

SCYTHROP

Number Twenty-Two

April 1971

Forty Cents



SCYTHROP

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Number Twenty-Two

April 1971

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON

MR HILARY ...the highest wisdom and the highest genius have been invariably accompanied with cheerfulness. ...

MR TOOBAD How can we be cheerful with the devil among us?

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS How can we be cheerful when our nerves are shattered?

MR FLOSKY How can we be cheerful when we are surrounded by a reading public, that is growing too wise for its betters?

SCYTHROP How can we be cheerful when our great general designs are crossed every moment by our little particular passions?

MR CYPRESS How can we be cheerful in the midst of disappointment and despair?

MR GLOWRY Let us all be unhappy together.

MR HILARY Let us sing a catch.

Thomas Love Peacock: Nightmare Abbey

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The excerpt from "Iron Outlaw" by Greg & Grae is from the Sunday Review.

The photograph of Mrs Le Guin came from the jacket of "The Left Hand of Darkness" (Walker & Co), and the photographs on page 36 were supplied by Frank Bryning.

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THERE ETYMOLOGY THEY FOUND,
WHO SCORN'D SURROUNDING FRUITS;
AND EVER DUG IN DEEPEST GROUND,
FOR OLD AND MOULDY ROOTS

Editorial

Many who read this will be seeing Scythrop for the first time. Those not included in this category will be seeing it for only the second time, since before number 21 this magazine was called "Australian Science Fiction Review".

ASFR was born five years ago at the Seventh Australian SF Convention. There was a good feeling about that convention and we discussed at some length what we should do to keep the spirit of the gathering alive. I suggested a magazine. Lee Harding suggested I produce it. John Baxter said, "What we're thinking of is an amateur magazine, circulated amongst people who are interested in science fiction, and probably containing articles and reviews and stories, perhaps".

In its first year of publication, ASFR saw ten issues; in the second year, six; in the third, four. In December 1969 the name was changed to Scythrop, and silence descended. Scythrop elicited letters of comment from three or four people and was mentioned briefly in perhaps half a dozen fanzines. One said it was too perfect; another that it was good amateur journalism but not a science fiction fanzine. One letter - a very interesting one, too, which I think I've lost - purported to be written by the shade of P. B. Shelley. Eric Harris wrote that one. It was rather sad, and so was I. Six months later, after a period of ill-health and a sudden disillusionment with sf fandom, I announced that I had had enough. My gaffiation lasted all of a month, but the damage was done. Dick Geis ran the news on the cover of SF Review. Linda Bushyager mentioned my name in a context which suggested I had sunk into a long twilight of carpet slippers and trugo. Hardly anyone sent me fanzines or letters. Yet two years earlier ASFR had been on the Hugo ballot for best fanzine, a story from the magazine had been included in a "Year's Best SF" collection, and I had even (goshwowboyoboy) been mentioned in Analog. Sic transit gloria fandi... or something.

Since the first Scythrop appeared I have not been entirely idle, though most of my publishing activity (with one disastrous exception) has been on a fairly small scale. My records indicate that this is my 87th fanzine. The publications most of you haven't seen include seven issues each of The New Millennial Harbinger and The Cosmic Dustbug, nine of Crog', four of Philosophical Gas and one each of Lodbrog and Welcome Warmly The US Kuhn-Kan Delegation. Last year I spent an enormous (by my standards) amount of time, energy and money on a magazine called Australian Science Fiction Monthly - and two proposed annual volumes, Australian SF Yearbook and Australian SF Directory. The Monthly saw one full-scale issue and three very small, very unsatisfactory, non-issues. (If you haven't seen these, write and ask for them. A small contribution towards postage would be appreciated.) The purpose of all this activity and expense was to provide something approaching a professional sf magazine in this country; to enlist support for Australia's bid for the 1975 World Convention; and to help to create a market for my friend Mervyn Binns's book shop. To say I miscalculated would be too gentle: I really bombed out completely. "Aye, scrolls shall fall and laurels fade - long, long before his debts are pay'd."

But leave us not be maudlin. Life is sweet, brother, and you wouldn't be dead for quids. As the master has said: "Whatever happens, never let it spoil your dinner." The master? Well, a master. The gentleman who wrote those lines at the head of this page - Thomas Love Peacock - and I'm getting around to telling you why those lines are there.

Scythrop is, of course, named after the main character in Peacock's novel, "Nightmare

Abbey". Apparently I didn't make this very clear in the last issue. I had a lot of fun with mouldy roots in the editorial there, and at least one reader believed until recently that the word was really an acronym from "Society for the Corruption of Youth Through Habitual Reading Of Peacock" - which it is, but that was an afterthought.

I started reading Peacock about ten years ago, after a girl named Luigi (Ann, actually, but she was studying Italian at the time and had acquired this odd nickname) told me about a weird sort of novel she had been studying, and it sounded like my kind of book. It was, and is. "Maid Marian" opened up a new world for me - a world of wit and humour, of horseplay and heeltaps and vast erudition. But a dangerous world, since I have tended more and more in recent years to live in it - and I have only lately come to realize this. Peacock's world is a world of the mind: an imaginary creation, for all that it reflects the "real" world of the author's time (and ours, for that matter). But Peacock himself did not live in a Peacockian world. He was an eminently sane and human person.

The stories you hear about him tend to make you think of him as a "character" every bit as eccentric as his own creations: his imprisonment for bankruptcy or whatever (the references are vague, but there was a woman involved - according to one writer, a woman Peacock had assumed rich, planned to marry, and, after he had gone into debt in anticipation of the marriage, discovered to be nigh penniless: a good yarn anyway, even if untrue); his naval career (like Gilbert's "ruler of the Queen's Navee", he never actually went to sea); his businesslike proposal of marriage by mail to a lady he had not seen for eight years (she accepted); and so on. But he enjoyed a long and apparently quite serene life. He was a real person.

You can easily talk a lot of nonsense about "being a real person", about "integrating the personality" and the like. But when all the crap and the jargon is discounted there remains a fact: we are, all of us, so much more potentially than we are actually. How do you reconcile the "great general designs" with the "little particular passions"? Some of us don't try too hard.

I have lately begun to realize just how much I am in danger of retreating from the joys and responsibilities of trying to be "a real person" into a two-dimensional world of words. I can't say people haven't warned me, gently and otherwise, in the past. John Foyster, one of the nicest persons I know and a constant reproach - in his example, more often than in his words - to my slothful way of life, has often said, "Words are not things". Leigh Edmonds despairs of my "clever" writing. Lee Harding has pointed out, for years, the lack of emotion in my writing and conversation. No-one has tried harder to show me where I am heading than my wife, Diane; ironically, we seem to communicate so much better now that we have separated. A few months ago a psychiatrist said, "Words are important to you, aren't they? I wonder why." I wondered, too. Then a person I love very dearly, a person whose love and wisdom and humour and everything-she-is I need and desire more than I can ever say with words, led me to realize within myself what people have been telling me for years. I suddenly knew that for most of my life I have been using my cleverness with words to erect an enormous barrier between myself and people, clouding my mind with thoughts which are not thoughts at all but just words.

Words are important. I don't think I need to apologize for any skill I display in my use of them. But they are bridges, a means of access from my island to yours, from yours to mine; and no matter how beautifully constructed the bridge is, it fails in its basic and ultimate function if no-one crosses it. The written word is my only means of communication with most of you. Fanzines are exercises in bridge-building. In the past five years I have shown that I can put up a pretty fancy-looking structure of this kind, but I have wondered why the hell Fan X's crudzine gets tremendous response while my elegant publications just seem to disappear into a vacuum. I think I know the answer now.



in the last days of the last midphase of
storm and blew from the northern
through the dying forests of Askat
a cold wind that smelled of smoke
and snow. Slight and shadowy as a wild
animal in her light furs, the girl Rolery
stepped through the woods, through the
storming of dead leaves, away from the
walls that stone by stone were rising on the
hillside of Tevar and from the busy fields
of the last harvest. She followed a faint path that
called after her. She went alone and no one
led west, scored and rescored in grooves by the
passing southward of the footroots, choked in pla-
ces by fallen trunks or huge drifts of leaves.
Where the path forked at the foot of the border ridge
she went on straight, but before she had gone ten steps
she turned back quickly towards a pulsing rustle that app-
roached from behind. A runner came down the northw-
ard track, bare feet beating in the surf of leaves, the
long string that tied his hair whipping behind him.
From the north he came at a steady, pound-
ing, lung-bursting pace, and never glanc-
ed past and was gone. The wind blew
firm on his way to Tevar with his
news - storm, disaster, winter,
war. Incurious, Rolery turned
and followed her own evasive
path, which dragged upw-
ard along the dead,
faded trails and as
she went she
could hear the be-
neath.

Armed with a
teen-age
Tolkien. I
fantasy you
from about 13 on.
guess. But in order to
sell one's writing one
gets fitted into a market.
My next Ace should be out
early in the year - THE
LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS.
It's very slow getting off the ground &
rather peculiar, but I think it's the
best sf book I've done. :: I must
finish the Tale of the Hugo for you.
There was Alan Nourse in North
Bend, Washington, with it, and me
in Portland, without it, you rec-
all. Well, we had to drive up
to Seattle to buy a cello
for my eldest child,
there being an outst-
anding repairer &
dealer in string
ed instrumen-
is there.
to I
call
ed

URSULA K. LE GUIN

The View In

PEOPLE in my line of work are forever being asked three questions: What name do you write under? Where do you get your ideas? Why do you write science fiction?

To the first I answer, What name do you beat your wife under? To the second, Out of my head. That is, I would make these answers if I didn't always remember them several hours later. To the third I have never had a satisfactory answer even several hours later. I shall attempt now to produce an unsatisfactory answer, since John Bangsund asked me Question Three, and John is a man worth answering.

I write science fiction because that is what publishers call my books. Left to myself, I should call them novels.

The novel is dead. If you don't believe me, ask the French. They know the novel's dead. They ought to: Flaubert killed it. The Flaubertian novel has been dead ever since it was born. No-one noticed this for about a century. Then, during the last ten or fifteen years, they made a great fuss about it, and a New Wave. This is very like the French.

Meanwhile, Angus Wilson, Patrick White, Boris Pasternak and Alexander Solzhenitsyn were writing long works of fiction in prose of immense power and vitality. This is very like the English and Russians, who in the teeth of the best literary theories write huge, messy books that go on forever - novels, in other words. This is the deplorable tradition of Dickens and Tolstoy, which produces nothing that pleases theoreticians, and which will not even die on schedule.

It includes one renegade Frenchman, Proust, by the way.

American novels since the time of Henry James have been preponderantly Flaubertian, and dead. There is no major native tradition for a novelist in America to grow from. We have had marvellous oddballs and one-shotters, such as Melville and Thornton Wilder. But great novelists are like redwood trees, which grow best among a lot of other redwood trees. We do not have the ecological nexus, the tradition:

which surely is one reason why our best writers seem so rootless, and wither so young. There are minor native traditions of great vigour: the regional (Cather, Capote &c), the committed (Steinbeck, Mailer &c) and others. There are also international traditions of equal or greater vigour.

None of these, however, is on anything like the scale, or has anything like the scope, of the genuine or Absolute Novel of the Anglo-Russian Messy Tradition, which is the greatest artistic achievement of Late Western culture, because it is more complicated than all the others, even symphonies. Life is coherent complexity. So is art. The more complex the coherence, the higher the life, or art, form.

One of the liveliest of the minor international traditions of the novel is the fantasy. No fantasy is an Absolute Novel, because by definition a fantasy contains less than the total content of reality on all levels of the Absolute Novel. The fantastic novel, like the naturalistic novel, or the philosophical novel, or the dirty novel, settles for less than the whole.

Specialization, of course, has its rewards. Fantasy's reward is the special complexity and difficulty of invention. It gives particular delight, because the use of the imagination is delightful to sane people. The use and control of the dream is a noble art. The exercise of irrationality under the guidance of reason is a sport worth playing. No invented world, it goes without saying, can match one square yard of the Earth in variety, splendour, terror and unexpectedness; but the invention of secondary worlds (Tolkien's phrase) is a participation in the inexhaustibility of Creation, which continues inexhaustibly to create itself without the slightest rational excuse for doing so, and against all the rules of pedants and of entropy.

The tradition into which I fit by disposition and by choice (it's unfashionable to talk about tradition now that we are all Doing Our Own Thing, but I prefer accuracy to fashion) was mostly written in English: for example, Dunsany, L.H. Myers, A.T. Wright, Isak Dinesen, Tolkien. But if I have appeared to be anti-French, let me here rendre hommage tres sincere a Supervielle, St Exupery, Giradoux. From the Germans comes Rilke's one novel; in Russia, early Pasternak, Olesha and Zamyatin are related to the Western tradition. As one moves on East, through India and Japan, sometimes all the novels seem to be related to the fantasy tradition; which must surely be an effect of the fact that a Japanese commonplace can seem a wild flight of fancy to the ignorant Westerner; and also of the fact that the East sees reality differently from the West.

Anyhow, it was in this general sub-tradition of the novel, fantasy, that I began writing, and have always

written. It was not until my work could be defined by publishers as science fiction, however, that it was published.

Whether or not it's worth while to try to distinguish "fantasy" from "science fiction" I don't know; I incline to think not. Of course Verne is different from Hugo, and Wells from Eddison, just as Dunsany is immensely different from Myers, and Tolkien from Dinesen. But it is their similarities that interest me. At any rate the area of overlap is so large as to render any effort at exclusive definition useless. The most relentlessly technological Analogous novella, armoured like a tank in engineering data and rolling juggernaut-like forward through the realms of Extrapolation, even this is a fairy tale. The characters prove it. Instead of Prince Charming and the Sleeping Beauty we have Captain Hardnose and the Easy Lay. Big difference.

When you get above this level, the distinctions become even harder to make, the similarities even obscurer and more fascinating. What possible bond of likeness is there among LADY INTO FOX, A MARTIAN ODYSSEY, GORMENGHAST and GALACTIC POT-HEALER? Four decades; four utterly dissimilar stylists; four utterly dissimilar kinds of reality. Maybe that's it.

If I read Tolstoy, or Dickens, or Turgenev, or Forster, or Wilson, or Solzhenitsyn, I know what I am going to experience is reality, as expressed and transfigured through art. Reality translated to a higher plane, a more passionate intensity, than most of us can experience at all without the help of art or religion or profound emotion; but reality. The shared world, the scene of our mortality.

Whereas, if I read Tolkien, or Peake, or Dick, or Vance, or Zelazny, or Davidson, or Ballard, or Cordwainer Smith, I know that I am going to meet a personal variation on reality; a scene less real than the world around us, a partial view of reality.

But I know also that by that partiality, that independence, that distancing from the shared experience, it will be new: a revelation. It will be a vision, a more or less powerful or haunting dream. A view in, not out. A space-voyage through somebody else's psychic abysses. It will fall short of tragedy, because tragedy is the truth, and truth is what the very great artists, the absolute novelists, tell. It will not be truth; but it will be imagination.

Truth is best. For it encompasses tragedy, and partakes of the eternal joy. But very few of us know it; the best we can do is recognize it. Imagination - to me - is next best. For it partakes

of Creation, which is one aspect of the eternal joy.

And all the rest is either Politics, or Pedantry, or Mainstream Fiction, may it rest in peace.

Mrs Le Guin has published five novels to date. Two more are due this year: THE LATHE OF HEAVEN (Scribner's) and THE TOMBS OF ATUAN (Atheneum), a sequel to A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA. Captain Chandler, who started writing when Mrs Le Guin was (as they say) a mere slip of a child, has written more novels than most people have read (present company excepted, of course). We asked Bert (his American friends call him Jack: this is a mystery he doesn't clear up in this article) pretty much the same question we asked Ursula: why, and how, do you write science fiction? Here is his reply.

A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

My Life and Grimes'

YEARS and years ago I was annoyed by the blurb before one of my short stories in the now defunct Fantastic Universe. It stated that I was a "Chief Officer in the Australian Merchant Marine". At the time I was a Chief Officer, but in a British liner company maintaining regular services between the United Kingdom and the Australasian colonies. (Today I would say that I was "Mate of a Pommy Ship"...) I used to consider myself an English writer. I used to think that the late Neville Shute's love affair with Australia was rather embarrassing to read about. But now that I have seen Alice Springs I can appreciate A TOWN LIKE ALICE, just as I have a deeper understanding of Cordwainer Smith's Old North Australia after having travelled through the Northern Territory and northern and central Queensland. My own Rim Worlds, of course, are more Australian than otherwise. Yet to appear in print are stories set in the New Australian Colonies - the capital city of one of them is called Paddington - and in the Lost Colony planet Olgana, the national song of which is a slightly re-written version of "Waltzing Matilda", and which has a huge granite monolith in the middle of its southern continent.

Seaman, science fiction writer specializing in Space Opera, and latterly an Aussified Pom... How did I get this way?

I've very few complaints, actually. At a very early age I became an avid reader, my favourite reading consisting of science fiction and sea stories in roughly equal doses. My boyhood heroes were seamen and spacemen. I was born in the wrong time and place to become one of the latter, but I can, at least, write about them. At which juncture someone is bound to remark that my space stories are really sea stories - and so they are. It was Heinlein who said, quite some time ago, that only people who know ships can write convincingly about spaceships. This is true, I think. The spaceman of the future, manning the real spaceships, will have far more in common with the 20th Century seaman than the 20th Century aviator. An aeroplane goes a long way in a short time, and can make an emergency landing en route if necessary. A ship goes a long way in a long time, with her crew and passengers cooped up in a tin box, and is - although not to the same extent as the future spaceship - a self-contained economy.

The science fiction writer with sea experience has more than a nodding acquaintance with Manning Scales and the like. He knows how a ship making a long voyage should be run. He's been there.

One story of mine which was a real sea story was "Sea Change" in Harry Harrison's YEAR 2000 anthology. That was one with which I had to take very great pains, since it was being written by a ship master rather than a science fiction writer. My officers, I imagine, were very relieved when I finished it. "Chief, I have this ship with a conventional nuclear power plant. How can I arrange a complete breakdown of all main and auxiliary machinery?" "Tell me, Sparks, how can I blow out the radio telephone transceiver?" - and so on. Harry Harrison wasn't at all happy about the blowout of the radio telephone ("What about the circuit breakers?") so I finally had to drag in the human element. The ship's electrician was an incurable tinkerer and her nickname was Passion Fingers. Everything she touched, she fucked.

My favourite character is Commodore Grimes - even though every now and then I toy with the idea of killing him off. What annoys me about him is that he is always one step ahead of me in rank. When I was Chief Officer he was Captain Grimes, and when I became Captain Chandler he became Commodore Grimes. Even when, for a while, I was a sort of a kind of Commodore myself (the title being, in the Merchant Navy, honorary and given by some companies to their senior Master; I was senior Master in such a company - which had, as it happened, only one ship anyway) Grimes

became a sort of a kind of Admiral, having been awarded that honorary rank in the surface Navy of Tham, one of the worlds on the Rim Runners' Eastern Circuit. Again, Grimes has sailed in command of an ocean-going vessel (THE SISTER SHIPS, to be published in *Galaxy*) whereas I shall never sail in command of a spaceship. Not in this incarnation anyway.

