if there are writers interested enough to publish locally. As it happens, I'm not sure that it is really important to produce SF from particular regions, but I do know that there are lots of folks to whom it is important, so I'm all for them having a go.

ASFN: What influence will Melbourne in 1985 have on Australian SF writing if we win the bid?

JF: If I am consistent with my previous answer, and I intend to be, I will have to say 'none'. SF in Australia already receives mammoth support from the Federal Government. We can hardly expect more or bigger grants. If SF writing in Australia is to develop, then this will happen when younger writers follow in the steps of Chandler, Broderick, Harding and Turner: conventions don't do much.

ASFN: Will Melbourne in 1985 increase the interest in Fandom or has fandom reached a level in Australia that is unlikely to change in the near future?

JF: In the past three or four years over 1000 people have attended at least one SF convention in Australia. On a per capita basis, that sort of involvement is one of the highest in the world. Far more people attend conventions in Australia, for example,

than attend them in France, although France by comparison with Australia has a vast publishing industry. Yet it is fairly clear that many more people are interested in the sort of things that go on at conventions or are discussed in fanzines. If a concerted effort is made, fandom in Australia could become much larger (today the Nova Mob, tomorrow the world). But it isn't terribly clear that we would be much happier if fandom in Australia were much bigger. One of the things people remember about Aussiecon was that it was comfortably small. Is this a genuine feeling about scale or merely a matter of cutting down on the hoi polloi? One can't be sure, but lots of people from Marc Ortleib on down, have wondered whether they were wise to miss Aussiecon. If only we had known, they seem to say rather often.

But the first part of your question can be answered more directly. The Melbourne in 1985 Bidding Group, through its parent body, the Australian SF Foundation, will be working over the next three years to develop all aspects of science fiction fandom in Australia. Obviously there's some self-interest here, since a larger fan population means that more people will roll up in 1985, but it is also the case that the Foundation is obligated by its charter to work towards that sort of end anyway. The Foundation sponsors Australian SF News because it believes that publicising SF through a publication of such quality must encourage interest in Science Fiction and fandom. So, if the interest in fandom doesn't increase the Melbourne in 1985 bid will not have achieved one of its goals.



MIKE GLICKSOHN and JOHN FOYSTER  
AT AUSSIECON

Photo by Helena Roberts

ASFN: So, basically, why do you want another World Con for Melbourne, for Australia?

JF: Science Fiction is a genuinely international phenomenon. Monoglot Australians, physically remote from the other sfnal-reading countries, don't always appreciate just how international it is. Science Fiction readers from all over the world can and do communicate with each other - though it takes a considerable effort for it to happen (an example: Roelof Goudriaan in the Netherlands has just

started an international/European newsletter, in English, the second issue of which runs to six photoreduced offset pages and is chock-a-block with hard news - including a bid for the 1988 World Con from Zagreb, Yugoslavia, which I intend to support strongly). That international flavour should be reflected in there being some opportunity for fans from all over the world to meet together, and that opportunity should be shared amongst fans from all over.

At the moment, for historical reasons, the World Con is pretty much resident in North America. I believe that every World Con held outside North America is a good thing. (Most of them held in North America are good things too, but that is a different issue.) I hoped that Sydney would win the bid for 1983 for that reason, and when Sydney's bid failed I felt that it was essential that there be another bid soon from outside North America. Generally speaking, there's only one way to assure something like that - get behind it yourself. That's what I'm doing. That's why I support the Yugoslavian bid for 1988, and that's why I would have supported the British bid for 1987, if it had not apparently fallen in a hole.

Those of us who were at SEACON can appreciate what a truly international convention can be like. The flavour of difference was so important to me that I am going to the World Con in Chicago this year via the EUROCON in Germany.

