

doxa!

Vol 4 Number One, Sept 1999

An Incurable RomanTic production
from the fevered mind of Roman Orszanski,
PO Box 178, Kensington Park, SA 5068 Australia.
Available via editorial whim, or for the usual.

Back in Print again after five years!

It's been over five years since the last issue of *doxa!* — if memory plays not false, it was the DADA issue, in which I announced the birth of my son Dylan.

A lot has changed since then: Sue, his mother, and I have separated, and I see Dylan alternate weekends. It's not enough, but I treasure what time I have with him. He's five-and-a-half and going to school.

He's at that exciting age where he's just learning to read. Everywhere we go, he reads out signs: on posters, buses, walls, train stops, newspaper banners, etc etc.

All that time reading to him has paid off: he's read me two stories (albeit with a little help)! I'm going to enjoy sharing the Harry Potter books with him in a few years time (I think they're a bit too scary for him at the moment — they were scary for me, anyway!).

[For those of you who haven't discovered them, it's a new series of books following the adventures of an orphan, Harry Potter, whose parents were killed by an evil wizard. Innocent of his background, and believing his parents had died in an accident, he discovers the truth when invited, at the age of ten, to enroll in *Hogwarts*, a school for wizards. Sort of William crossed with *Lord of the Rings* with a dash of *Jeeves* thrown in for good measure. The school sport,

quiddich (sp?), is played, seven a-side, with three balls of varying sizes while zooming about on broomsticks. I wish they'd televise that instead of aussie rules! I suspect the books will top the best-seller lists here as they have done in England.]

I'm currently sharing a rental house with two young women in an inner suburb of Adelaide, but I hope to move into my own place early in the new year — it's one of the dwellings shown below.

☞ see *The Last Straw*, p2 for details

If you don't count several years of FRIENDS OF THE EARTH NOUVEAU newsletters (including daily sheets at the Nov '98 international gathering in Melbourne), the last fanzine I produced was the first issue of *The Adelaide Fan Review* (aka AFR), an all-electronic fanzine. Despite it being on the web (<<http://www.peg.apc.org/~roman/afr/afr1/>> for the nonce; issue 2 — promised for Aussiecon by co-editor Damien Warman — at <<http://www.pobox.com/~dwm/afr/>>), it was originally designed for distribution by disk & email.

At the time, web browsers actually fit on a floppy, along with the issue. The idea was to use a common, lightweight hypertext language, HTML, rather than a proprietary system. In response to email requests (and the ridiculous size limit on emails to AOL members), we put the issue up on the web.