Still, I like Grimes. Like me, he's a reactionary old bastard. Like me, he takes a dim view of progress for its own sweet sake. Had he been around in person he would, I am sure, have marched as I did in the protest against driving a freeway through the heart of Paddo. ("To Widen Jersey Road Is To Destroy Paddington!") But we were talking about science fiction, not about the misguided attempts to make Sydney a city fit for nothing but the internal combustion engine. How did Grimes and I get the way that we are? And was it worth it anyway?

Many ship's officers think that it would be nice to have a lucrative sideline. Almost invariably, however, the necessary work and study is deferred until the Master's Certificate, qualifying one for command, has been obtained. The idea is that until this milestone has been passed one should spend all one's spare time "swotting for Master". (What happens, of course, is that one neither studies writing, accountancy or whatever nor swots for Master, but just carries on having a good time.) Anyway, I'd always wanted to write, but put off any serious attempt to do so until that precious Certificate of Competency was in my possession. I passed for it during World War II. At this time the ships of the Shaw Savill and Albion Company had been shunted off their well-worn tramlines and were running to all sorts of exotic (to us) places, such as New York.

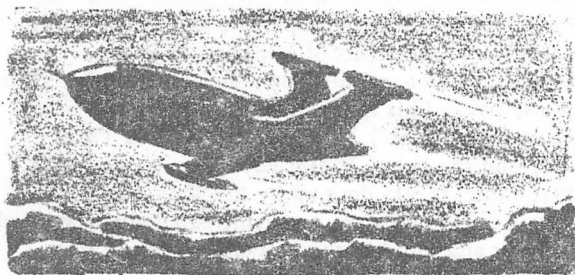
In that city for the first time, I decided to pay a visit to John W. Campbell Jr, editor of Astounding Science Fiction (as it was then). After all, I was a Faithful Reader of many years' standing. John condescended to see me. He complained that he was very short of material and suggested that I try my hand at writing for him. I thought he must be joking. Nevertheless, the next time in New York I took him the precious manuscript of "This Means War", about 4000 words which had taken me all of a fortnight painfully to peck out. (If anybody is interested, the story was about a Venusian spacecraft making a landing on Earth's seas and being shot at by everybody; whereupon the batrachian captain sends a message back to his superiors to inform them that Earth has opened hostilities with Venus...) I said that I'd better leave a stamped addressed envelope for the return of the manuscript. John told me not to bother and that he'd send it back.

I proceeded back to the UK in a very slow convoy. Awaiting me at home was an envelope bearing the proud name of Street & Smith. It contained not a rejection slip but a cheque.

During the remaining years of the war I wrote almost exclusively for Street & Smith, although I was able to peddle the rejects elsewhere. I had stories in Famous Fantastic Mysteries and Weird Tales, as well as an occasional sea story in the American Short Stories. Most of the Astounding rejects went either to Planet Stories or Thrilling Wonder Stories, and carbon copies of them all were sold to the K.G. Murray magazines in Australia. The reason for the pseudonyms - George Whitley and Andrew Dunstan - used at that time was that John Campbell requested his regular writers to use noms-de-plume when submitting material to other magazines. That way he could say, "So-and-so writes exclusively for Astounding".

Towards the end of World War II, "Giant Killer" (recently reprinted in Ballantine's GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF SCIENCE FICTION) was written. At the time I was Second Officer of the old "Raranga", one of the last of Shaw Savill's coal-burning steamships. She had been torpedoed during the First World War, but had made port; we all used to say that the captain of the U-boat involved should be brought to trial as a World War II war criminal - for not doing his job properly. Apart from anything else, she was infested with rats. We used to keep a .22 rifle on the bridge so that the officer of the watch could amuse himself on moonlit nights potting at the brutes. Everybody in the ship was rat-conscious.

"Giant Killer" was the third attempt at "the rat story". I can't recall the title of the first one, but it was written from the viewpoint of the crew of another spaceship which boards this drifting derelict and then nudges it into a sunward trajectory. John bounced it, saying, "Try it again from the viewpoint of the original crew". (That first story did sell, as it happened, to Walter Gillings, for a British sf magazine which never got off the ground.) The second version I really liked. It was called "The Rejected" - the title coming from the American



version of "The Internationale" - "Arise, ye prisoners of starvation! Arise, rejected of the Earth!" The ship was a Russian spaceship, with a cargo of seed grain for the Russian colony on Mars. There were bubbling samovars bolted to the bulkheads, as well as gilt-framed red-draped portraits of the Little Red Father, and all hands sang re-worded Russian folk songs at the drop of a balalaika. The vessel had a mixed crew, some of whom were married to each other, and there was a fair dollop of adultery and general fornication. And, all the time, there was this mess of mutinous mutants seething under the Comrades' feet...

John, to my pained surprise, was not impressed. He said coldly, "I would point out that Astounding Science Fiction is neither Thrilling Romances nor a monthly edition of The Daily Worker. Take it away... and do it again from the viewpoint of the rats".

I said, "What?"

He said, "You heard me".

The next time I was in New York I was a house guest at John's usual weekend party. I took with me the first thousand words of "Giant Killer". John read this, then passed it to George O. Smith, who read it and passed it to Theodore Sturgeon, who read it. Then they all asked, "Where's the rest of it?" I replied, "There ain't gonna be no rest unless John says he'll buy it". John said, "Finish it", so I did.

Re-reading the story recently in the Ballantine anthology, I was amazed at how little it dates, and at how much better it is, as writing, than other material turned out at about the same time. The credit should go to John Campbell, who knew what he wanted and was determined to get it.

My appearances these days in his magazine are very few and far between, but I feel that he put me on the right path, as he has done with so many new writers. Three years ago my wife visited New York during a world tour. I insisted that she call on John, and she did so and was impressed. In her own words, "He's the only man who has ever been able to talk me into a corner!" You have read his editorials... well, that's the way he talks.

During the boom period I must have contributed to every magazine in the field, with the exception of Galaxy. As far as Galaxy was concerned, I just didn't seem able to appeal to Mr Gold's tastes. I got my foot inside the door some time later, after Fred Pohl had become editor. And then, with my promotion to Chief Officer (the Mate of a big ship, especially one carrying passengers, has very little spare time), production fell off. I was still writing, but only when there was something that absolutely

had to be put down on paper. "Jetsam" and "Late" are two of my favourite stories from this almost idle spell.

Then came the domestic upheaval that culminated in my resignation from Shaw Savill and my emigration to Australia. It was a fresh start in more ways than one, and not an altogether pleasant one. The step down from Chief Officer of a big overseas ship to Third Officer of a little coaster was a blow to the pride. I think that the resumption of literary activities was as much from psychological causes as financial ones. I just had to be some kind of biggish frog in some kind of smallish puddle. Slowly but steadily I began to make a name for myself again.

But after the boom came the bust. Overnight, all the minor magazines in the field ceased publication. One reason for the sudden collapse of this market was the proliferation of paperback novels selling at magazine prices. Like most writers in the field, I said to myself, "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em", and so the transition was made from short stories to novels.

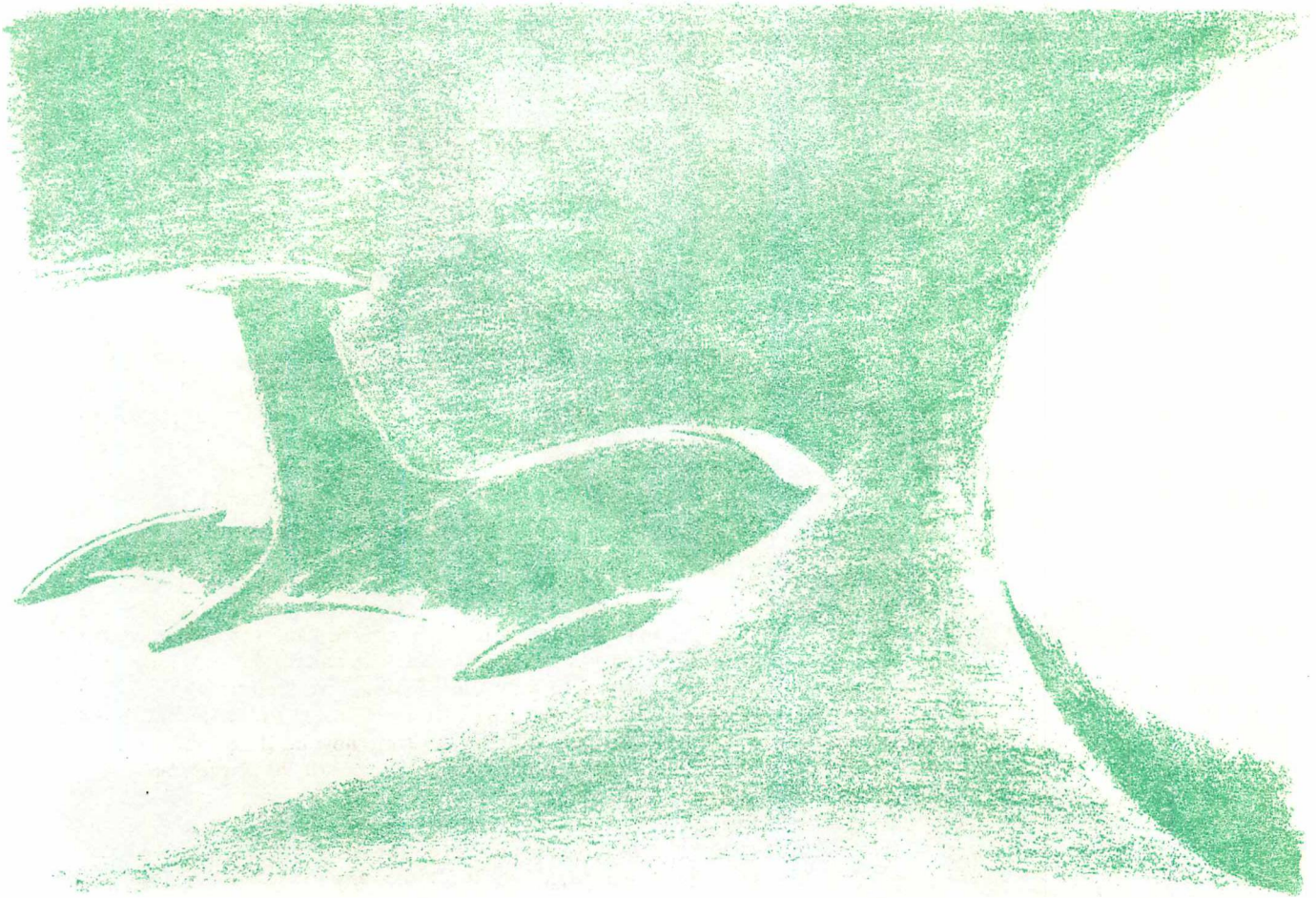
One result of the upheavals in my life was the creation of the Rim Worlds. The resemblance between the Rim Runners - the company owning and operating the Merchant Fleet of the Rim Worlds Confederacy - and my present employers is rather more than coincidental. Rim Runners' ships are officered by refugees from the major shipping lines of the Galaxy, just as the ships in which I now serve are officered by refugees from the major overseas shipping lines. Again, some of our trades are as close to rim-running as you could get on this planet: the famous Strahan Trade, for example. (Speaking of which, the hold-flooding episode at the end of "The Kinsolving's Planet Irregulars" actually happened - with the exception, of course, of the apparition of Commodore Grimes. It gave me a neat conclusion to the story. As they say, an opportunist is a man who meets the wolf at the door and appears next day wearing a fur coat.) The Port of Strahan is closed now. I should have been the Very Last Master of the Strahan Trade, but unluckily was transferred when there were only two more trips to make.

The first Rim Worlds story - although it doesn't quite fit into the pattern - was "The Man Who Couldn't Stop". This gave me the idea of using the locale for a series of stories, the first of which was "To Run The Rim" in Astounding. This was later expanded into a full-length novel, published by both Avalon and Ace as THE RIM OF SPACE. Ace's cover artist must have read the hard-cover edition before painting his picture; unluckily he illustrated a scene which was cut from the paperback. Another early Rim Worlds story was "Wet Paint". It later was fitted into the Rim Worlds mythology, and its locale, Kinsolving's Planet, has been used quite a few times. Grimes appeared in the early Rim Worlds stories as little more than a back-

ground character; Rim Runners had to have an Astro-nautical Superintendent, and he was it. Then somehow he started taking charge. As well as being the protagonist of quite a few novels and short stories, he is a writer himself and an acknowledged expert on Terran naval (sea-going) history. In "The Bird-Brained Navigator" he displays a grasp of the fundamentals of surface navigation. In "The Sister Ships" he actually sails in command of an ocean-going steamship. In "The Man Who Sailed The Sky" (also coming up in Galaxy) he shows that he is quite capable of handling an aircraft when he has to. And he bobs up in stories outside the general Rim Worlds framework. In FALSE FATHERLAND (called SPARTAN PLANET in America) he is captain of the Survey Service's census ship, "Speaker", and towards the end of NEBULA ALERT (my title was TO RIDE THE NIGHTMARE, but Ace knows best) he gets tangled with the ex-Empress Irene, who doesn't belong in Grimes's universe at all. For a while now I've been keeping the two Grimes series running concurrently - the Rim Worlds stories, with the Commodore firmly in charge, and the Federation Survey Service stories, the early-life-and-hard-times of the Commodore. I've brought him up slowly and painfully from Ensign to Lieutenant Commander; at any time now he'll do something really horrid, get booted out of the Survey Service and finish up on the Rim.

Another character with whom I've had a lot of fun, although I don't like her any more than Grimes does, is the ex-Empress Irene. She, believe it or not, is John Russell Fearn's Golden Amazon, brainwashed and re-named. My affair with the Golden Amazon was... odd. Very.

It started when the heart-broken readers of the Toronto Star Weekly, in which the Fearn series had been appearing regularly, pleaded with Gwen Cowley, the Fiction Editor, to find someone to step into the late Mr Fearn's shoes to keep the series going. I don't know how many writers were approached, nor how many had a stab at it, but I was one of them. Rashly, I said that I would give it a go. Never having been able to read Fearn, I didn't know what I was letting myself in for. I started by borrowing some ancient copies of Amazing Stories from Don Tuck in Hobart. The Golden Amazon, as she appeared in that magazine, had been a sort of Tarzaness, whose parents had been marooned on Venus as the result of a Mutiny In Space. (Fearn was one of those writers who, knowing nothing about ships, packed his spacecraft to bursting with hordes of useless ratings.) The parents died, as Tarzan's did, and the baby, Violet Ray (a touch of genius, that name!), was drug up by the Things of the Venusian Swamp, acquiring superhuman strength of body and mind in the process. Later on she married a Terran engineer (who should have known



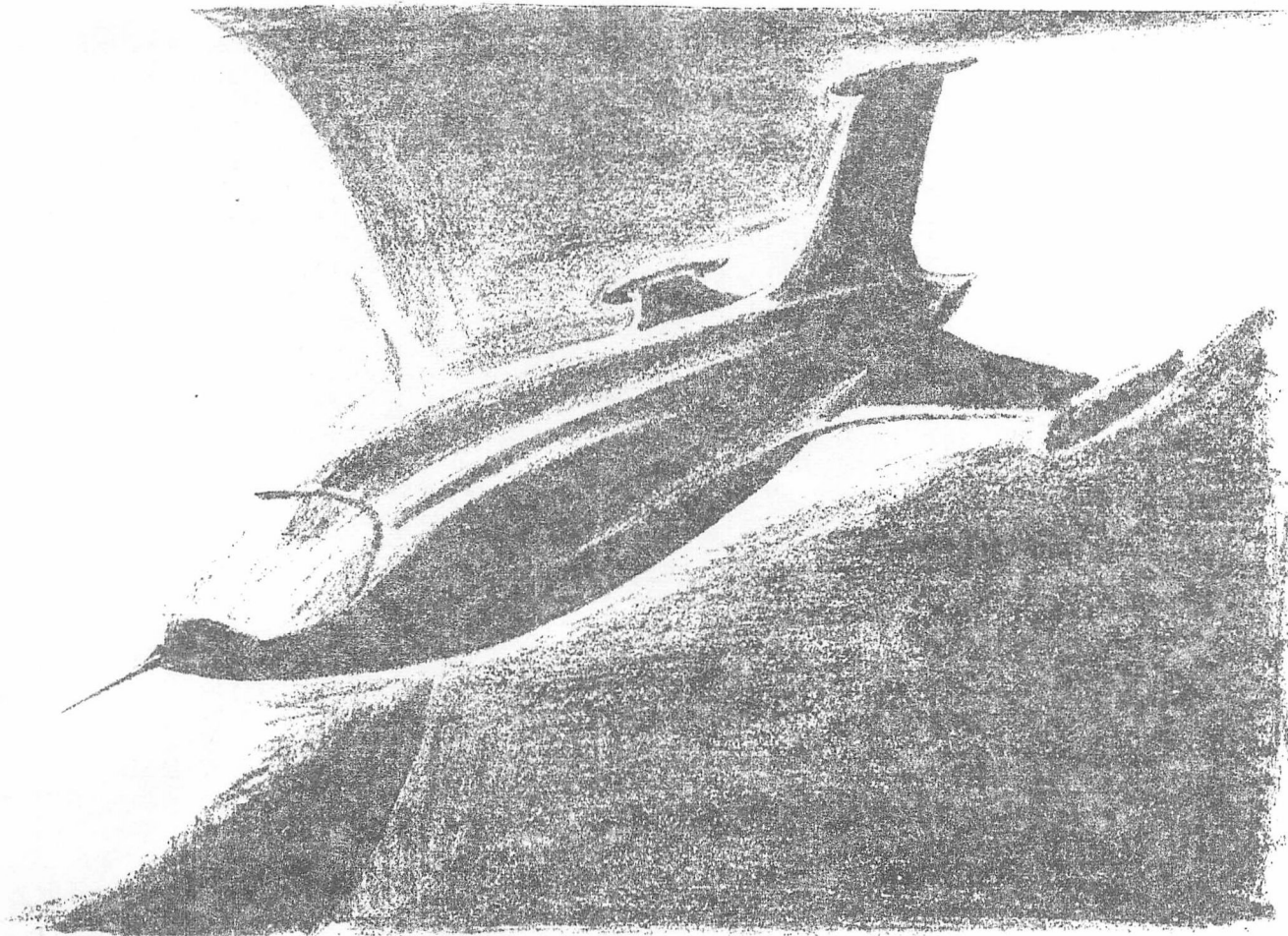
better) and gave birth to twins, whom she named Hercules and Hygiea. It would be unreasonable to expect her to have any better taste in names than her creator. Any baddies wishing to annoy the Amazon would invariably start by kidnapping her revolting brats, whereupon she would tear them apart with her bare hands. (No, Virginia, the baddies.) And so on. And so on.

This might have been good Fearn, but it certainly wasn't any kind of Chandler. Not a single one of the characters could I possibly do anything with - except the one obvious thing. The only solution was some tinkering with Time. One of my own standard characters, the Second Mate of a spaceship, had to be slung back into the Past and onto an Alternate Time Track (to account for the jungly, swampy Venus) to catch the Golden Amazon young and bring her up properly. Also I changed her name from Violet to Vanessa. This effort, THE COILS OF TIME, was submitted to Gwen Cowley, who screamed "This isn't my Amazon!" She sent me some back numbers of the Star Weekly and I learnt that this version of the Golden Amazon, although still named

Violet Ray, had been engendered by a Mad Scientist on Earth. (Meanwhile, THE COILS OF TIME sold both to Ace and the TSW.)