Thus, I have general and underlying principles which lead me to want to have a convention in Melbourne in 1985 which is as international as possible. But I also think that in Melbourne we have a team of people who have already shown, in 1975, that they can run a convention which is remembered with great pleasure by people seven years later. And I believe they can do it again. A 1985 World Con won't be another Aussiecon - it will be bigger, for example - but if fans in Melbourne especially, but also those in the rest of the country, can get behind the bid and the convention it will be better than Aussiecon. No one wants to do anything worse than it was done last time, so the aim in 1985 will plainly be to produce something more than just memorable. That will need lots of support, but we are confident that that support is there.

ASFN: Thank you for your time John. You have made some very good points about the World Cons that I am sure many people will agree with. You have clearly told our readers why you want to have another World Con in Australia and what you have told us will certainly strengthen support. Good luck on your overseas trip and we hope you let us have some of your impressions of the convention in Europe that you are attending.



#### WORLD CONS

This years World Science Fiction Convention is being held in Chicago, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, from the 2nd to the 6th of September. Guests of Honour are A. BERTRAM CHANDLER, KELLY FREAS and LEE HOFFMAN - CHICON IV. Next years World Con is being held in Baltimore, at the Baltimore Convention Centre from the 1st to the 5th of September 1983. GOH JOHN BRUNNER. For more details write to CON-STELLATION, The 41st World SF Convention, Box 1046, Baltimore, Maryland 21203 USA. (We stupidly listed the date in our last issue as 1984. We apologise and we were not trying to get back at Baltimore for winning the '83 bid from us. MB)

1984 is not decided but it will most likely be in LOS ANGELES. We will have full details next issue, after the voting result is announced at Chicon. Melbourne, Australia is bidding for 1985. Ten years after the last Australian world con, also in Melbourne in 1975, AUSSIECON.

Further details on the MELBOURNE IN '85 BID can be obtained from G.P.O. Box 225 U, Melbourne 3000, Victoria, AUSTRALIA. You can help the Aussie bid by subscribing to the ANTIPODEAN ANNOUNCER newspaper, that is being distributed at all major conventions in Australia and overseas, and the Newsletter, KANGARUSE. Send \$10.00 now to the above address. At this time we apparently have no major opposition, but your support is needed to help with publicity and every aspect of mounting the bid.

We have no information on later bids at this time.

#### AUSTRALIAN CONVENTIONS

SYNCON '82 is being held in Sydney the weekend this issue is being completed. August 13 - 15, at the New Crest Hotel, Darlinghurst Rd., Kings Cross, SYDNEY. Next up is CIRCULATION CONVENTION in our nation's capital Canberra. At the Hotel Ainslie, to be specific. For more details see the advertisement in this issue. Between now and SYNCON '83 we have no details on other cons, here or in New Zealand. There may be a media con in Melbourne at the Melbourne Town House over Easter, but plans for another CINECON are very much up in the air at the moment. Easter would be a good time for Adelaide to organise something next year, seeing Sydney have pinched their usual Queen's Birthday date, June 10 to 13, for SYNCON '83. That is the next Australian National Convention and with HARLAN ELLISON as GOH is being held at The Shore Motel, Pacific Highway, Artarmon, NSW. For more details contact SYNCON '83 at P.O.Box A491, Sydney South 2000, N.S.W.

If Melbourne wins the World Con Bid for '85 EUREKA-CON '84 will be a bit of a warm up. It is the Australian National Convention being held April 20th to 21st 1984, with GEORGE TURNER as Guest of Honour. The venue is not announced yet, but you can get all future details from P.O.Box 175, South Melbourne 3205, Victoria, Australia.

## AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

As usual at Australian National conventions, reports were given by the various groups at TSCHAICON last Easter. It reminded us that this is a feature we have been overlooking a bit in the NEWS. Of course people have not been letting us know their activities in the main, but we have been letting down the few that have. So from this issue on we will try and cover this aspect a little better. We have decided not to print the reports, as given at Tschaicon, but we may use those as a basis for future details on the various groups and clubs throughout Australia.