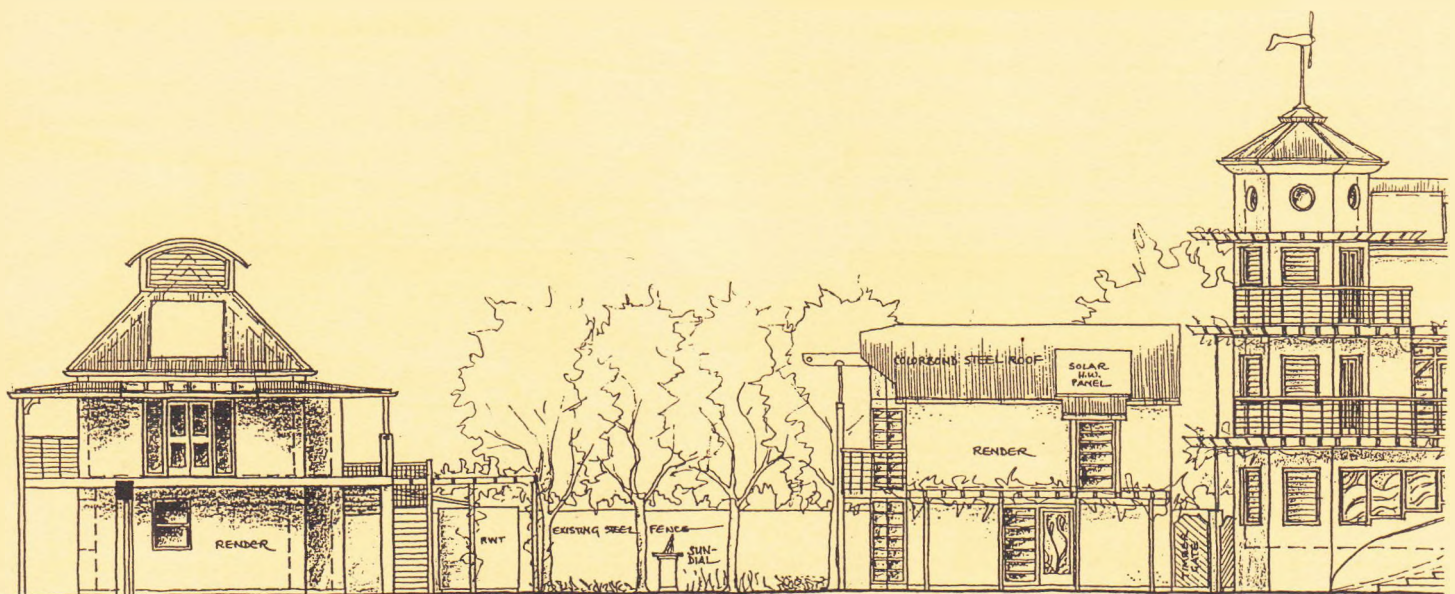
The world has changed significantly since then, and we are re-considering our earlier model of "issues" distributed via email.

☞ see *Snapshots of Old Time Radio*, p4.

This is the special Aussiecon 3 edition of *doxa!*, the fanzine which dares to shout its name. By my reckoning, this issue is whole number 23. Illustrations herein taken from architect's drawings of the Christie