If anything, TSW's Amazon was even worse than Amazing's Amazon. She had acquired a most horrid assortment of friends, enemies and relatives by marriage - Saturnians, Jovians and Ghod knows what else. There was only one thing to do - kill off everybody except the Amazon in the very first chapter and have her thoroughly brainwashed, in order to start again from scratch. The first two or three chapters and a synopsis were submitted to Gwen Cowley. She said, coldly, "I don't think Mr Chandler likes Mr Fearn". And that was that.

With a few changes the story became EMPRESS OF OUTER SPACE, and the Golden Amazon became the ex-Empress Irene. Irene appeared in two more novels - NEBULA ALERT and SPACE MERCENARIES. She appears again in THE DARK DIMENSIONS, together with Commodore Grimes, Marks I & II, and Captain Sir Dominic Flandry, borrowed from Poul Anderson. (I got the idea for that when stories about



young Ensign Flandry and young Lieutenant Grimes appeared in the same issue of Galaxy. I asked Poul if I could borrow Flandry and he gave me his permission.)

My failure to exhume the Amazon is caused by my dislike for fictional characters of the Superman type. Not that I'm very fond of anti-heroes, either; the protagonist of a story, a thriller especially, should be just a cut above the average. My favourite comic strip hero, nevertheless, is Li'l Abner, and I never look at Dick Tracy. At the same time I am a James Bond addict; James, after all, was no Superman, and had his fair share of human weaknesses. Le Carre is a far better novelist than Fleming and his drab, shabby spies are probably much closer to real life than Fleming's goodies and baddies - but... Could it be that Fleming managed to engender the sense of wonder lacking in the books by Le Carre, Len Deighton and others?

Insofar as my own characters - Grimes especially - are concerned, I try to the best of my ability to make them real people. Grimes, as Commodore Grimes,

is essentially a good, solid, Twentieth Century ship-master type projected into the Umpteenth Century, making do as well as he can with the materials and personnel at his disposal, in whom the spirit of adventure is not yet dead. Grimes - Ensign, Lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander - is an overly zealous young officer whose enthusiasm does not compensate for his lack of experience. And, with the exception of the various Psionic Communications Officers, Grimes's shipmates could be found aboard any sea-going vessel today.

Would there have been the Rim Worlds and a Commodore Grimes if I had not emigrated to Australia? I doubt it. And even if Grimes had somehow produced himself by spontaneous generation, he would never have become involved in - and blamed for - the disappearance of Ayers Rock; nor would he have been the Astronautical Superintendent of Rim Runners. Nor, come to that, would there have ever been the villainous Captain Drongo Kane, Master of "Southerly Buster", who exists in typescript - but not yet in print.

And Grimes would not have turned out the way that he has were it not for the women in his life. Make what you like of that - but I will say that it is important for a writer in any field to have the right sort of wife. I owe very much to mine.

Finally... I may not be Australian born, but I like to kid myself that I have become an Australian writer.

One of the odd things about science fiction fandom is that you tend to regard some people you have met as good friends, some people you correspond with as good friends-by-mail - and every so often you realize you haven't seen these people, or written to them, in ages. (Brian Richards, for example, way over there in Port Hedland. Incredibly, I haven't seen him since 1967 - yet I think of him as one of the best friends I have.) The last time I saw Bert Chandler was at the Sydney SF Convention - Syncon 70 - in January 1970. Maybe... maybe it's because most sf fans don't get to see most other sf fans too often that so many of them remain friends? However that may be, the fact is that meeting other fans is one of the chief delights of fandom, and most of these meetings take place at what we are pleased to call conventions. Syncon 70 was a particularly delightful convention - especially for the people from Melbourne, most of whom found themselves for the first time in the role of visitors rather than organizers. John Foyster, the man who started the current revival of Australian fandom when he organized the 7th Australian SF Convention in 1966, wrote the following very personal account of the 1970 Sydney Convention in the August 1970 issue of his FAPazine, "Altjira", and it is reprinted here with his permission. The illustrations were drawn on-the-spot by that very gifted artist, Gerald Carr. In places the article has been slightly revised.

JOHN FOYSTER

Syncon 70

The previous sf convention held in Sydney, in 1955, was by all accounts a "swinging" affair - and I use the word with reference to the fistic art, rather than in the more modern sense. Since then all of the conventions but two (Canberra, 1955; Brisbane, 1971) have been held in Melbourne. The first of these was in 1956, at the same time as the Olympic Games,

though not, it must be admitted, on the same scale. I only started reading science fiction in March 1956 (while flat on my back in hospital; does it always get to you in moments of weakness?) so I didn't attend that one. It is symptomatic of Australian fandom that one prominent member of Melbourne fandom wanted the event to be known as the Olympicon (yes, oh limp con) and it was only after great efforts by his co-workers that the label "Olympicon" was applied. (My own efforts at baptism have been less successful: when a science fiction club was started at Monash University I tried to have it called the Monash University Scientifiction Association, with the obvious acronym MUSTFAN. But no-one would agree, and MUSFAN it became.)

The next convention was in 1958 - and I attended it as a shrinking neo. I bought a few magazines I didn't have and was actually befriended by a P*R*O*W*R*I*T*E*R (Nigel Jackson - no, you won't have heard of him).

Both of these conventions were Big Deals, held in the Richmond Town Hall, or part thereof, with exciting programme items like talks on Mars and flying saucers and suchlike. These two conventions received small write-ups in the local newspapers. The paid-up membership was around 150 each time, I think, and many of these members were from overseas.

Flash forward eight years. J. Foyster is now married (for just a month). This convention is not held in the Richmond Town Hall, but in the clubrooms of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. Let me tell you about that.

The Melbourne SF Club has been around since, roughly, 1950. It started as a group which met in the homes of various members, and progressed through the stages of meeting in cafes, hiring rooms by the hour and so on, until by the mid-fifties a permanent room was obtained. There were three of these permanent rooms, each an improvement over the last, over the next seven or eight years, until about 1963 the loft in the city, celebrated in local fannish legend, was obtained. Since the monthly rent for this place was only slightly more than the club could afford, we stayed. (Until late 1970, when vigilantes from the City Health Department forced yet another move - this time to the inner suburb of South Yarra. Since the present building sold recently for the magnificent sum of \$171,000, it seems likely that the new owners will want rather more return on their investment than the club can provide, and therefore likely that this place will prove to be just as permanent as the earlier ones.)

The clubrooms at 19 Somerset Place, Melbourne, could seat over a hundred people for movies, so it

seemed that they would be suitable for a small convention. Normally the main room housed a table tennis table, far too many chairs, a duplicator, screen and projector, the club library and other comforts such as TV and refrigerator (and probably other things I haven't heard of). I understand that members have been known to stay overnight there, and in recent years the clubrooms had sometimes been termed (in a mildly euphemistic way) a "travel agency".

So this was where the 1966 convention was held, water-powered lift and all. Not particularly imposing, perhaps, but it drew three journalists who, between them, produced some 8-10 thousand words of coverage and a photo or two. Even better, I got a free meal at one of our posher hotels out of one of them.

Another convention was held in 1968; same surroundings, except that by then the lift had succumbed to old age, and except that one session of the convention was held in a small hall in the Dandenong Ranges, some twenty miles from the other venue. Don't ask foolish questions. For that matter, "Ranges" is a rather extreme word to use for those lumps of dirt, but let it pass.

Then in 1969 they did it again, and this time the other venue was a movie theatre in the suburbs. What emerged from this convention was that no-one in particular wanted to put on the 1970 event. No doubt this will explain why it was that the convention held in Sydney at the New Year was only the first of a Double: Bill (if you will pardon the expression). The second leg of the double was the official Ninth Australian Convention in Melbourne the following Easter.

Sydney fandom, in its incarnation as the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation has existed for a little over three years. But behind this brash newcomer lie dark, evil forces, unmentionable things, dangerous visions and the Futurian Society of Sydney. I understood FSS meetings (held monthly) to consist in the denigration of other organizations, but at Syncon discovered that this is probably only true of the Australian SF Association. One member of the Foundation was warned to sever all connections with sf clubs other than the Futurians if he wished to remain on the side of the goodies, but fortunately no-one takes Graham Stone very seriously.

Anyway, towards the end of 1969, a fairly large number of Melbourne fans headed for Sydney. I'm not sure how many went, nor how many returned, even now. The convention was due to start on 1st January, in the afternoon, but Elizabeth and I started moving on the morning of Tuesday, 30th December.

The first step in a long series was to visit a local dry-cleaners: as usual I had left everything too late, but since they advertised a 24-hour service I felt that I was not asking too much in pressing for 36. They made it, too. Then we went home again (oh, we have great memories - we never leave anything behind) and I packed into the car what Elizabeth then considered to be all of the luggage. Then she took car, luggage, daughter Jillian and self off to her mother's. Try not to jump the gun, please; we already have enough trouble with the neighbours. There was a point to that little manoeuvre. I was left to clean up the house a little, pack the forgotten luggage and (mainly) finish writing a speech I was supposed to deliver at Syncon. Although I had expected to have a really peaceful convention, I did get stuck with this one chore. Well, I'd started working on it a week before Xmas, but somehow hadn't got much more than a third of the way into it. Which means that the first-draft had only got that far (same as final copy). I was just getting to the tricky bits when a visitor arrived. Postman. With the November Fapa mailing. A most inopportune time for it to arrive. We also had a card from Franz Rottensteiner in Austria - picture of snowy Alps - message "wishing you the same" variety. Australian summers being what they are, my feelings were not greatly eased by Franz's kind thought.

So I glanced through the Fapa mailing, and some time later squeezed in a couple of thousand more words of speech. I then headed for the city of Melbourne, weighed down by the previously neglected luggage (details of which had been phoned through) - and the November Fapa mailing.

Two servings of public transport later I arrived in the city proper, with only two tasks and plenty of time in which to perform them. The first of these was to purchase a ream of ditto paper, something I hadn't done before. I still think \$2.40 is too much to pay. My second task was to hand over to Mervyn Binns, secretary-treasurer of the Melbourne SF Club an exciting manuscript titled "SF in 1969" for the Club fanzine. As the member who had read least sf during the year, I was especially fitted for this honour, and only had to be asked about it three or four times. (The last time seemed more like a shout, now that I think about it...)

I handed over this remarkable work of fiction to M. Binns, bookseller. "Going to Sydney, Mervyn?" I asked. Now for the past several weeks the answer to this question had depended on a number of factors, but I was never able to work out the most significant. I think the more important ones included time of day, day of week, sales for the day and food just consumed. Mervyn replied, on this occasion, in the affirmative.



"When?" I said tactfully.

"Oh, we thought perhaps we'd go tomorrow morning or perhaps Thursday morning. I'd like to be home for New Year's Eve. And Paul wants to go and see the midnight movie at the drive-in."

"Mervyn, if you leave on Thursday morning you will miss half the convention. May I also point out that drive-ins show midnight movie horror specials on other nights?"

"Yes, but you get ones then that you don't get at other times of the year."

"Hmm. What is the name of the film Paul wants to see?"

"Oh, he doesn't know, but they're always good films."

So I went on the five-minute bus-ride to my parents-in-law's. Now you can understand the complexity.

We live at the edge of Melbourne, about eighteen miles from the centre. Elizabeth's parents live about two miles from the centre. We were catching an early-morning train from Melbourne's main station.

Then came the final packing. I had agreed to take a SAPS and a FAPA mailing with me for some of the Sydney fans (John Ryan in particular). Then there were a few books as well.

"What's this?"

"Oh, THE GOLDEN BOWL. See, on the front it says T-H-E G-O-"

"But what is it doing here?"

"I thought I'd finish it on the train; it isn't very long." Thunk.

"Take something lighter. And what is this?"
"That's just the Fapa mailing that arrived today."
"Out."
"Well, I'll just take out a few of the fanzines..."
Thunk.
And so on.

Next morning we took a taxi at 7.45am. It seemed early for an 8.45 train, but the taxi company was insistent. And it was while I was in that taxi that I recalled the most important item for my travels - irretrievably forgotten. I was to be completely unprepared, ideologically, to do battle at the convention. Not having a separate edition of THE THREE CONSTANTLY READ ARTICLES, I had mentally settled for QUOTATIONS as being quite portable. Now even that had been left behind. Nevertheless I resolved to raise high the great banner, etc. My mind on higher things, I shoved aside a few porters and other flunkies and made my way to my first-class seat.

I spent some time looking for Bruce R. Gillespie, who was supposedly travelling on the same train. I couldn't find him but, as it turned out, this was because he was getting on the train further up the line. Somehow, boarding an express, I'd felt that unlikely.

The journey from Melbourne to Sydney is 598 miles. I know, because the little brochure I have here states it plainly. We were travelling on the fastest of the three good trains that make this journey, and its average speed, a quick bit of mental slide-ruling revealed, is about 47 mph. But that doesn't tell it all, since the train's average speed in Victoria is about 54 mph and in New South Wales 44 mph, top speed being in the nineties (though in practice the trains rarely exceed 75 mph). All this makes for a slow journey.

This little brochure is an informative document. I made some notes on other things, too, mostly fannish. For instance, pulling out of the station in Melbourne I noticed the following large sign: FIRST AUTOMATIC HUMPYARD IN AUSTRALIA. I guessed that it didn't mean what I thought it meant, and subsequently a Sydney fan who tries to keep up with this kind of thing informed me that humpyards are pretty big in railways. Besides this I noticed plenty of NSW Government Railways stock in the yards (indeed, I was travelling in a pre-war example of it), and I began to think that John Baxter must be much preferring being guest at SF Film Festivals to keeping track of that damned stock. On the other hand, John's job did seem to entail working for about thirty minutes in the morning and then taking the rest of the day off for reading, writing letters and cutting stencils. I suppose one has to take the short with the long.

At 10.20 am we passed through Avenel (Bruce R. Gillespie was now safely aboard), about which our guide has the following to say: "Notorious Australian bush-ranger Ned Kelly, on one of his surprise visits to Avenel, earned the sympathies of early settlers by saving a child from drowning." Very touching. There are several references to Ned Kelly, but none to Mick Jagger.

2.23 pm - June: "You are now almost halfway to Sydney." You are also passing through the town in which J. Baxter grew up. June delights in the "J. W. Ballard Tyre Service". ("How come you pranged the car?" "I was tired by Ballard.")

Bowral (7.32 pm) will be remembered by all cricket lovers as the birthplace of one of Australia's greatest cricketers - Sir Donald Bradman. It may also be remembered as the place from whence John Baxter ventured forth into fandom.

John Baxter and I shared an earthquake in Bowral.

9.09 pm - Strathfield. "Get off at Strathfield," John Ryan had said. He is only a comics fan, so I didn't take much notice of that. Elizabeth also suggested that we get off there. Somehow that tipped the balance and, more than a little encumbered by luggage (and Fapa mailings: I want you to know I had some success in that direction), we flowed onto the platform to be greeted not only by Ryan, but also by John Brosnan (former member of Capa-Alpha) and by Gary Mason (member of Capa-Alpha). I very nearly climbed back aboard the train. But in the end I found the comics sections of the convention the most interesting.

It was only a matter of waiting half an hour for a train to take us back along the line to the station nearest Ryan's (while Mason cleared off with Gillespie and Stephen Campbell). As I had only feuded with Ryan by letter before, this gave us some time to get down to business in person. For some reason, John had not arranged to have his house near the railway station, so that even after we arrived there was the matter of a taxi.

Now New Year's Eve is not a good time to try to find taxis. We had another half-hour wait. In celebrating New Year's Eve many Australian citizens are known to have a few drinks, and one of the heaviest celebrants accosted me while I was waiting with the others. Perhaps because of my long association with Melbourne fandom, it is generally believed that I am used to talking to drunks, so I was left to support the conversation and, occasionally, my temporary friend, alone. I report that the conversation, as much as I could make of it, was exceptionally boring.

Eventually John managed to snare a cab. I don't like



to think what the inducement must have been. I confess to not having been interested in much but going to sleep that night. After all, the big deal convention started the next day.

My notes tell me that I got up at 5.45 the next morning, but that was only to keep my notes up to date, and so hardly counts. Most of the fans at Ryan's (and there were about five or six of them altogether) left for the convention site at about 10.30 am, but I waited. I was going with Bob Smith and he didn't arrive for another hour or so. We hadn't met for about three years, so there was no problem at all in filling in the fifteen-mile drive to the consite. And my notes run out, dammit, at this point, just before the convention begins. The remainder is therefore likely to be even more fictional than the foregoing.

The site was a small hall located quite some distance from civilization (food, water, clothing &c) but the committee had made provision on the first two matters. But there was one unexpected snag - the rain on the roof. It does not normally rain in Sydney on New Year's Day. The programme started at about 2 in the afternoon with a sort of welcoming speech and what was supposed to be a panel on Fandom which turned into a fanzine-huckstering session. I think this was also the first Australian convention in some time in which there was competitive hustling of books; at least three sellers were in operation, though there might have been more I didn't find out about. I was able to spend a lot of this time talking to people I already knew and meeting a few I didn't. I didn't like the look of the evening programme, and since most of the people I knew in Sydney were either



involved in running the convention or not available, I went home (to Ryan's). Star Trek episodes and talks about flying saucers lacked charm in about equal quantities. At this stage, about sixty people had registered.

At present there are few attractions at Australian conventions apart from the programme, the reason being (as I've suggested above) that almost all the active fans are involved in the running of the convention. Parties are rather rare, except for con-sponsored ones, which tend to be over-sized.

It is true that most of the Australian pros turn up at conventions, but I knew them all apart from a new fella named Robert Bowden, and although I always enjoy talking to Jack Wodhams and Bert Chandler, I had done it quite a few times before. Moreover, I discovered that a teensy-weensy speech on the Saturday afternoon was not to be my lot after all. So on Friday morning I started off with a two-man discussion with Bob Smith on the Australian fandom we remembered. As it turned out we talked more about fandom before our own time. We had both been pretty pissed off by the emphasis on fanpubbing for profit, which had been the keynote of the previous afternoon's panel (I once took ten cents for one of my fanzines, but I think Bob forgives me) and were determined to show convention members that there was more to it than sending out renewal notices and accosting fans at conventions.

Next up was a panel on SF IN THE SEVENTIES, with Guess Who as chairman. Somehow, panels at Australian conventions seem slightly more exciting than the transcripts of the Worldcon panels I've read, which indicate that panelists get up, spout their pieces, and that's the finish. In Australia, panelists are expected to disagree (though not going so far as fisticuffs) and this first panel was no exception.

The afternoon programme started with the Guest of Honour speech from Ron Graham, publisher of Vision of Tomorrow. He outlined his plans for the future.

Now you will begin to understand why, by the Saturday evening, I was almost completely hoarse. The next item was a dual interview, with Bert Chandler the ham in a Gillespie-Foyster sandwich. I felt that Bruce hadn't quite grasped the idea that people were more interested in hearing from Bert Chandler than from Bruce Gillespie, but between us we managed to get some interesting comments out of ABC.