Media fandom is growing very rapidly. Phantastacon was well attended last year and we believe 600 fans or more are expected to attend the first night of STAR TREK II in Melbourne this week. In comparison the best we have had for an SF convention in Australia is just over 400 apart from Aussiecon. Melbourne fans who want to contact the Star Trek club in Melbourne should write to AUSTREK, Box 5206AA, G.P.O. Melbourne 3001, Victoria.

We have just received a circular referring to CONQUEST '82, the first media oriented convention to be held in Queensland. Their publicity indicates a very well organised group. For details write to G.P.O. Box 1376, Brisbane, Q 4001. We have heard little or nothing from Queensland SF fandom for some time now, but at least we know something is alive up there.

We do not hear very much about Tasmanian fandom, but it is alive and well according to Mike O'Brien. The Tasmanian SF Association meets in Hobart on the first and third Saturdays of every month. It has been in operation for four years, after initially starting out as a Star Trek Club. A newsletter and irregular fanzines are produced. They have a full sized Dalek for sale Mike told us. For details on the Tasmanian SF Association contact Mike O'Brien at 158 Liverpool St., Hobart, Tasmania 7000.

Well thats a start, but do let us have details on your groups activities so that we can tell people about them in our future issues.

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that people do appreciate your efforts. Incidentally, I do applaud the organisers of Jerucon for their audacity in planning a convention there, but I do think that a lot of fans may have been put off by the continuing political climate in the area. Sincerely Merv Binns

## The International Scene

On the international sf scene it is reported that sf is very popular in China at present. A book by the local equivalent to Arthur C. Clarke, astronomer Zheng Wenguang can expect a 100,000 copy edition selling out within a week. An anthology of non-Chinese sf sold 420,000 copies in a similar period. Many American books are being translated into Chinese editions. The STAR WARS titles have been popular and titles such as THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL and RAISE THE TITANIC were quite popular. ISAAC ASIMOV and ARTHUR C. CLARKE are two of the most popular authors.

CHARLES N. BROWN, JOE HALDEMAN, FOREST J. ACKERMAN, ROGER ZELAZNY and OCTAVIA BUTLER visited Russia from April 24th to May 8th with a group of other people, to meet Russian sf authors. In his report in LOCUS Brown said that the trip was not quite what they had been led to believe it was, expecting to have a lot more time with the Russian authors than they did. They did not have very much time for sightseeing and were restricted as people are that visit Russia, to what Intourist had arranged for them.

However they did meet some interesting people such as BERTA "BELLA" KLYUEVA of VAAP, the copyright expert on sf and well regarded editor, BORIS and ARKADY STRUGATSKY, ROMAN PODOLNY, YEVGENY VOISKUNSKY and SERGEI SNEGOV.

They found that many American authors are popular in Russia, and that what is not translated is read in the original American editions or in manuscript form. Soviet sf and the translations, have no violence, cruelty, dystopian fiction, etc. The current trend in fantasy in the U.S. is not understood in Russia and so is not popular there.

More details on this trip will appear in future issues of LOCUS.

The first FINNISH SF convention was held in May from the 28th to 31st. It took place in Helsinki with some 40 Swedes and 100 Finns attending. HARRY HARRISON, SAM J. LUNDWELL and KAROL THOLE were amongst the attendees.

SYMBIOTE'S CROWN by SCOTT BAKER won the Prix Apollo Award, which is the French equivalent to the Hugo. Other novels that figured in the voting included HELLO AMERICA by J.G. BALLARD, THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER by GENE WOLFE, and THE AFFIRMATION by Christopher Priest. Baker is an American but lives in Paris.

LEE..? LEA..? LEIGH (.I THINK HE'S GOT IT) EDMUNDS FOR MAFF!

Harry Harrison  
Kestral Ridge,  
Vale of Avoca,  
Co. Wicklow, IRELAND 9 June '82

Dear Merv,

My thanks for sending me your zine. Silence has only been laziness. I read it with relish and know now far more about world and Aussie SF than I should.