walk development in Sturt Street, Adelaide (two blocks SW of the central market). Letters of Comment can be sent to the PO Box above, or zapped to roman@peg.apc.org

Sept 1st, 1999 ▲

NORTH ELEVATION



The Whitmore Square EcoCity Project

'Christie Walk' Development Stage 2
Sturt Street ADELAIDE

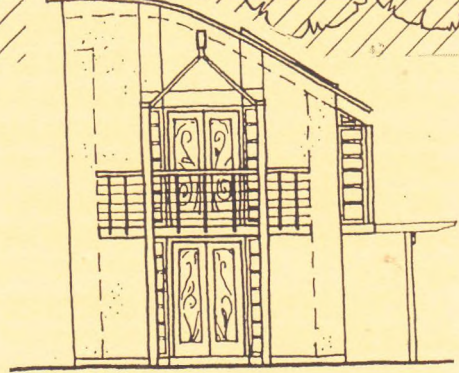
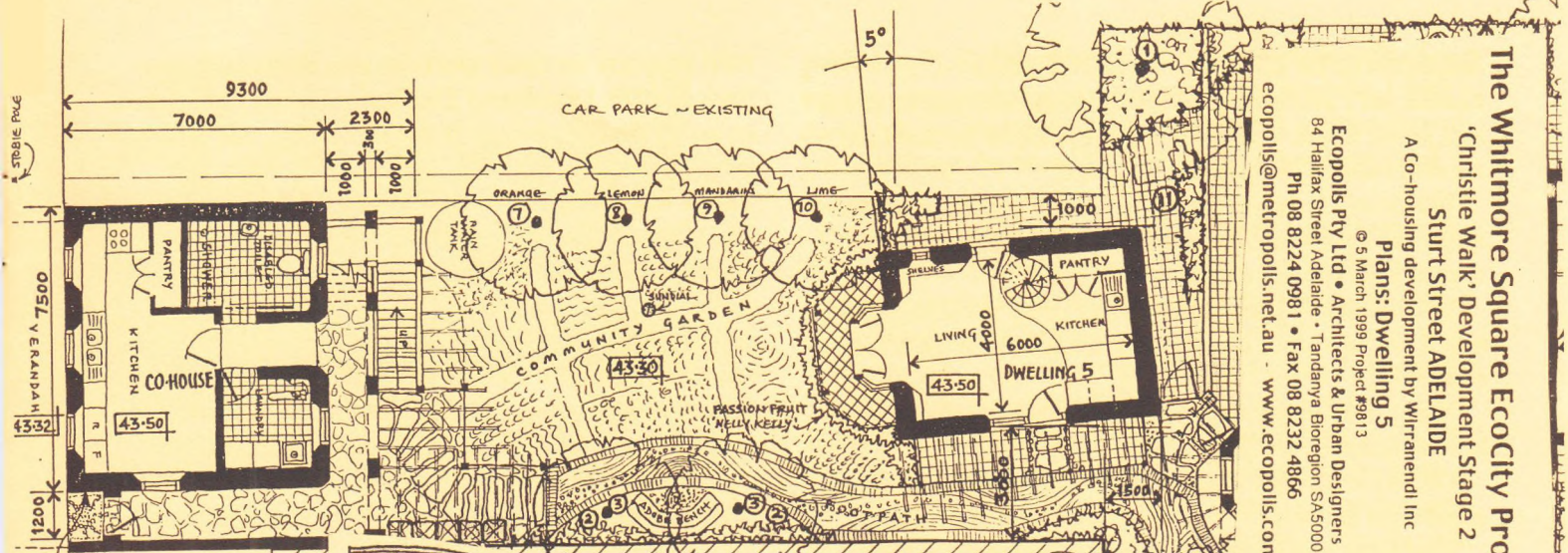
A Co-housing development by Wlrntandl Inc