Elizabeth was speaking next, and at the same time I had an interesting chore. Elizabeth spoke about SF IN SCHOOLS, and about being the wife of an sf fan. I was looking through Laura Molesworth's notes on the Futurian Society of Sydney, which included some fascinating material. As the widow of one of the

leading figures in the Society, Laura was slightly biased, though not as much as many of the other members would be. For about twenty years the FSS has been dominated by Graham Stone, whom I consider to be a wart on the arsehole of Sydney fandom, but of whom current Sydney fans have a slightly higher opinion. Most of the material Laura had dated from before this period - that is, from about 1939 to 1949 - and there are, I should say, some mighty important things there. I would like to take a copy of all she has, but this will take a lot of time. Besides being the oldest fan organization in Australia, the FSS is/was also one of the feudingest in the world. I saw a copy of "Futurian Law", a document which prescribed the behaviour of members: it runs for over fifty half-foolscap pages. The main problems the Futurians had, I think, were their obsessions with the importance of themselves and their group.

(A note for Harry Warner: There was a photo of Russ Woodman ("I am a negro" - ALL OUR YESTER-DAYS, p.27)) which seemed to me to indicate a thoroughly Caucasian racial ancestry for this fan. Edco would know. Laura indicated that Woodman always seemed to the Futurians to be a bit of an oddball - but remember what they were like.)

Anyway, Bob Smith and I pawed over this fabulous stuff, and then Laura gave a five or ten-minute talk on the activities of the Futurians. Her attendance at the convention brought Sydney fandom much closer together, and several members of the Foundation are now regular attenders at meetings of the Futurian Society. (Why do Sydney fans go for grandiose titles, I wonder?)

Following that came the Worldcon panel. It had been decided that the best way to work the problem out was to discuss it as publicly as possible. The panel ran for an hour or so and after covering most of the major points decided to postpone a decision on the matter of Australia's bidding for '75 until the Melbourne convention at Easter, in the meantime discussing the matter by mail. Australia in '75?, the fanzine produced for this purpose, ran to six issues and 120 pages by Easter, when a committee was appointed to handle the matter from then on.

That night a couple of films formed the official programme, but I went to a party, where I spent most of the time talking with Ron Graham and a girl who came with Ron Smith (yes, that Ron Smith). Ron Graham told me some things about the '69 British Convention which I hadn't seen in print.

Next morning was the comics programme, so many fans stayed away. For example, there was the group of young fans who decided on a tour of Sydney, rolled their car, and had to leave the injured driver to suffer while they removed fourteen ounces of pot

to a safe distance. But they, and the others, really missed something. The panel consisted of the Australian equivalent of Al Capp, Walt Kelly, Milton Caniff, &c &c. I suppose it was partly because they had something to sell that these people (Stanley Pitt, John Dixon, Bill Jolliffe et al) managed to interest me. There was a stunned silence when Bert Chandler asked a question about a Sydney comic strip which no-one could answer.

Dinner followed. I have not mentioned it, but most of the meals one needed could be obtained at the convention hall, where they were served by hard-working parents and wives of fans. This is okay for the first fifty people, but after that... Nevertheless this was a service which I appreciated.

Immediately after the dinner break came the flop of the convention: the big-deal prepared speech by me. On previous occasions I had always spoken off the cuff, but run into time troubles. This time I read. Then there was the subject matter - one close to my heart, but perhaps a little too close to be softened down for popular consumption. Indeed, I wasn't even quite sure how to handle "The Criticism of Science Fiction", which had seemed so good when I first thought it up for a convention audience, and no-one I asked could help me much. I wound up going for what I thought was a beginner's guide, but the comments I heard afterwards indicated that I had misjudged badly - undoubtedly the result of not having been in a classroom for a couple of years. The speech was later nearly printed in Vision of Tomorrow - but several factors, including the utter boredom of it all, prevented that.

Next came the Pro Panel, which was devoted to the subject of publishing, rather than writing. This says a lot for the growth of Australian sf. Rons Smith and Graham represented the publishers and Bert Chandler and Jack Wodhams the writers. Lee Harding was chairman. I don't recall much of that. The auction followed, setting records of various kinds. The prices paid for magazines and books were unremarkable, but artwork from Vision brought excellent prices by local standards, and the comic books and fanzines went for quite incredible prices. Bob Smith, who had donated most of the fanzines to the con, didn't realize he had given away so much. Three early Mads of mine went for \$2.50 each (thankew, Ron Graham!), which was a trifle mind-boggling, since they were given to me.

In the middle of all this I have missed out items such as eating and drinking several times with Jack Wodhams, and the sight of Bert Chandler tripping it lightly outside the church-hall where the movies were shown, singing "Get me to the church on time" - but these and others are more personal things.

That night was con party night, at John Ryan's. Most

of the comics panel turned up, as well as most of the fans from the convention. Fortunately it was a warm night, and everyone spilled out of the house. The party ended soon after 4 am, by which time I was pretty tired, having averaged four or five hours sleep per night for the three previous nights. I have improved since then, and at the Easter convention in Melbourne a few months later managed to avoid sleeping on the Saturday night and so conventioned steadily for a trifle over forty hours. I'm tempted to try for sixty next year...

The convention over, many of the Melbourne fans started for home. But some, including us, decided to stay for a few extra days. Besides, one way and another I had hardly spoken to John Ryan, and I think he still wasn't sure whether everything I say or write is seriously intended or otherwise. (How about you?) Anyway, we didn't spend much of Sunday, 4th January, with the Ryans, because soon after I woke there was a phone call from an old friend to whom I had mis-addressed a telegram. She would have liked to attend some of the convention, so I really had made a mess of that one. We had a most pleasant afternoon with Roz and Bruce, mostly talking about movies, which is their hang-up. I hadn't quite expected to be offered a joint more or less as we walked in the door, however. Fairly late that night we crawled to bed.

Monday started slowly, which was just as well. Eventually we bundled two Ryans, two Foysters and two Ryan children into a cab for a journey to Sydney proper and some shopping (book-shopping - what else?). The Ryans, I should explain, live ten miles or so to the west of Sydney, while the con site was some miles to the north-west of Sydney, so that it had never been necessary to go right into the big smoke for the convention.

After this book-shopping we were to meet John Bangsund, Lee Harding and Leigh Edmonds, who would take us down to Bob Smith's (about twenty miles south of Sydney - so now you've had the grand tour) for the afternoon and evening. All this fancy meeting stuff was achieved after some minor difficulties, such as heaving those other fellows out of the bookshops. Bob lives a full fifty yards from the Tasman Sea, which explained, I suppose, why he appeared to me much darker than I remembered him. All of us admired his taste in books, records and so on, before Bob and I practised Zen In The Art Of Table-Setting.

We all ate rather heartily (is that a common phenomenon a few days after Worldcons?) before drifting down to the beach. I can report seeing John Bangsund wading in the children's pool. Leigh, Lee and John had intended to leave from Bob's place for Melbourne, but the convention started to hit them

at about this point and eventually they more or less collapsed on the floor. For Elizabeth and me it was bask to the long-suffering Ryans, who had struggled home with Fiona and Sean early in the afternoon.

I had actually been able to speak to John Ryan during the convention while we were publishing the con newspaper (two issues, three pages each). He has the best ditto machine I have ever seen, and can conduct quite sensible conversations while duplicating. I can't perform that trick at all, though I do speak while duplicating.

Tuesday night we were going home, so we decided to spend some of the day by ourselves wandering around Sydney. Jan and John were to meet us at the train, and as it turned out, Gary Mason and Peter Darling were there, too.

But we caught the train into the city, put one foot out of the station entrance - and my arm was clasped firmly. It was Kevin Dillon, the Iron Man of Sydney Fandom, who alone has survived from the group of Sydney fans around Mike Baldwin and Doug Nicholson in the late fifties. Kevin is an institution at Australian conventions, and his absence from recent Melbourne cons goes a long way towards explaining their relative failure. Kevin gave us a guided tour of the city - it had changed a lot in the four years since I'd last seen it - and we finished up in an icecream parlour. Neither Kevin nor I can satisfactorily manage icecream cones. But then it was the train and the goodbyes and the special messages and the promises for the future and the train moving out and the shouted but unheard farewells and, sometimes, fandom is a way of life.

Ah, yes, that was a convention. After sleeping (if that's the word I'm lunging about for) on Bob Smith's floor for a few hours, Lee, Leigh and I set off for Melbourne, and for the first two or three hours kept ourselves awake by trying to remember as much as we could about the con - the incidents, the quips and so on - with the idea of eventually writing the con report to end all con reports. We didn't, of course, but I still have the notes we made, and will transcribe them here for posterity to do with what it will: Jan Ryan - "I was introduced to JR - a very nice couple" - one of the emerging fans. ... Smith - the teapot incident. ... Box C.39 ... That morning - 6.30 am ... "An outlet for everything" ... Ryan's party - Paul Wheelahan, Reg Pitt, the Newlyn/Pitt incident ... The Graham party - waste of a perfectly good swimming pool - Dillon not there ... Harding and the lemon joke ... Gillespie and the milk

The Lee Harding Show ... Hotel at Holbrook ... Baptist College ... The sea at Smith's ... Foyster's "short cut" ... Bowden - artwork ... Dimitrii - Virgin and priest ... Raquel Welch - private showing ... The Bus ... The Leigh Edmonds Incident ... Dymo-Man' ... Newlyn's question after Elizabeth's speech - "The problem is that no-one has yet worked out a way to talk about sexual ecstasy in the classroom" ... Windy Drop-down Creek ... Wollondilly Central Killing Co-op Society ... Arriving at Darlings' ... Bert Chandler's story ... "Mittagong in my heart!" ... JB playing Beethoven and Mahler on harmonica (they lost) ... Broderick ... Foyster - "If lost please return to 12 Barkley St, Fairfield" ... Girl Guides' urinal ... Mason & Brosnan locked in back room (Foyster - "Sit down in there, too!") ... Ned Quatermass OBE ... JB - "I lit Stan Pitt's cigarette and bid for a Marvel Comic." ... ASFR covers ... Waking Alex Robb on Epping station - Harding's calisthenics ... But enough of that nostalgic stuff. What I had intended to follow John's article was a couple of more recent con reports - on the two Easter 1971 conventions, in Brisbane and Melbourne. It's really a blow to the pride of any well-organized fanzine editor to admit this, but at the moment of writing Our Men in Brisbane and Melbourne have not submitted their reports. So here is John Brosnan, with an article originally written for the ill-fated Australian SF Yearbook...

JOHN BROSNAN

On and Off the Abomnibus

When I received Banger's sensually-typed letter requesting (nay, demanding) an article from me on the bus trip, my experiences in London, British fandom, world politics and the environmental crisis, I was overcome with emotion. Emitting sharp little cries of pleasure, I hastily inflated my typewriter, combed my hair, changed my underpants and sat down to begin. Then I re-read his letter, and my tense fingers fell limp over the keys. It appeared

that the article was required for something called a Yearbook. A YEARBOOK, I muttered to myself in capital letters, not a simple, common fanzine as I had first assumed. The idea daunted me. A Yearbook is something important; it has a touch of permanence to it. Perhaps the frivolous claptrap I had intended writing would not be suitable for such an illustrious project. But then, what could I write instead? Frivolous claptrap is all I know! Surely Banger didn't want something literate, balanced, well-constructed, learned and intelligent - otherwise he wouldn't have asked me. So, with confidence returning, I took up my typewriter and scribbled the following...

THE BUS TRIP

First of all, I would like to clear up a popular misconception: it was no bus-load of fans which made the recent epic journey halfway across the world. True, it was a fannish project to begin with. The originator, Chris Guy, was a fan, and the other three people who had a great deal to do with the early stages of the trip were fans, too. They were Ron Clarke, John Dowden and his wife Debbie. Later on, of course, there was me, which made the total of fans five, but the Dowdens were forced to drop out months before we got underway, so out of the fourteen who actually went there were only three fans. The rest were all mundanes, and some of them were very mundane. Therefore I must reluctantly destroy the delusion that there was a whole double-decker bus-full of fans valiantly trying to reach Heicon. It would look great in some future Australian chapter of ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, but it just wasn't that way.

As for the trip itself (mumbled the writer, shifting uneasily within the confines of his plaster casts), no doubt most of you reading this have a rough idea of what we attempted to do and what happened. Briefly, we shipped the bus to Bombay early in 1970 and then followed it by various means. We assembled in Madras, caught a train across to Bombay, picked up the bus and pointed it in the direction of England. We only got as far as Italy (and some of us didn't even get that far) owing to a mechanical fault. Namely, that the engine fell to pieces.

Oh, how dearly I would love to tell of all the horrors, dangers and misfortunes we endured, the passions and emotional turbulences that shook the passengers, but I haven't the space. I ache to recount the acts of bravery, such as the time Ron Clarke fought off fifty mountain tribesmen with a surplus army boot... Seriously, though, there are many amusing incidents I could write about... such as our entrance into New Delhi - on the wrong side of the road... or the way we sang our way through the customs barrier between India and Pakistan... or the ease with which we conquered the Khyber Pass... or how Chris and I lost the

bus in Lahore... or the night we were raided by the Turkish police... or how we sold our fridge to a flying doctor we met in Greece... But I can't; I get too nauseated. However, I will tell you about -

MARY

We met Mary at the Red Shield Salvation Army Hotel in Bombay. (In case you ever want to stay there, it's near the Rex/Stiffles Hotel. You can't miss the Rex/Stiffles. The three lower floors are called The Rex, and from there on up it's The Stiffles. Or maybe it's the other way round.) Mary was an odd creature, to say the least. She was Jewish, born in Scotland, and she had spent several years studying in France. As far as appearance was concerned, she was sort of plumpish, with fair skin and reddish hair. But her most outstanding feature was the way she talked. She talked at an incredible speed, automatically dominating any conversation she happened upon (which is how she came in contact with us: anyone who can out-talk fourteen people, including three science fiction fans, just has to be good). But it wasn't only how she spoke but what she said! At first we believed it all, and naturally became rather alarmed when she started talking about countries we intended travelling through. We were relieved when we gradually came to realize that much of what she said was... exaggeration. This did result in some disappointment, too. I was particularly intrigued with what she once told us about the relations men had with donkeys in Turkey. When travelling through that country I still looked about hopefully...

One afternoon when I staggered into the boys' room at the hotel I was met with a burst of laughter. Mary and three of the fellows were sprawled on various beds, all laughing like crazy. I know the way I enter a room can be pretty amusing at times, but this was puzzling. I collapsed on my bed and watched them wearily. It soon became apparent that the three boys were laughing at Mary rather than with her. Then it eventually sank in that she was high. Hash and so on is very easy to get in Bombay, especially in that area. The Rex/Stiffles was swarming with hippies; you could almost see the fumes coming out of the windows.

As her ride started on its downward curve, she began to get depressed, so she decided to stoke up again. This time, though, she was going to eat the stuff so that the effect would hit her more quickly. This could be dangerous, she said, and she implored us to get her medical attention if she should have a bad reaction. Someone nodded, and she immediately swallowed some of the brown gunk. It hit her pretty fast, and she was soon away again, laughing and giggling. When we grew tired of watching her,

someone suggested a game of chess. Mary challenged someone - she said she had been a champion in France. About ten minutes later she started groaning and complaining about stomach pains. She started to roll about on the bed, clutching at her stomach. We sat watching her. No-one made any effort to get a doctor. I didn't say anything, but I was worried. It wouldn't look very good if she dropped dead in our room. Finally she got up and staggered off to her own room. I don't know if the others were as disturbed as I was, but the games kept going.

I was worried right up until dinner time, when I walked into the dining-room and saw her attacking her food with gusto. She had obviously come out on top in her brush with death.

It was thanks to Mary that I gave up golf once and for all. I had given up golf before when I left Western Australia and moved east. That way I escaped being dragged around the golf course by my father every weekend. The trouble was that I liked golf - until I reached the end of the first fairway, when the rot would set in. This happened every week. I used to work myself up into such a rage of frenzy and frustration that by the end of a game I would be limp with exhaustion.

But when Mary suggested one afternoon that we all go and have a game of golf, I was the first to agree. As usual all my golfing traumas had been re-interred in my murky subconscious. Except for Peter, one of the mundanes, I was the only one to show any interest. So, after warning the others that they would be missing out on a great experience, we left to look for a golf course.

Mary managed to scare a taxi-driver into cowering submission (not an easy thing to do) and we found ourselves at the Bombay Golf Club. As soon as I saw the place I began to regret my coming. It looked like a rich man's version of the Taj Mahal. One could imagine the place festooned with sahibs and their mem-sahibs in the days of the Empire's glory. Uh-oh, I said to myself, We'll never get in there and if we do it will cost a fortune. I was all for turning back, but Mary took charge. She swept in and we could do nothing but follow meekly in her wake. She eventually cornered some poor official and with a mixture of charm and threats bent him to her will. The next thing we were being outfitted with clubs and caddies. The latter we didn't really want, since we were quite willing to save money and lug the bags around ourselves. But that was not permitted and we were forced to accept them. Not that the charges were very high, compared with Australian standards, but as I was almost broke at the time they were a financial disaster as far as I was concerned.

We went to order drinks, getting thirsty even before we

started playing. My caddy, who looked old enough to have carried Clive of India's clubs, whispered in my ear that it would be a good idea if I bought the caddies a drink, too. Sort of improve employer-labour relations. So Sahib Brosnan, not wishing to commit a social gaffe on the Bombay Golf Course, reached into his rapidly-emptying pocket again.

Then we took our places on the first tee. A small crowd of onlookers quickly formed to see what this strange trio of Europeans would do. We didn't disappoint them as far as entertainment was concerned. My first hit was satisfactory - as it usually is - but Mary tore up an embarrassing amount of soil and sent her ball dribbling only a few feet. And she had said earlier that she had been a junior champion in Scotland. It was the donkey business all over again.

But Peter was the one who delivered the real coup de grace. He gave a mighty swing which sent the ball hurtling forward - less than an inch above the ground. It hit the tee marker a few feet in front of him and ricocheted away at right angles, still travelling at colossal speed. It passed at kneecap level through the crowd of spectators, tore through a hedge and struck the side of the club-house with a terrific "thunk!" I was sure it had gone right through the wall. It was a suitable beginning to the most horrendous game of golf in history.

As was to be expected, my hitting quality deteriorated steadily after the first couple of holes until it reached Peter's level, and Mary started to fall over every time she swung at the ball. Each time, she would climb to her feet, swear horribly and attack the ball with wild swings which gouged great holes in the ancient turf and thoroughly alarmed her caddy. I wish I could have understood what the caddies were saying. I'm sure it was priceless. My old fellow looked as if he was going to burst into tears with every swing I made. He kept offering to give me a few tips on the game, despite my repeated assurances that it didn't really matter and that we were only there to have some fun.

Fun... As the game wore on it grew inexorably worse. The unique playing conditions afforded by the Bombay Golf Club weren't helping, either. For one thing, it was getting terribly hot and I was sweating like crazy. As for the vultures... Yeah, real vultures - or, if not vultures technically, they certainly looked like vultures. We saw a lot of them in India and they were always hovering around over Bombay. Ever tried concentrating on your putting while huge shadows flitted across the green about you? I had the feeling that if I stopped to rest they would presume me dead and move in for a feed.

At one point the fairway ran alongside a collection of ramshackle houses, which meant there was a crowd



"...faintly surprised at finding a double-decker bus parked in a poppy field in the middle of Iran..."

of jeering kids hanging over the fence. To prevent them rushing onto the fairway there were a couple of guards patrolling with long sticks. Despite their presence I lost a couple of balls which I suspect were snatched by some fleet-footed kids. Learning to play golf in Western Australia doesn't prepare you for this kind of hazard.