But I was depressed while reading 4-2 to see that Brunner is up to his old wrecking tricks again. I wish he would stop doing this sort of thing! For the record then-- there is no law that pros should be paid to go to cons. If he was invited by the Jerucon in Israel I'm sure no mention of expenses was ever made. I should know-- I was invited to be Guest of Honour, and accepted, and no mention of expenses was made by either side. Brunner will never be a gentleman I am afraid. Gentlemen don't display their lack of funds in private-- nor do they whine about their business relationships. But, sigh, it is all water under the dam now since the con has been cancelled due to lack of registrations. I know a lot of poor European fans were going at their own expense. Perhaps if a few more rich pros had registered as well....

All best,

Harry Harrison

Dear Harry,

Well it seems I have put my foot in it again. A couple of issues back I stood on Harlan Ellison's toes, now yours. I picked the reference up from Dave Langford's ANSTIBLE, issue # 24, in which it was noted that Chairman Sheldon Teitelbaum was complaining, because he was let down by pros who had gone back on their word about attending JERUCON.

I do not know the exact circumstances in this case, but I still feel that if a convention specifically invites an author to attend a convention, said con is obliged to meet at least part of the expense. This depends of course on the way in which the invitation is put.

Con organisers of course rely on authors turning up at their conventions to man the panels and such, but in most cases, both here and in the U.S.A. in particular, there are always a few who only have a short distance to come. With only two or three at the most major cons in Australia in a year, we usually do not have too much trouble. However if any guest is specifically invited, it is taken for granted that accomodation is at least paid for.

This situation with Jerucon is I realise probably quite different. I also realise that sf authors have been attending cons for years, with little or no talk of any expenses being paid. I for one do very sincerely appreciate this and in no way want the situation to change, but I do think that convention organisers should not take the authors too much for granted.

Thank you very much for your letter and kind comments. It is gratifying to know

### THE PLAINS

By Gerald Murnane

126 pp \$9.95 ARP

Christopher priest, when he visited Australia earlier this year, spoke of his desire to 'open up' science fiction, meaning that he sought areas of theme and imaginative narrative no dependent on the conventions of sf or any other genre. His own THE AFFIRMATION could stand as an example of what he meant, as might the novels of Tom Disch, John Sladek and Gene Wolfe. Also THE PLAINS.

Interpretation of this novel will vary with the reader, but I see it as a vision of what we Australians might have become if we had based our culture on our surroundings instead of importing our thinking from Europe and America.

A young film-maker travels to THE PLAINS, a vast internal area culturally severed from The Coast, with a history - part Dcker, part intellectual - quite different from the one we know. The 'squattocracy' have become the new 'Renaissance princes' who carouse in a pub while at the same time providing essential patronage of the arts and sciences: their visions are simultaneously limited by changeless plains and released by the illimitable acres of a country too vast to explore; their people are what we might have become if we had not spread the Old World too thickly over our new one.

The novel consists of the explorations of the film maker whose film may never be made because it will not be understood, even if he can understand well enough to make it.

It is a quiet novel, more rumination than movement, needing concentration from the reader. A writer who makes demands on his reader must provide an intellectual reward for devotion, and for me Murnane does so; I commend THE PLAINS if you are prepared to step outside the norm and not expect the mixture-as-before.

I quote: '... the great maps of the regions of plains ... the work of... those who locate their improbable tribes and preposterous beasts in the regions assumed to be the best known...'

Do you scent a whiff of Borges? You should. There is more than one such.

Reviewed by George Turner

THIS ABRIDGED ISSUE OF ASFN IS BEING DISTRIBUTED AT CHICON TO HELP PUBLICISE A'85, THE MELBOURNE WORLD CON BID. ASFN COVERS AUSTRALIAN FAN & PRO & OVERSEAS NEWS, PLUS REVIEWS AND INTERVIEWS. SUBSCRIBE NOW & HELP SUPPORT A'85. \$6.00 US