After nine holes we staggered into the open-air restaurant for refreshments. Our caddies disappeared, no doubt in search of some quiet place where they could laugh themselves sick. As we sat there drinking we could hear a group of Indian women talking at the table behind us. They were talking in English, and for some reason this infuriated Mary. She began to describe them as pseudo-British snobs, ashamed of their own language and so on, and all

this in a very loud voice so they could hear her. I know they did hear her because they stopped talking to listen to her. It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life, and I came close to braining Mary with a Number 1 iron. But Peter and I just sank into our seats and wished we were somewhere else.

After that traumatic interlude we hobbled back onto the fairway to continue with our own version of a Carry-On film. I wanted to pack the whole thing in, but the others wanted their money's worth. Within a couple of holes, though, I had lost our remaining spare balls and ended up merely following the other two around. This suited me fine, but Mary suddenly discovered that she was exhausted and insisted I carry on in her place. So I was forced to complete the

grisly farce while she retreated to the restaurant. At the end of it I once again solemnly swore off golf once and for all, and really meant it.

When we left Bombay we naturally didn't expect ever to see Mary again - not that this prospect particularly disturbed us (especially the girls: they loathed her on sight). But one cold and windy night in Iran there was a knock on our door. The few of us still up thought this odd, since we were parked in the middle of a poppy field, miles from anywhere. Someone warily opened the door, expecting bandits or poppy-pickers, and in burst Mary, babbling away like mad and wearing an Afghan coat. It was a very brief and confused conversation, but basically the story was that she had been robbed of everything by a student she had started travelling with. Then she took up with a couple of Germans who had some sort of incredible car, and they offered her a lift back to Europe.

She dragged us out into the cold to meet them. I can't remember the name of the car, but it must have been something special judging by the way the mundanes went mad over it. The Germans were a large, dour couple, who still looked faintly surprised at finding a double-decker bus parked in a poppy field in the middle of Iran. And they were anxious to be on their way, so before Mary had time to get into her conversational top gear she was whisked away. I had to hand it to those two gentlemen. It takes guts to shut yourself in a car with Mary and drive from India to Germany. I wonder if they made it?

The bus, as you know, broke down in Italy and was sold for scrap. But it had broken down earlier while in Greece, and that was where the first group of passengers deserted. I, of course, was among them. After a couple of weeks down in the south of Greece I caught a train direct to London. Well... almost direct... but that's another story. Again, I haven't the space to tell you of my experiences in the land of mythology, but must pass directly on to -

LONDON

- which is where I am now. England. Many was the time when I was dying of thirst and heat prostration in darkest India that I dreamt of the green fields and pubs of England. And now that I'm here I find that the wages are diabolical, the taxes unbelievable, the cost of living higher than in Australia, the prices of drinks sickening, and the monotonous suburban architecture depressing. But apart from these few quibbles, things aren't that bad. There is an abundance of beautiful dollies, a marvellous range of uncut films to choose from, the London bookshops, the National

Film Theatre and things like the recent cinema exhibition at the Round House. The latter enabled me to see two of my idols, Spike Milligan and Peter Sellers, in the flesh.

As I type this I am sitting in a tiny room in the heart of Earl's Court, that much-maligned London suburb which is also known as Kangaroo Valley. But it's all a myth: there are no kangaroos here, no hordes of bronzed Bazza McKenzies lounging on the street corners. In fact I suspect I might be the only Australian in Earl's Court, which is a rather frightening thought. It means it is up to me to keep the legend going. I have to deliberately adopt a dinki-di accent every time I go out, sprinkling my conversation with crikeys, too-right-sports and the odd cooeee. Sometimes this isn't easy.

My address used to be Flat 5 until I became honest and started calling it a room. Perhaps even that is an exaggeration. If you can imagine a toilet without a toilet you get some idea of just how big it is. Or better still, ask either Ron Clarke or Robin Johnson, who have slept on my floor at odd times. In Robin's case we had to move the stove before he could find room for his feet. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that my room had actually been a toilet originally. I have this fear that one night someone will mistake my door for the real toilet which is just opposite, come in and flush me into oblivion.

I have neighbour problems, too. There is a connecting door between our rooms. It doesn't open - it can't, because it is covered with plumbing - but it does make an excellent sounding-board. If someone breaks wind next door, not only do I hear him but my stack of beer cans collapses. When I first moved in a young married couple was living there. They were a very trendy pair: both had long hair, wore the latest gear and all that. She played the drums, he played a guitar. He also sang. Every night he would sing to her in this incredibly corroded voice, and this apparently had the desired effect on her because almost every night they would make violent love afterwards. It was so violent I would have to get up, get dressed and go for long walks in the rain to cool off. But they moved out after a couple of weeks and a horde of Yugoslavs moved in. I don't think there is any particular tenant, just a constantly floating population. The room is used mainly as a place for them to bring their birds to for a quick tumble. Some of these are amusing to listen to, especially when they carry out their seduction attempts in broken English, but on the whole they are not up to the standard of the previous tenants.

Their worst habit is talking very loudly in Yugoslavian until the early hours of the morning. I never realized before just how hideous the Yugoslavian spoken tongue is. I tried everything to make them

stop: swore, threw shoes at the door, screamed obscenities - but to no avail. In the end I bought a transistor radio to drown them out, but in retaliation they bought one, too. My next move was to make sure I was always on a different station from them. They play pop, I play classical; they switch to classical and I hit them with the replay of Housewife's Choice. Really, it's quite fun.

As a fan, one of London's main attractions is the Globe pub. Here one can drink warm beer (yes, it's true - the beer is warm), surrounded by the big names in fandom and prodrom. The New Wave and the Old Wave mingle happily, snivelling neos corner the colossi of sf, engaging them in trivial conversations, and aloof from everything, John Brunner does his thing. (John Brunner is a sort of rich man's Gary Mason.)

My first Globe night was a bit overwhelming. I found it hard to believe that all these people were actually either fans or pros. The only place you get that many sf nuts together in Australia is at a convention. Needless to say, I enjoyed myself immensely. I think the idea of holding such a gathering in a pub is great, and one which the Sydney SF Foundation should adopt. I admit I did miss the trappings I normally associate with an sf meeting. No-one read out the minutes from the last meeting or attacked the Constitution (someone told me there wasn't any Constitution, but I didn't believe him of course) and I had to fight the urge all night to put forward a motion or two.

Naturally I was curious about the impression that English fans had of Australian fandom. How do they regard us? What do they think of us? The answer is that they don't think much about us at all. Most English fans are familiar with the names of Foyster, Bangsund and, to a lesser extent, Gillespie, but a surprising number I've met didn't even know there were any fans in Australia.

Obviously this is going to affect our bid for the World Convention in 1975, which is already unfavourably regarded by most people I've met. The most common complaint is that Australia is just too far away for English fans to attend a con there. An example of what the average fan thinks of the bid is provided by Pete Weston in Speculation. It now appears that there might even be an English bid for '75. So let's pack it all in and think of something more constructive to do, eh?

I can only remember a couple of times when someone specifically asked me about fandom in Australia. One of them was at the Mini-mini-con held at Sam Long's place during the weekend of the Heicon. A few of us, miffed at not being able to attend that great event, gathered at Sam's to ease the pain. We stayed up all Saturday night drinking, talking, drinking, singing

and drinking and so on. Around 2 am I was sitting in front of a roaring log fire with the famous Julia Stone. Churl Legg, husband of the famous Mary Reed (who is now of course the famous Mary Legg), had just finished playing the guitar. A momentary silence fell on the group.

"Tell me," said Julia in a dreamy voice, "about Australian fans. Tell me about Leigh Edmonds. Is he handsome?"

I began to choke and almost spilt my wine. "Leigh Edmonds?" I gasped. "Why in God's name do you want to know about him?"

"I used to correspond with him," Julia replied. "Go on, tell me what he's like. I always imagined him as being a good sort."

I can't remember what I said after that. I think I told her some colourful lies so as not to shatter her romantic illusions. I was extremely shaken. God knows who she might have asked me about next.

I cannot allow that calumny to pass unrebuted, young Brosnan. Leigh Edmonds IS handsome and a good sort - the very best sort - tall, lean, bronzed in places, long-haired and bespectacled, always neatly and soberly dressed, Leigh is the epitome of all that is worthy and wholesome in fandom ("just a good-clean hobby" as he is wont to say). Pure in word, thought and letter-column, he is a shining beacon unto young neofans, and not at all like your lewd ruffians in places like Perth and Sydney which I refrain from mentioning (except in passing).

Your comments on Australia In '75 may be disputed, too, but I don't intend to do it. Let's hear it from the readers.

In his most recent letter John gives the impression that the British bid for '75 more or less depends on whether Pete Weston wants to conduct the whole show, and this is confirmed by Peter Roberts's report on discussions at the British Easter con in his newzine, Checkpoint: "Pete Weston who had originally suggested the idea was no longer happy with the role of Chairman which was unanimously offered him - the work required for Eastercon 22 had effectively soured him, although he allowed for a subsequent change of mind." Peter's own view on a British Worldcon in '75 "and that of several others, is that we should admit

our lateness in the race and wait until the 1980s for a proper British bid, supporting Stockholm in 1976 as a reasonable alternative". Stockholm in '76, if successful, would effectively kill Australia in '75, I should think, unless the feelings of American fans about non-American Worldcons change considerably during the next couple of years. And, of course, the reverse is just as true. I haven't heard anything lately about the South Africa in '75 bid, but I have heard of an American city opposing us in '75. If the votes of people in favour of an overseas con in '75 are split three ways there is not much doubt about the outcome.

See what you've made me do, Brosnan! Here I should be ready in my best suit and scholarly expression to make a dignified entry to my very own column, and you've left me rambling on like this in me BVDs and gumboots and fannish-politics expression. Yer a good lad, Brozzer, but a stirrer. (Grumble. Wheeze. Where's me bloody tie?!)

JOHN BANGSUND

The March of Mind

Every now and then someone asks me, "What is the best book you have ever read?" This is a question which can be answered only by a person who has never read more than one book, or by a person who has just finished reading Proust, but I usually resist the temptation to say so. I say I am not a literary critic, but a reader, but if the question were to be re-phrased - "What is your favourite book?" for example - I might attempt an answer.

And the book I come up with, after thinking about that for a moment, is not a book at all, except in the physical sense of being a single bound volume. It is THE BEST OF MYLES, a collection published in 1968 by MacGibbon & Kee of short pieces by "Myles na Gopaleen".

"Myles" was Brian O'Nolan. He is better known, at least outside Ireland, as the novelist "Flann O'Brien". His delicious AT SWIM-TWO-BIRDS ("Just the book

to give your sister, if she's a loud, dirty, boozy girl," according to Dylan Thomas) is very likely my favourite novel. I re-read it each year, discovering new delights each time. (Sometimes it's an advantage to have a lousy memory.)

But much more often I dip into THE BEST OF MYLES. It is an eminently dipable book - ideal, for example, as an antidote to just about any kind of dejection or depression, except the very worst kind, when a strong dose of something homely and basic - Thurber, say (or sex) - is called for.

O'Nolan contributed a column each day to the "Irish Times" for twenty-seven years, from 1939 until his death in 1966. The selection in the book is from the early years of this column, and it includes a few of the many pieces written in Irish. These, unfortunately, I cannot read, but I am doing something about it: acting on a hint from George Borrow, I have purchased a pack of playing cards and carry them about with me until I meet a poor Irishman who will sell me his language. (Yes, I also carry a few bibles about my person in case I run into some Spaniards. Need you ask?)

O'Nolan also wrote his column occasionally in Latin. Can you imagine Keith Dunstan doing this - or readers of the Melbourne "Sun" appreciating it? There is a splendidly erudite aspect to Irish literature and journalism which never fails to amaze and dismay me. Some Irish-Australian writers - notably Christopher Brennan - seem to have carried on the tradition in this country, but I wonder if it will survive anywhere now that the Catholic Church has, so to speak, gone native?

"Myles na Gopaleen" (or gCopaleen) was - according to the dustjacket of the book (you wouldn't expect me to know stuff like this, would you?) - a character in two novels and an opera. Normally translated as "Myles of the little horses", O'Nolan insisted it meant "Myles of the ponies", quite rightly maintaining that the autonomy of the pony should not be subjugated by the imperialism of the horse. The title of the column was "Cruiskeen Lawn", which means... (hmm - don't write dustjackets like they used to, do they?) ...which means I'd better flash those playing cards about a bit, or admit defeat and trade them in on an Irish dictionary.

An American critic, Richard Watts, described the column as "devoted to magnificently laborious literary puns, remarkable parodies of De Quincey and others, fanciful literary anecdotes and erudite studies of cliches, scornful dissection of the literal meaning of highflown literary phraseology and a general air of shameless irony and high spirits. No-one can build up a pun more shamelessly. No-one can analyse the exact meaning of a literary

flight of fantasy more devastatingly. He is at his best when telling absurd anecdotes, which he usually attributes to Keats and Chapman."

It would be fruitless to attempt to determine whether the historical Keats and the historical Chapman are intended in these stories. The very fact that John Keats was born 161 years after George Chapman died would seem to indicate that the attempt would be unfeasible for any but the most belief-suspending (or, as we say, ignorant) science fiction addict. What either gentleman would be doing in Ireland during the Second World War defies rational explanation. Nevertheless, there they were, every few days in the "Irish Times".

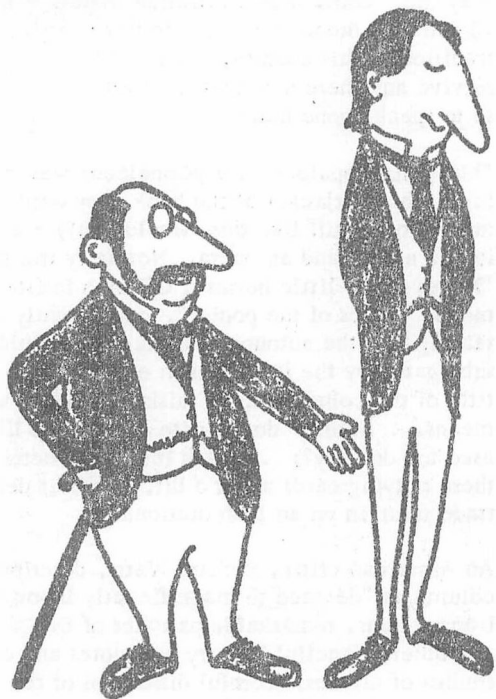
To read Myles na Gopaleen and Flann O'Brien is, amongst other things, to understand where the celebrated (and highly esteemed, need I add) Goon Shows originated. Any of the Keats and Chapman stories might have found its way into a Goon Show - and, for all I know, did.

The anecdotes which follow are printed entirely without the permission of the "Irish Times", the executrix of O'Nolan's estate and MacGibbon & Kee Ltd (3 Upper James Street, Golden Square, London W.1).

But it's all in a good cause. I want to share with you my enjoyment of this marvellous writer, and if this inspires you to purchase his books, so much the better for his publishers and estate. All of Flann O'Brien's novels are in print: AT SWIM-TWO-BIRDS, THE THIRD POLICEMAN, THE DALKEY ARCHIVE and THE HARD LIFE. All are published in hard covers by MacGibbon & Kee, and two at least have been issued in paperbacks. THE BEST OF MYLES is a rare book (mine is the only copy I have seen) but it and the novels may be ordered from any good bookseller. (We recommend, naturally, The Space Age Bookshop - GPO Box 1267 L, Melbourne 3001.)

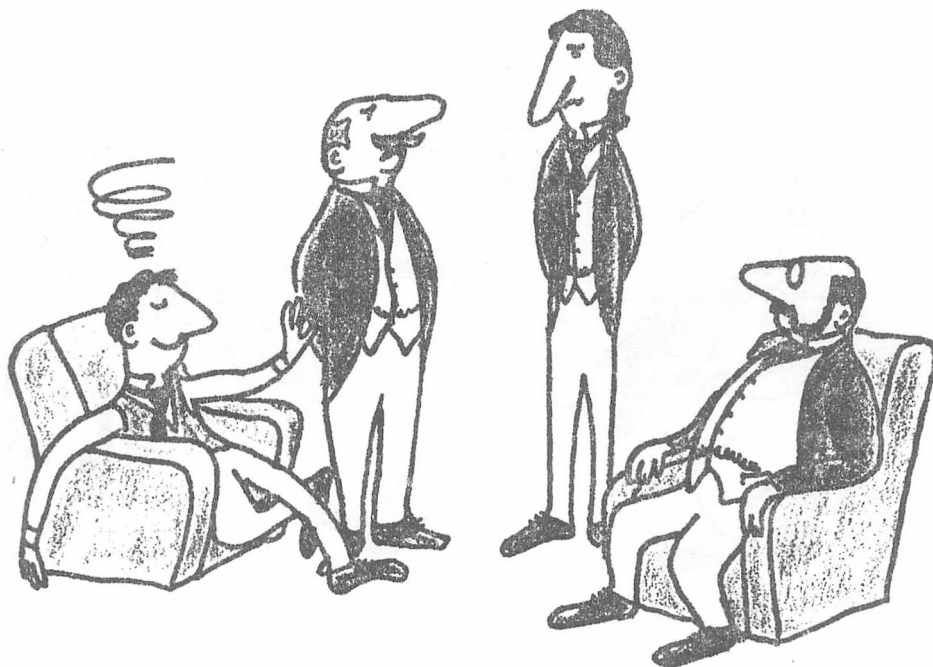
The first three anecdotes here are by Myles, and the rest crass imitations by myself. If you feel like trying your hand at a similar story, please do so. I will publish anything I think good enough, but do not promise not to enter into correspondence on the matter.

To attempt to write K&C anecdotes without some knowledge of O'Nolan's incredibly pure, yet entirely individual, style is that burial of a gigantic prehistoric beast (as Myles might have said), a mammoth undertaking. But I shall be lenient. Moreover, I will illustrate suitable stories, as I have done here.



ANECDOTES OF KEATS AND CHAPMAN

By Myles na Gopaleen and others



Keats and Chapman once called to see a titled friend and after the host had hospitably produced a bottle of whiskey, the two visitors were called into consultation regarding the son of the house, who had been exhibiting a disquieting redness of face and boisterousness of manner at the age of twelve. The father was worried, suspecting some dread disease. The youngster was produced but the two visitors, glass in hand, declined to make any diagnosis. When leaving the big house, Chapman rubbed his hands briskly and remarked on the cold.

"I think it must be freezing and I'm glad of that drink," he said. "By the way, did you think what I thought about that youngster?"

"There's a nip in the heir," Keats said.

...

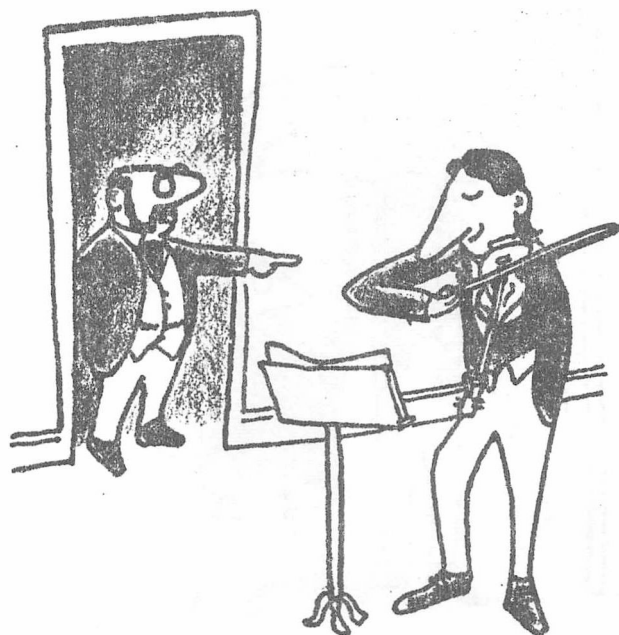
Keats was once presented with an Irish terrier, which he humorously named Byrne. One day the beast strayed from the house and failed to return at night. Everybody was distressed, save Keats himself. He reached reflectively for his violin, a fairly passable timber of the Stradivarius feciture, and was soon at work with chin and jaw.

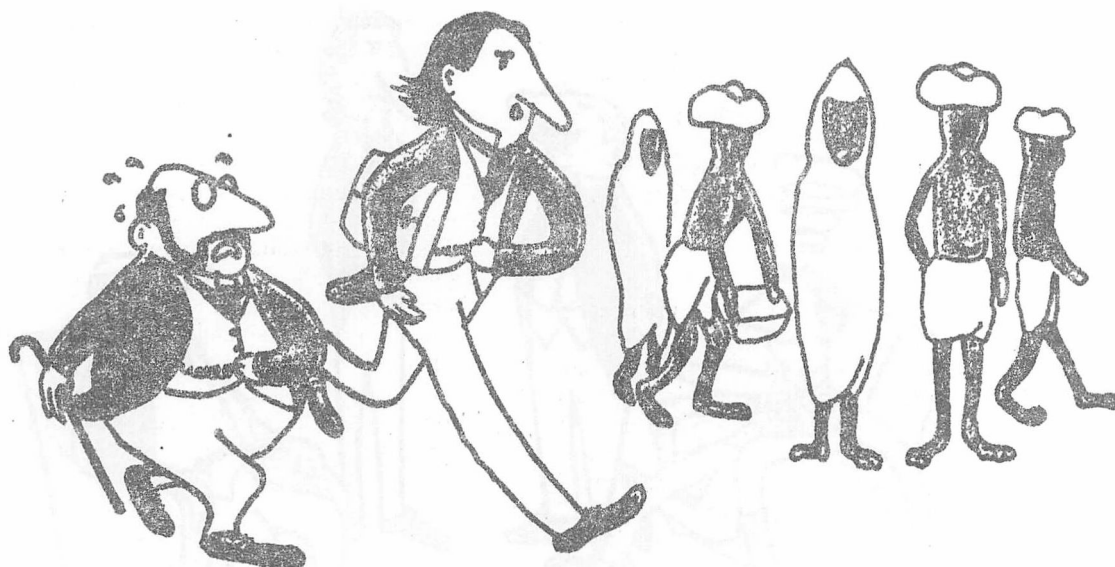
Chapman, looking in for an after-supper pipe, was astonished at the poet's composure, and did not hesitate to say so. Keats smiled (in a way that was rather lovely).

"And why should I not fiddle," he asked, "while Byrne roams?"

...

Keats and Chapman were entrusted by the British Government with a secret mission which involved a trip to India. A man-of-war awaited them at a British port. Leaving their lodgings at dawn, they were driven at a furious pace to the point of embarkation. When about to rush on board, they encountered at the dockside a mutual friend, one Mr Childs, who chanced to be there on business connected with his calling of wine-importer. Perfunctory and very hasty courtesies were exchanged; Keats and Chapman then rushed on board the man-





of-war, which instantly weighed anchor. The trip to India was made in the fastest time then heard of, and as soon as the ship had come to anchor in Bombay harbour, the two friends were whisked to land in a wherry. Knowing that time was of the essence of their mission, they hastened from the docks into the neighbouring streets and on turning a corner, whom should they see only —

Mr Childs? No.

Just a lot of Indians, complete strangers.

"Big world," Keats remarked.

...



Keats and Chapman stood for twenty minutes in the rain one wintry evening, waiting for an omnibus. At last the vehicle appeared, and the friends hurried aboard, hoping that the proximity of their fellow humans would to some degree dispel the cold. It was, indeed, warmer inside the bus, but a cracked window and a hole (the purpose of which eluded them) near their feet directed chill draughts at them, causing them much discomfort.

"Freezing, isn't it," said Chapman.

"Yes," said Keats.

"If," said Chapman, "we did not of necessity have to travel in this conveyance, and if you had to choose between standing in the rain and sitting here, with this vile breeze whistling about us, which would you prefer?"

"De gustibus non est disputandum," said Keats.

...

Keats and Chapman journeyed to Belfast to see a Mr Shaw about some slow glass he had invented. Unfamiliar with the district in which the gentleman lived, they took the precaution of consulting some street directories - but on inspecting the publications available, they could not decide which to purchase. Keats favoured a slim volume published by Tate & Company, Chapman a solid tome issued by Flaherty & Sons. They bought both. Unfortunately, both directories were quite misleading, and the friends soon found themselves utterly unable to relate the ghostly streets depicted on the maps with the all-too-solid pavements beneath their weary feet. In desperation they hired a cabriolet, which conveyed them circuitously to their destination. A gentleman opened the door to them.

"Are you Shaw?" asked Chapman.

"Absolutely!" said the gentleman, and bade them enter. The friends were soon engaged in a most pleasant and witty conversation with Mr Shaw, in the course of which he displayed much amusement over their purchase of the directories.

"Flaherty," he said, "will get you nowhere." Keats remarked, "And he who has a Tate's is lost."

Keats and Chapman once visited Vienna, where they were guests of an elderly friend, Professor Ottavio Funken, and his charming family. The gracious old Funken schloss on Weltschmerzstrasse rang for days to the happy sounds of cultured talk, refined music of an intimate nature and laughing children. The friends had not experienced such pleasant company for a long time, and their joy in themselves and their surroundings knew no bounds. But, alas, it was not to last.

On the fifth evening, over Frau Funken's excellent schnitzel, a genteel yet well-informed and wide-ranging (indeed, at times, erudite, pedantic, even esoteric) conversation about German literature and philosophy in all its aspects from Gottfried von Strassburg to Perry Rhodan, degenerated into a quite ungenteel shouting match when Chapman innocently expressed enthusiasm for certain theories of Dr Sigmund Freud.

"Freud schmeud!" screamed Professor Funken, "Der Mann ist ein Teufel!" - and proceeded, with references classical and biological, to damn the learned doctor and all his works copiously and at length.

Keats and Chapman were deeply distressed. They excused themselves, retired early, and left the country on the first conveyance next morning. "Well," said Keats, looking out of the window glumly at the beautiful Vienna woods, "Freud is sure no god to Funken."

"No," replied Chapman, who could not bring himself to take his eyes off his boots, despite the beauty which surrounded them, "tactless sort of louse I am." Suddenly the friends realized what they had said, looked at each other (with a wild surmise), and burst into spirited song.

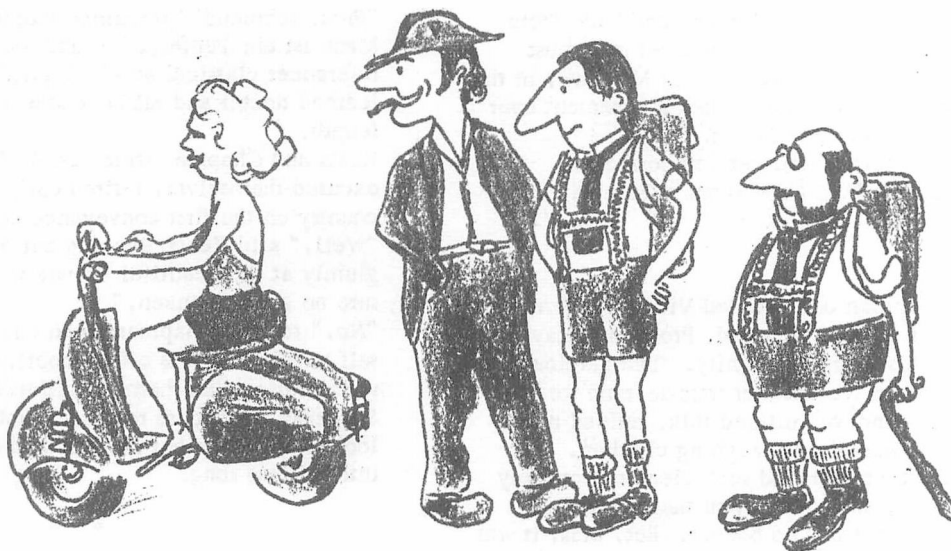
After leaving Vienna, Keats and Chapman travelled through Germany. In Göttingen they fell in with an Australian, and (having extricated themselves) discussed their plans with him.

"I think I'll just kick around here a bit, sink some beer, pick up a few sheilas..."

"You like to read poetry while you imbibe?" asked Chapman.

"I beg yours?"





"My friend refers to your interesting habit of reading Schiller over your beer," said Keats.

"Eh? No, you've got me wrong there, fellers. I said 'sheilas' - you know - birds, broads, talent..."

"Ah," said Keats and Chapman.

"And what are youse blokes thinking of doing?"

"We thought," said Keats, "we might emulate Heine and go for a tour in the Harz."

"Well, strewth, you call it what you like, but why don't we all go together?"

Okay, Walt Willis, Bob Bloch, and all you other scintillating punsters out there - I know you can do better than that. And, ah, Dr Asimov, I hate to intrude on your valuable time, but a short anecdote would fit on one of your postcards.

And now, back to the serious stuff... Dame Mary Gilmore (1865-1962) was for many years the Grand Old Lady of Australian literature. Journalist, poet and idealist, she participated in the establishment of that rather incredible Australian colony in Paraguay at the turn of the century, and was a lifelong supporter of the Labour movement. In her honour the trade unions gave her name to their annual award for Australian literature - and in 1970 the Dame Mary Gilmore Award for Australian Literature was won by Keith Antill with his science fiction novel, MOON IN THE GROUND. Julia Orange of The Australian, recorded this interview with Keith:

JULIA ORANGE

Talking to Keith Antill

"I really got the vapours," said Keith Antill, "a great sinking feeling of joy - like swallowing something big and not knowing what it was."

This was the only literary competition he had ever entered, with the only book he had ever finished. He had worked in the Post Office for ten years, and if it had not been for a perceptive girl-friend who was also a nagger, he would never have entered at all.

He won with a strange book which he believes holds a message for Australians. A combination of Aboriginal myth, science fiction and social commentary, MOON IN THE GROUND is in general about Man's alienation from life, and in particular, about political exploitation in Australia.

He sat down to write it on 23rd November, 1968. (He is very precise about dates.) It took five months to complete, after twenty-five years practice on short stories, novels and poetry.

Keith Antill is a tall, stooping man with pipe-stained teeth and sparkling green eyes. In conversation he is nervous. While we talked he sucked alternately at

three different pipes. He talks a strange patchwork of elegant and faintly biblical pronunciamiento ("Man must improve his mind lest he slip into the abyss...") "I am born of a father of solitary nature and violent passions..." and boyish slang ("People worry about being psychic; they think it's flipping nutty"). And while he talks you constantly find yourself wondering whether he is brilliant or slightly mad.

He sees himself as "a very screwed-up kind of person", and says this is one of the reasons why he has never before finished a book. "Writing, to me, is a way of thinking through problems, of clarifying the turmoil of my thoughts. It is a way of working out a spiritual reality. My central frustration is that I know myself to be the disciple of some religion, but I know not what it is."

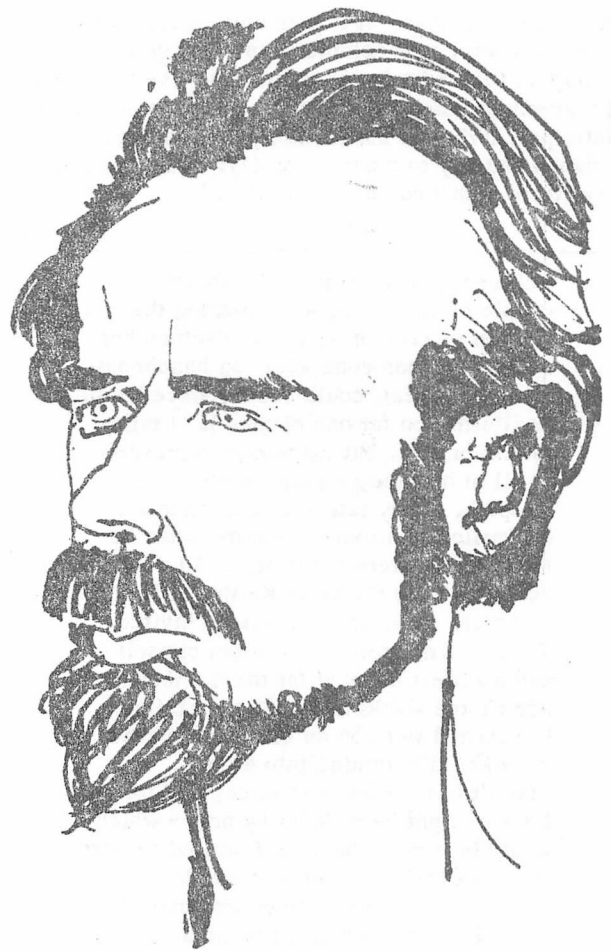
He takes the therapeutic view of writing as a means and as a hoped-for end: "In 1964 I underwent psychiatric treatment. I was given LSD, among other drugs, to take me back to my childhood. Under LSD I did recapture the sense of myself as a child - I was like a child in that I felt no estrangement from the natural world: it was as much me as I was it.

"I felt that when we grew up we lost this sense of 'oneness' with the universe, we gradually became encapsulated within ourselves. And I swore I would explore the reality again through my writing."

His first novel, written at the age of sixteen, was centred on Pre-Columbian civilization and was called *THE CITY OF STONES*. In it was a hero who through reasoning about the various religions of the old cities of Mitla, Palegue and Itza managed to trace the whole of civilization back to an ancient myth. Did the book owe anything to D. H. Lawrence and his preoccupation with Aztec religion (*THE PLUMED SERPENT*, for example)? He had not read the book, and explained that he was consciously not a reader.

"Apart from Plato, Spinoza and Gibbon, who I turn to again and again, I try to read as little as possible. I'm afraid for my own vision. It is part of a process which began when I was a child. I was very solitary; I had decided young that school and school friends would water me down, truncate my personality. So I withdrew into my mind. When I had had enough, I would switch on a sort of movie house of the mind, forget them all."

His books, he says, have a lot to do with his psychic powers and his belief in the supernatural. He is sure his mother influenced him in that direction. "She was an amazing woman, born of Irish parents and a kind of mystic. She lived for many years on an island off the coast of Western Australia, in the hull



Keith Antill: sketch by Lawrence Beck

of a liner which had foundered off Fremantle in 1906. I didn't see her often. I lived with my father on the mainland, but my spirit lived with her on that island. She seemed to me like the soul of romance, and when I went to stay with her she spoke to me of her psychic nature with such familiarity that I grew up believing in it."

Later an incident proved to him that he had inherited his mother's telepathic gifts: "The first time it happened I was nine. It suddenly came to me that my mother would die on the eighth of August that year, which she did. I went to tell her my fears, but she told me I was not to be afraid - she had been told."

Antill plans to use his \$2000 prize-money to join an intellectual commune in Pondicherry in India. The reason, he says, is mainly economic. At present he lives in a commune in Glebe, Sydney ("We share everything except our ladies") and finds, with reservations, that the life-style suits him well. About

Pondicherry he says: "It is part university, part Buddhist monastery, part commune and part giant group therapy. I intend to go there because I've heard it is a marvellous place, and also because it is cheap. I anticipate living on about twenty cents a day, which means I can buy so many more days of writing freedom over there than I could in Australia."

Keith spent some time in Melbourne a couple of years ago, and attended the convention in 1968 or 69 (I can't remember which - but someone with con handbooks from those years could check, since he did an illustration for one of them). I talked to him briefly, but gained no impression at all of his being either a writer or a telepath. Early last year a secondhand bookseller mentioned his name when he found I was interested in sf, and I wondered if it was the same Keith Antill I had met. Of course, it was. I invited Keith to write something about himself and his ideas about sf for the Yearbook. After some weeks he wrote and said he had started work on an article, but that it looked like turning into a book. I haven't heard from him since, and for all I know might be in India by now - which would be a pity, because I wanted to warn him about those vultures at the Bombay Golf Club. His last advice was that MOON IN THE GROUND had not found a publisher.

George Turner is another Australian writer having difficulty getting his work published - which, when you know the esteem in which George's novels are held by the critics, is a bit like saying Theodore Sturgeon is having trouble getting his sf published. I have been stock-piling articles and reviews he has given me, and becoming steadily more frustrated and conscience-ridden at not publishing them. Now he tells me he is commencing another novel and I should not expect any contributions from him for a while; and on the same night I was trying to tell him that I planned to arrange his material into a column. That evening we were both, ah, somewhat relaxed, and communication was difficult. But, very late, as I poured both of him into a taxi, I recall him saying, "Oh, all right then, if you must", and on that understanding I proceed. The first piece, on A CASE OF CONSCIENCE, was written for the ASFM series, "The Basic SF Library". It might not be followed up in subsequent issues.

GEORGE TURNER

Plumbers of the Cosmos

JAMES BLISH: A CASE OF CONSCIENCE
("The Basic Science Fiction Library: 1.")

I think there is no such thing as a truly basic science fiction novel, in the sense of one without which sf could not exist, or even one without having read which you could not call yourself a complete sf reader. But there is a handful or so which may be taken to represent the absolute best that science fiction has to offer, both as sf and as novels - works which would stand on their own merits even if the special addiction we call sf had never become epidemic.

Alas, every reader has his personal idea of what constitutes science fiction, and hence of what represents the best, so I must first indicate my standards and values. For me a science fiction novel must satisfy a number of criteria before being granted more than run-of-the-mill status.

1. It must be a true novel, not a romance. That is (in brief), it must have a central theme culminating in a statement or a question after due examination by the author. No simple adventure story, however brilliantly devised or presented, can make the grade as a novel, and in all of literature never has. Romance has its own genius, but the novel is something more.
2. Plot and theme must be dependent upon each other, making a natural progression of events. Raymond Chandler's advice - "When in doubt, have someone come through the door with a gun" - simply won't do. The theme must be honestly presented without loading the authorial dice for a propaganda point of view.
3. Characterization must be present and consistent. Merely labelling characters with names and a limp or a lisp so that the reader can tell them apart is not good enough. And they must behave as the persons they purport to be would behave.
4. The scientific basis must be consistent with present-day knowledge or theory (with no limit on extrapolation) and must be essential to plot or theme. A thriller using ray guns instead of automatics is not science fiction.

5. The writing must be literate and the style in keeping with the theme.

It is shocking to realize how much of the field is ruled out by these simple restrictions. Just about all of it. Still, a few gems remain. Ursula Le Guin's *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* springs to mind, but I have reviewed it for three publications already - and so has just about everyone else. And there are, of course, such hardy perennials as *A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ*, *BRAVE NEW WORLD*, *DRAGON IN THE SEA*, *MISSION OF GRAVITY* and at least four novels by H. G. Wells. I can think offhand of perhaps six more, and shall simply select one of them, more or less at random (more truthfully, because I like it), because it is a good novel in the genre - without trying to place it as better than so-and-so or not as good as whatsit.

It is not difficult to recommend *A CASE OF CONSCIENCE*. It satisfies all of my requirements and adds a bonus of unexpectedness of theme. There are better science fiction novels, but not many, and few so completely craftsmanlike.

James Blish is not a writer of whom one can say that everything he writes is consistently excellent, for he has an alter ego as a literary tradesman (I almost said hack) so that his production runs a gamut from passing-ordinary to first class. *A CASE OF CONSCIENCE* is not his best work; the non-sf novel *DOCTOR MIRABILIS* is probably that; but it is certainly a tour de force.

It is a novel with a theological theme, but is in no sense a "religious" novel. Blish picks a point where science and religion, with particular reference to the Roman Catholic dogma, may in future cross swords, and asks a question which is both scientific and theological. In a narrow sense he provides an answer which might or might not satisfy Catholic beliefs, but in the larger sense he leaves the question in our laps for pawing over at leisure.

The question is this: If, on a far planet, a civilized race exists which propagates by what we can for simplicity think of as virgin birth, what becomes of the doctrine of original sin? For such a race, it cannot exist. Christianity postulates the purity of Christ as springing from such virgin birth; must we then regard Blish's Lithians as essentially sinless?

I will not go into the multiplicity of theological by-paths raised by this question, for they are legion. One could easily extrapolate it into arguments on free will, predestination and other thorny subjects, and Blish himself remains aware of all these, but he concentrates on the core of the matter. His hero is a Roman Catholic priest, Ruiz-Sanchez, whose problem is this: Is the race of Lithians a creation of

Satan, introduced into the cosmos to undermine the faith of men by destroying religion with paradox?

Ruiz-Sanchez's internal struggle is no mean one, for he is a biologist as well as a priest, and he is faced with making a relentless decision between religious and scientific faiths. Neither as scientist nor as priest can he admit compromise.

In the long run he opts for the religious faith, and pronounces Anathema on the planet Lithia. In a curious and (one must admit it) something of a compromise ending, the planet is destroyed by scientific means even as Ruiz-Sanchez seeks to eliminate it by religious means. The reader can choose for himself which was the destructive cause, but nothing can destroy the question which has been asked.

So much for theme and plot, each utterly dependent on the other. (Blish is one of the few sf writers who can consistently achieve this symbiosis.)

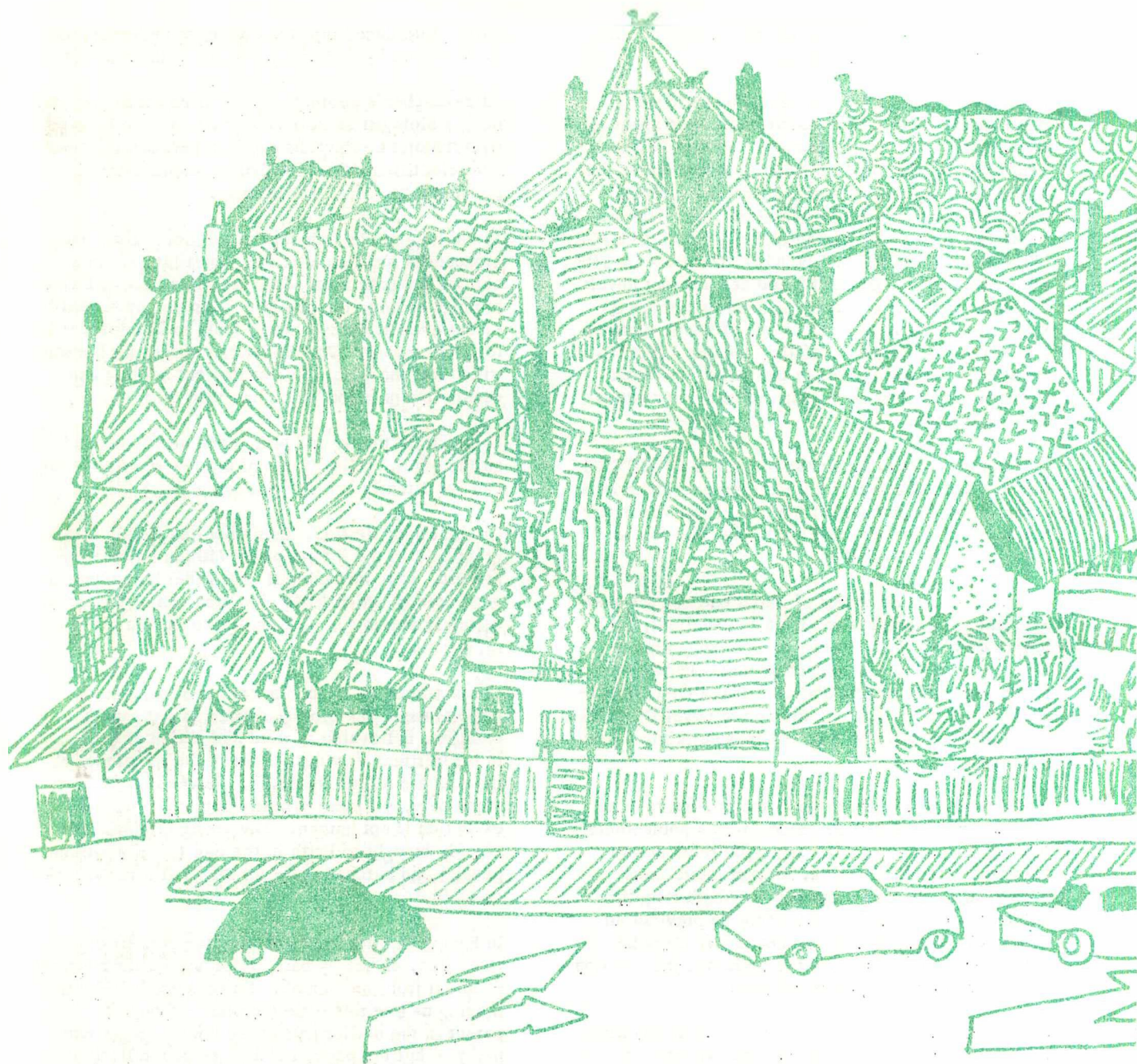
On the scientific side, the author has plainly taken great care in the matter of the Lithian procreative process. I am no biologist, but I feel he presents a good case to which little objection can be taken: he certainly presents it well enough to sustain his central question.

Characterization in such a work is of paramount importance. The biologist-priest is a thorough creation, believable in word and action as well as in his spiritual strivings. Most of the remainder of the cast are relatively minor, sketched in sufficient depth to render them honestly human. The one exception is not human. The young Lithian, Egtverchi, brought to Earth in the egg (his is a saurian people) and hatched there for study, is a remarkable creation.

In Egtverchi Blish has attempted the portrait of a true alien, driven by basic urges and instincts utterly different from the human. He does not succeed in making us like this little monster - though his parent in the earlier part of the book engages sympathy - but the portrait is a piece of intellectual bravura which repays attention, and it is Egtverchi and his attitudes which crystallize the decision of Ruiz-Sanchez and satisfy him that this is the Devil's work.

The style throughout is competent in all aspects, and the writing literate beyond the normal call of sf duty.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE might, in the long run, be a novel for the connoisseur rather than the escapist reader. It is, in any case, an extremely fine work which demonstrates that the sf treatment is not incompatible with the standards of worthwhile literature.



D. G. COMPTON: CHRONOCULES
(Ace Books: US\$0.95)

The two JB's commend this book, Bangsund in tones of incipient fanaticism, Blish with immoderate but forgivable enthusiasm on the back cover. The combination makes praise a categorical imperative, and from this critic praise it should have had even without their prodding, for *CHRONOCULES* is an excellent novel. It is the kind that should win Hugos and rarely does. (I understand it hasn't even been nominated this year.)

"Chronocules: Particles of Time." This is the definition Compton gives at the beginning of his book, and it is more than an excuse for another theory of time travel. It is a description of the whole crowded action and its pointless resolution, of the characters and their helplessness before the impervious face of time. Time is the enemy and the story is of the struggle to defeat it. Only one character does, and the joke is on him. A very savage joke.

But this is not a novel about time travel. Time is



the precipitating factor, but the story is about people and their relationship with time. It is a true novel, wherein every aspect of story, theme and character contributes to a total structure, and every part depends for its existence on every other part.

Compton's world of the near future is one in which opiates have become the religion of the people and sex has developed or regressed (according to your age, capability and point of view) into an end in itself; violence is a commonplace, repressed hysteria the

norm, and money speaks louder than ever before.

Manny Littlejohn - fabulously rich, despotically powerful and eighty-seven years old - is afraid of time in its personification as death, though his presence is a wish to escape from a crumbling world. He has founded a project for the discovery of time travel. In his Village of scientists (and a highly amusing and original Village it is) are characters afraid of all sorts of things, from sex to truth to life itself. Some believe in the project, some do not, but all save a few see in it a "way out" of either an unbearable world or their unbearable selves.

Among those who do not seek this particular way out is Liza Simmons, who seeks, among other things, a man - a particular man. He is the Village idiot, Roses Varco, a subnormal lump of muscle and inhibition, still virgin at thirty-eight. She gets him eventually - in trumps doubled and redoubled - and then needs someone to blame for the experience. By the end of the book she has a whole nation to blame and punish and still is only a chronocule, a lone and unfulfilled particle of time.

Roses, on the other hand, wants nothing except to be left alone, and nothing is what he gets, with a vengeance. To explain that sentence would be to destroy the book for you.

Wealthy Manny wants success for his project, and gets it, and much good it does him. I could list the mocking fates of the characters indefinitely, but think you can gather by now the tone of the tale. The catch is that time travel works, but with a thoroughly coherent logic of its own: time is not mocked, neither by money nor intelligence nor anything else. It has the last laugh.

To tell more of the story would be to betray the surprises Compton heaps on his characters and his readers. And all the surprises are fair play: there's not a ring-in amongst them. Suffice it to say that his theory of time travel is new in my experience of sf, and for an "invented" science is as consistent as one could reasonably ask. And it eliminates the paradoxes, except one which turns up with a bang (literally) at both ends of the book and in so doing plays merry hell with entropy, conservation and the basic structure of the universe. Critical contemplation of it is enough to justify LSD.

Characterization throughout is larger than life, but not so exaggerated as to challenge credibility, except perhaps in the outrageous Manny Littlejohn. The one you will remember, however, is poor, sub-normal Roses Varco, and on him Compton has lavished an unsentimental tenderness and sympathy; he is not drawn larger than life, but looms over all the rest in a fashion that reduces them to hollow

shells. Symbolists may make what they like of that.

I wrote recently that D. G. Compton is a novelist to watch, and repeat it here. CHRONOCULES is not the really great book we may eventually expect from him - it has too many faults of technique and precision for that - but it stands above all but the very best sf of the last two decades, and at forty-one years of age he could be just getting into gear. I feel that the best is yet to come.

I don't propose to sully enjoyment by analysing the faults of this novel; it is enough that they do not cripple the total structure. A later date will be soon enough to examine author Compton more closely.

FRANK HERBERT: THE SANTAROGA BARRIER
(Rapp & Whiting: A\$3.65)

Frank Herbert is in many ways the complete science fiction writer, yet he never seems quite to fulfil himself and sometimes fails shockingly. His range (save for a lack of humour) seems limitless, yet often the work reveals a basic flaw.

The fabulous "Dune" novels (fabulous to Dune-lovers - I have no time for them) were ruined by the subjugation of story to an involved philosophy which finally foundered on the error present from the beginning: that if the future is foreseeable, the only action you can take is to leave it alone. DESTINATION VOID, with the nature of God as its theme, crashed in its unintentionally hilarious denouement; THE DREAM MAKERS bored itself to death in rumination on ethics and HEISENBERG'S EYES suffered from passages of incomprehensibility. Only his first novel, DRAGON IN THE SEA stands up as a stylish and gripping adventure yarn with a neat psychological fillip. THE SANTAROGA BARRIER is more lucid than any but the last, but suffers from an irritating flaw which the novelist should have himself perceived.

The story is an old stand-by, one of those which can still survive with deft handling. The town of Santaroga is a mystery; its inhabitants keep to themselves and by various quite legal means keep all strangers out. Are they mutants, interstellar colonists or whatever?

Dr Dasein, whose girl-friend is a Santarogan, uses her as a pretext to visit and investigate. Instead of freezing him out, the townspeople want him to stay, and the story concerns his desperate efforts not to become one of them. The mystery itself (a mild variant on the superman theme) is revealed early in the piece, and the rest of the 90,000 words is mainly lessons in ethics and logic quite entertainingly presented.

But (a mighty big but) the whole thing is unnecessary.

A little straight talk round about page 50 would have removed the whole mess. One is reminded of those Peg's Paper serials wherein the lovers are separated for ten episodes because neither had the brains to give a straight answer to a simple question in episode 1.

And I can't for the life of me see why the Santarogans had to hide their secret; more reasonable beings would have been only too ready to give it to the world.

LEE HOFFMAN: THE CAVES OF KARST
(Dobson: A\$3.75)

The males are tight-lipped Tarzans or incompetent sadists and the females are glamorous whores. The hero is a resounding drunk and the planet Karst is geologically silly. The plot is one wherein a bum-bling nitwit defeats an interstellar conspiracy. So don't say you weren't warned. And the caves of Karst, for all their science-fictional interest, might as well have been the sewers of Melbourne.

• • •

In Australian SF Monthly no. 3, Sabina Heggie asked what I found worthwhile in Brian Aldiss's REPORT ON PROBABILITY A.

There are more ways than one of enjoying a book. The most common is that of sensual excitement, or escapism; next, I imagine, would be the intellectual pleasure in character well explored, idea stimulatingly presented or argument well turned; more rare is the aesthetic pleasure in the use of language, in the form and structure of the book and the patterning of its elements, for these require a knowledge (or at least an appreciation) of the techniques of fiction.

REPORT ON PROBABILITY A presents nothing to the escapist reader, but there is stimulus in Aldiss's exploration of multiple realities and some reward in the pondering of further possibilities. I feel that this would be where for many the main attraction lay.

For myself there was also the interest of observing another novelist in the process of conducting a full-scale technical experiment - call it a craftsman's interest in the development of his craft. I found the experiment fascinating but ultimately too extended and too determined in its refusal of all concessions to popular sf-making. The attempt was less than a complete success, but one that needed to be made, and the method has possibilities which may be developed or modified by other hands. REPORT is an important work in experimental sf.

If Miss Heggie found it "extremely tedious and disappointing", that is a matter of taste and has nothing

to do with her "ignorance". And "intellectual" is not a pejorative. Nor does it mean the opposite of "ignorant". It means a person who questions and thinks, as against one who accepts uncritically all that is served up to him.

Back on page 17 I was complaining about Our Men in Brisbane and Melbourne not submitting their convention reports in time for me to use them at that point. Naturally, when I went to my post office box a few hours later (having started on John Brosnan's article) there was John Ryan's report on Q-Con waiting for me. Paul Stevens is, of course, made of sterner stuff; he is not one to be fooled by fan-zine editors' talk of deadlines and such; and, furthermore, he has been busy - writing fiery denunciations of my unworthy self. (I'm sorry we can't work up a good feud over this. We might have, but Paul and I spoilt everything by dining last week at the Degraes Tavern and having a good laugh at the whole business.) Paul feels that Bruce Gillespie and I are giving overseas readers the impression that Australian fans are dead serious, when in fact we are a madcap, fun-loving, devil-may-care kind of bunch. Well, I dunno: I've seen puns and things in SF Commentary and, for that matter, have heard Bruce laugh several times. As for me... well... Hands up all the overseas readers who find Scythrop dead serious. (You taking their names there, Claphanger? One way of cutting back the mailing list.)

As it happens, John Ryan's report is too long to publish in full, and he did invite me to rewrite it if I felt like it, so here is, ah, our report:

Q-CON 71

Queensland's first science fiction convention was held in Brisbane over Easter. It attracted fifty-four members, of whom most attended the sessions. Melbourne jet-setter, Robin Johnson, came to talk about Australia in '75 (by train and car this time: the man is incredibly versatile), and there was a welcome contingent of Sydney fans, including Shayne McCormack, Peter Darling, Kevin Dillon, Gary Mason, Lynne Hamilton (who plans to become Mrs Mason in June,

the lucky lady), Sabina Heggie, Frances Seymour, Barry Danes and Jim Morgan. Jack Wodhams, in Queensland to visit relatives, inadvertently became involved in the convention, too.

The Friday afternoon programme went a little adrift owing to Robin Johnson's delayed arrival, and was lightly attended. Part of the reason for this became apparent when we adjourned to the Ryans' for a barbecue tea and found that most of the Star Trek group had gone there early.

(We pause to inform confused readers who have already heard something about the Ryans from John Foyster earlier in this issue, that John and Jan moved from Sydney to Brisbane last year.)

Robin and Peter arrived during the barbecue and made an instant sensation in their Australia-in-'75 sweat-shirts. Pausing only to put away a mound of Peter Wright-Smith's excellent hamburgers, they set up shop in the lounge-room and managed to sell quite a few similar garments they just happened to have with them.

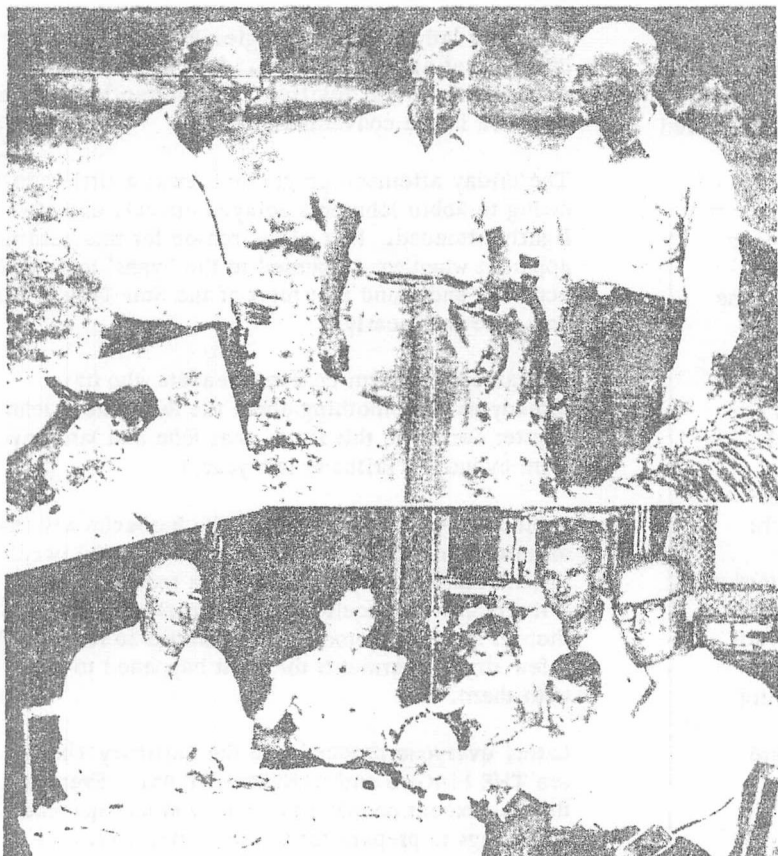
Later, everyone proceeded to the Salisbury Theatre to see THE MAGUS and FAHRENHEIT 451. Everyone, that is, except people like Ryan who had speeches and things to prepare for the following day.

Saturday morning's programme included a panel on science fiction and television, and an address by Roy Russell (President of the Queensland Flying Saucer Research Bureau) on UFOs. In the afternoon Dennis Stocks introduced the Guest of Honour, Frank Bryning, who spoke on "The Gemsback Era". His accompanist was Robin Johnson. While some felt that Robin's stentorian diapason was somewhat uncalled-for, most of us realized that here was a genuine, and rather moving, link with overseas fandom, since Robin has (according to usually reliable sources) snored through Guest-of-Honour speeches in forty-three countries.

The auction followed, and there was spirited bidding for such things as a set of promotional pages for Stan Pitt's Gully Foyle strip (\$25.50) and a piece of wood, painted black and donated by the AISF Committee, said to be a miniature replica of Kubrick's obelisk (\$8.50).

During the evening, short films (including one on Apollo XII and another of an ABC TV interview with John Ryan) and old serial trailers (courtesy of Chris Collier) were followed by that excellent movie, SECONDS. (Some of the younger fans expressed bewilderment at the absence of Doris Day from this film.)

On Sunday the Convention travelled fifty-odd miles



Above: Frank Bryning
Left: Arthur Clarke in Australia, 1955. Others in photos are Mike Wilson, Frank Bryning, Charles and Margaret Mustchin and two escapees from the national coat of arms.

down the Gold Coast to Coolangatta, to do reverence to Charles Mustchin's sf collection.

This pilgrimage is a glorious tradition of Brisbane fandom, though unobserved for many years. Frank Bryning gives the background story in an article in the Convention Handbook, covering the story of Queensland fandom from 1952 (when Mustchin set about creating it) to 1959. In another article, Dennis Stocks tells the story of contemporary fandom, from the time he found John Bangsund's name in If to the present.

At Coolangatta a Good Time was had by All, and the Convention officially came to an end. The captains and the kings (and Kevin Dillon and the Startrekies) departed. The gypsies took off their earmuffs, and peace descended upon the land.

There is a rumour that Frank Bryning's GoH address will be published shortly, possibly by Dennis Stocks. The two articles on Brisbane fandom in the con handbook were to have been published in the Yearbook; no doubt they will appear somewhere else also. Paul Stevens attended a small gathering

at Bundalohn Court last night. On being reproached for his tardiness by the editor, he tapped his forehead (making a not unpleasant sound: there's a future for Paul if J. Arthur Rank ever busts his gong) and said, "It's all up there". Omitting extraneous verbiage of a scurrilous nature, I more or less replied, "I want it all down here". Compelled by some obliging guests who twisted his arm only slightly beyond repair, Paul stood by my elbow and dictated the following:

MINI-MELCON 71

Like most sf fans, I enjoy conventions. I like meeting and talking to other fans. I enjoy the chance to put together a show that most people can get a laugh out of: it makes me feel wanted. Of course, I also have a soft spot between my ears, which is very likely why I agreed to organize the Mini-Melcon - and I suspect Mervyn Binns and the boys have an identical spot, since they let me.

Mini-Melcon 71 originally started out as a one-day grog-on at a pub for those people who had nothing to do over the Easter break. Hardly anyone from Melbourne could afford the trip to Brisbane, and for a while, until the whole thing got out of hand, the affair was referred to as the-Brisbane-convention-in-exile. Then someone suggested that we should have two days, one at the pub and one watching movies. Then someone remembered that it was time for a Nova Mob meeting and suggested we have a pre-convention Nova Mob party. Then celebrated Melbourne comic-strip artist and writer Greg & Grae walked into an MSFC meeting, and suddenly we had not one but (count them) two Guests of Honour. Then someone suggested we have a three-day con - but we threw him under a tram.

The party at John Bangsund's flat was quite popular, though somehow not as - relaxed, shall we say - as the party at the New Year con, when Bangsund was seen to wrap a sheepskin rug about his ample middle and crawl about on all fours, claiming to all and sundry that Australia rode to prosperity on his back. The prizes for best fancy dress were won by Liz Kinnaird and Michael Cameron - somewhat to their surprise, since they were not wearing fancy dress.

("Hey, did you see Liz's fantastic Afghan boots? She says all Afghans have the same size foot and..." "Get on with it, Paul: the cat's at me claret." "Ouch! Yessir!")

Easter Saturday got off to a good start. I was late. My welcoming speech was drowned out by the clink of beer glasses. Then we had a sparkling debate on whether *Star Trek* is Trash, with James Campbell reading computer print-outs (or Sanskrit or something), David Grigg trying to remember which side he was arguing for and Leigh Edmonds looking as though he would far rather be at church or a football match. The clinking of beer glasses punctuated and at times overwhelmed the speeches.

Mervyn Binns was dragged to the front and grilled by John Foyster on some subject or another which would probably have been quite interesting if it could have been heard above the clinking of beer glasses. But no-one seemed to mind. When Greg & Grae finally came on, the clinking of beer glasses ceased and everyone listened with rapt attention to the four of them as they recounted their experiences with "Iron Outlaw" and the Sunday Observer (now the Sunday Review).

("The four of them, Paul?" "I saw four, most people saw four - two sets of identical twins, sort of shimmering, a bit fuzzy at the edges, if you see my drift..." "The two of them, then?" "If you say so.")

This over, the clinking of beer glasses ("You're

making this up, Paul!" "No I'm not! Scout's honour!"). . . the clinking of beer glasses resumed while we auctioned off fabulously expensive items like \$5 copies of 1930s pulp magazines and 5-cent copies of Marvel comics. Artwork proved popular as usual, with an original Greg & Grae fetching \$11 and some miscellaneous Lindquist going for up to \$5 (to Daryl's surprise, since he had brought his artwork along to force upon fanzine publishers, rather than sell: for the rest of the day he got about with a thoughtful expression on his face). Bidding was hard to hear above the ("The clinking of beer glasses?" "The same." "I'll kill you if I find out you've been making this up.") clinking of beer glasses. John Foyshter - Foyster! Foyster! - was auctioneer.

Then there was a break for tea (and the chance to sit quietly with a drink, without the distracting sound of raised voices) and Peter House and I ran about frantically trying to organize the finishing touches for the Paul Stevens Show - such as writing scripts, rehearsing, finding costumes and makeup and so on. Peter was furious when he found someone had made off with his elephant; he had gone to no end of trouble to borrow the beast, and said he couldn't possibly do that particular skit without it. If Johnson or Bangsund had been there, he said, it might have been different, but he couldn't possibly etc. etc. We gave him a Luger to play with and this calmed him down a bit.

The evening programme started with John Foyster and Leigh Edmonds talking about Australia in '75. For a while we thought they intended to talk about it until '75, but someone cleverly took their drinks away and they were forced to retire. Then Gerald Carr was interviewed, and by this stage Peter and I realized that we shouldn't delay the Paul Stevens Show any longer, since it was unlikely that the audience could get any drunker and just possible they might start sobering up. The first item depicted a typical convention committee meeting, and was enjoyed by those who had not been involved in convention committee meetings; they found it amusing, others painfully close to the real thing. Then Peter (and his Luger) appeared as an agent for Comorg, and after a swift change reappeared as the admitting officer for the Transylvanian General Hospital - his patients Malcolm Sims (as a hunch-back with women trouble) and myself (Dracula with a guilt complex). Various other skits followed. Later the barmaid told me no-one bought drinks while this show was going on, so we obviously chose our moment well.

Then we thanked each other for coming and the Golden Age proprietor and staff for putting up with us, and we all bought our last drinks for the night and sat around until closing-time, talking.

IRON OUTLAW AND STEEL SHEILA

By GREG AND GRAE



Page 782 - THE SUNDAY REVIEW, April 11, 1971

A typical segment from Greg & Grae's weekly strip, *Iron Outlaw & Steel Sheila*, a delightful and often brilliant satire on super-heroes and the Australian Way of Life.

Next day, Easter Sunday, about sixty people turned up at the Capri Theatre, Murrumbidgee, for a programme of four feature films (THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO, CAPTAIN NEMO AND THE UNDERWATER CITY, NO BLADE OF GRASS and IT HAPPENED HERE), seven episodes of the Batman serial and three Pink Panther cartoons.

And that was Mini-Melcon 71.

I wish one day they would ask me to organize a real convention. It would be a hotel convention, of course. We would have at least one preview film, an all-night movie session, Alexandra the Great 48, topless usherettes in beanies, hot and cold running....

("Thank you, gentlemen. You may put him away now. Mind you don't spill any on the carpet, okay?")

Fanzine Reviews

THE FANARCHIST #4

(David Grigg 1556 Main Rd Research Victoria 3095 Australia 5 for A\$1.00/UK 50np/US\$1.10 - or for trades, contributions, artwork &c)

A fanzine which continues to delight, mainly because of David's irrepressible ironic humour. This issue has a transcript of the fanzine seminar from the 10th Australian Convention, amongst other (possibly more interesting) things.

BOYS' OWN FANZINE #1

(John Foyster & Leigh Edmonds 28 Ardmillan Road Moonee Ponds Victoria 3039 Australia - I've lent my copy, but I think they prefer trades and contributions rather than subscriptions)

A most interesting and beautifully-produced first issue. Highlights are Leigh's revealing editorial and an article by Apollo Papayannou about camping with Lee Harding. Don Symons's long story about gold smuggling I have always regarded highly, ever since Don wrote it for Lee's Canto 2 (with its publication there now remain very few items unpublished from that phantom fanzine), but I wish he would rewrite it at the much longer length it deserves. My own lecture on ektrachiasology (or however it is spelt: I invented the word under the influence of an especially good vintage, and cannot find the Greek root now in Donnegan) loses something in print, but perhaps I am biased about this. Bill Rotsler's drawings are, as always, superb.

SF COMMENTARY #19

(Bruce Gillespie GPO Box 5195AA Melbourne 3001 Australia Normally 8 for \$3/9 for US\$3/£1.50, but this issue is \$1/50np - also trades &c &c)

This incredible issue contains the complete run of John Foyster's little small-circulation critical fanzine, The Exploding Madonna (6 issues) and The Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology (3 issues) - a total, including indexes and so on, of no less than 140 pages. Here is some of the best critical writing about science fiction, by some of the sharpest intellects in fandom (and prodrom) - John Foyster, Franz Rottensteiner, Stanislaw Lem, George Turner, James Blish, Samuel R. Delany - but especially by John Foyster. It is also very nicely presented: Bruce has at last discovered Letraset. A tremendous undertaking, a tremendous achievement, and if it doesn't win a Hugo for Bruce there's no justice.

CHAO #3

(John Alderson PO Box 72 Maryborough Victoria 3465 Australia Per copy: A30c+postage/40np/US50c - also for trades, contributions &c) John Alderson's is one of the very special, very individual, voices in Australian fandom. Isolated from personal contact with other fans for most of the year, a farmer, a bachelor in his forties, and a man of vast erudition, John has been reading sf for many years but has only recently become at all involved with fandom. With fanzines he knows what he is about: for a long time he has published Sennachie, a very entertaining little journal devoted to reviews of historical works and news of events in the field of Australian local history (and, sometimes, to John's views on current affairs, which are always... very special, very individual). This issue contains a lengthy discussion of "The Bluebeard motif in Lee Harding's 'Cassandra's Castle'" by John, and another article by him on "Migration and the Future", a piece on sf as literature by Steven Phillips and various columns and reviews. Despite the serious approach to sf, Chao has the same (very special, very individual) sense of humour as its editor, and, like him, is entertaining, provocative (downright bloody perverse in places, particularly in matters of spelling - but John apparently, like Mark Twain, doesn't trust a man who spells a word the same way twice) and - well, look at the space I've been forced to give him. In short, imperturbably, magnificently, unrepresentative of fandom in Australia or anywhere else.

THE MENTOR #18

(Ron Clarke 78 Redgrave Road Normanhurst NSW 2076 Australia 3 for A\$1/US\$1/7 for UK£1 or the usual)

It's unfair to Ron to try to write about his fanzine after talking about John Alderson. The Mentor is probably the closest thing we have in Australia to the average good overseas fanzine; it's interesting, well-presented and mostly eminently forgettable - but the latter only by comparison with the four quite excellent fanzines mentioned above. Given a less parochial content and distribution it could be great.

Contributors to no.18 include Jack Wodhams, Michael Black, Paul Anderson, Cy Chauvin, Sheila Suttie, Shayne McCormack and numerous correspondents. Art-work is by Dimitrii Razuvaev, Bob Dobson and Jack the Wod.

ANZAPA - Mailing 16

(Official Editor: Dennis Stocks GPO Box 2268 Brisbane 4001 Australia)

I sometimes get rather frustrated when overseas fanzines review apa mailings, but it seems worth while to say something about ANZAPA here for the benefit of those overseas readers, especially, who might not suspect its existence. The 'ANZ' stands for Australia and New Zealand, naturally, but there is provision for members outside these countries (and it is rather ironic that the organization has never had a New Zealand member). Redd Boggs and Mike Horvat are currently American members, and Peter Roberts our sole British member. There are a few vacancies: write to Dennis if you are interested. The 16th mailing was issued a few days ago (last night, in my case) by Peter Darling, acting as Emergency Officer. Gary Mason, retiring OE, has had other things on his mind. It runs to 83 pages, from 18 members - somewhat below average. I have not read it closely yet, but on a quick skim it looks up to standard. Leigh Edmonds, John Foyster, Bruce Gillespie and David Grigg are conspicuously absent this time around. John Brosnan has re-joined, and there are two new members - Christine McGowan and Peter Wright-Smith.

OVERSEAS FANZINES

I am hoping someone will undertake the job of reviewing overseas fanzines for Scythrop - and the someone I have in mind is your old friend and mine, Bob ("Smudger") Smith. (Don't you wish you had never revealed that revolting nickname in ASFR, Bob?) For this issue I will list just a handful of recent arrivals.

ALGOL #16

(Andrew Porter 55 Pineapple Street Brooklyn New York 11201 USA 5 for \$3/4 for £1 - or trades &c) Offset and beautiful. I am Australian agent.

PROBE Vol 2 No 2

(Tex Cooper 1208 Carter Ave Queenswood Pretoria South Africa Trades &c - no price given) Lots of fiction. Similar to The Mentor (see p.39) but not as nicely produced.

ENTROPION #1

(Nick Shears 52 Garden Way Northcliff ext.4 Johannesburg South Africa 4 for US\$1.50/UK 70np or trades, contributions &c) A neat first issue, similar to Probe.

PEGASUS #7

(Joanne Burger 55 Blue Bonnet Crt Lake Jackson

Texas 77566 USA Available for contributions, letters &c - apparently no subscriptions)

Nice to see this again. Interesting, neatly spirit-duplicated with, this time, a silk-screen cover.

QUARBER MERKUR #26

(Franz Rottensteiner A-2762 Ortmann Felsenstr. 20 Austria DM2.00)

They tell me it's a great fanzine, and I really do believe it. I just wish I could read it. Highly recommended by people who like good analytical sf criticism and read German.

LOCUS

(Charles & Dena Brown 2078 Anthony Ave Bronx New York 10457 USA)

FOCAL POINT

(Arnie Katz 59 Livingston St Apt 6b Brooklyn New York 11201 USA)

CHECKPOINT

(Peter Roberts 87 West Town Lane Bristol BS4 5DZ England)

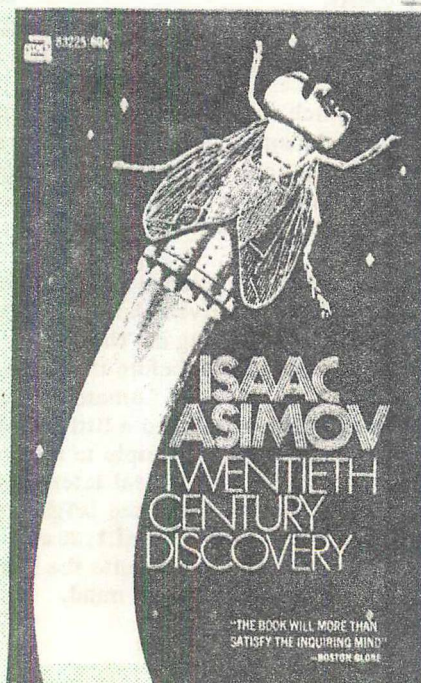
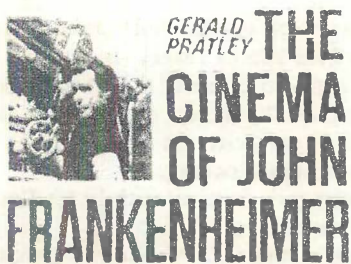
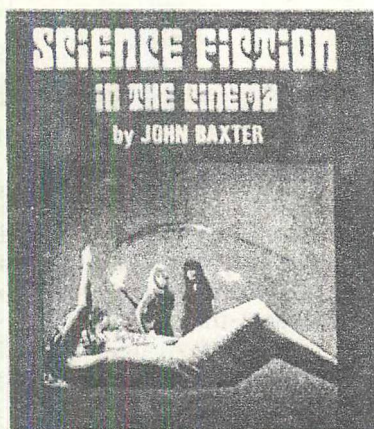
Three essential newszines. Rates and maybe sample copy from Bruce Gillespie, myself and David Grigg respectively. (Addresses elsewhere this issue.)

Peter Darling - GPO Box 4593 Sydney 2001 - is agent for LUNA MONTHLY, the other (and most professionally-presented) sf news magazine.

J.B.

AUSTRALIAN DIRECTORY

(Excluding addresses and fanzines listed elsewhere in this issue.) Melbourne SF Club - GPO Box 1267L Melbourne 3001 - meets 147 Toorak Rd, South Yarra. The Nova Mob - c/- John Foyster, 12 Glen-gariff Drive Mulgrave Vic 3170. Melbourne University SF Association - c/- Melb Uni Union Parkville Vic 3052. Monash University SF Association - c/- Alex Gas 75 Trevelyan St. Sth Caulfield Vic 3162. Sydney SF Foundation - GPO Box 4593 Sydney 2001. Sydney Futurian Society - GPO Box 4440 Sydney 2001. Sydney University SF Assoc'n - c/- Leith Morton 110 O'Connor St Haberfield NSW 2045. Australian SF Association - (no current information). Brisbane Fantasy & SF Association - GPO Box 2268 Brisbane 4001. University of Adelaide SF Society - c/- 1 Michael St Locksley SA 5032. DUSK - 20 Tryon Ave Wollstonecraft NSW 2165. Australian Star Trek Fan Club - 32 Bulleen Rd North Balwyn Vic 3104. Australian Tolkien Society - 158 Liverpool St Hobart Tasmania 7000. ANZAPA - see elsewhere. Australia in '75 Committee - GPO Box 4593 Sydney 2001. Space Age Bookshop - see ad. Parergon Books - see title page. Norstrilian News - Bruce Gillespie. Terran Times - DUSK. Somerset Gazette - Melbourne SF Club. New Forerunner - Sydney SF Fdn. Thrusting Member - Leigh Edmonds.



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