Plans: Dwelling 5

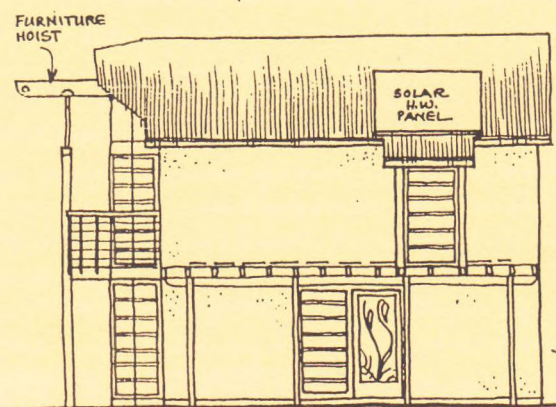
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Ecopolis Pty Ltd • Architects & Urban Designers
84 Halifax Street Adelaide • Tandanya Bioregion SA5000
Ph 08 8224 0981 • Fax 08 8232 4866

ecopolis@metropolis.net.au • www.ecopolis.com.au



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5000

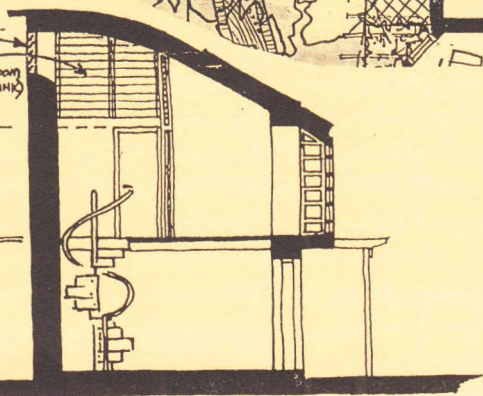


NORTH ELEVATION

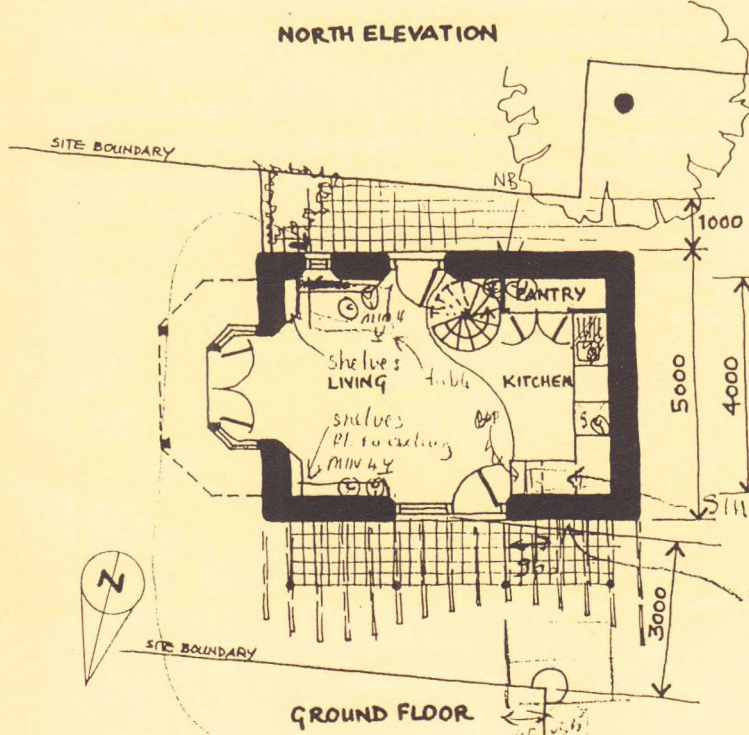
RECYCLED BRICK PAVING
RECYCLED CONCRETE SLAB
PAVERS LAID AS FLAGSTONES
PEBBLES & RECYCLED CERAMICS
& BRICKS LAID AS MOSAICS

LOUVRES
VENTED STORAGE
OVER BATHROOM
(INCL. H.W. TRNK)

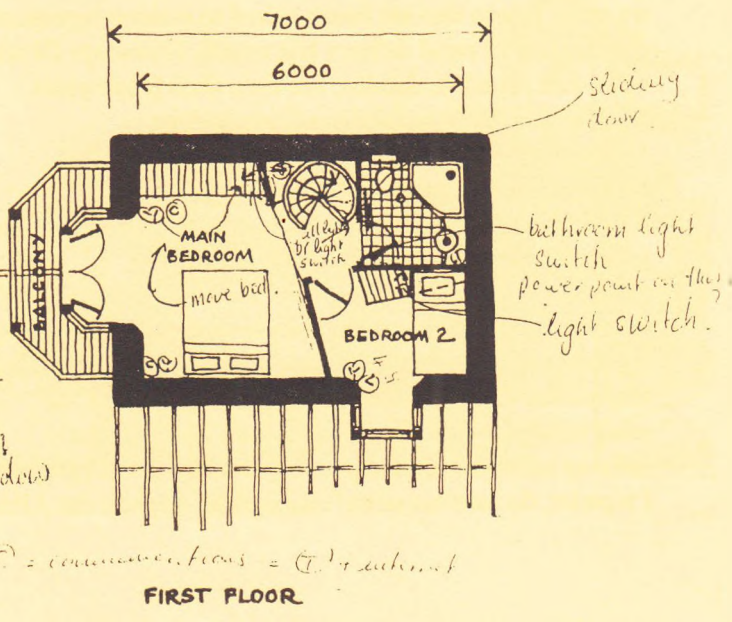
2400
TO UNDERSIDE
OF FLOOR DECK



SECTION



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

The Last Straw

Sooner or later, you will realise two things:

- (i) you are paying more in rent than you would paying off a mortgage; and
- (ii) you are sick of living in share households.

What broke this camel's back was the football craze which descended on the household in winter. Unfortunately, the TV dominated the lounge in which it sat, and there was no separate kitchen into which one could escape. *[I'm not even going to comment on the unfortunate fact that the channel 9 footy show always ran 30 minutes overtime, often delaying Babylon 5 screenings past midnight. Oh, for a video to time-shift!]*

For some years now, I have been involved in the modern Eco-city movement, believing that we can — and must — build cities "in balance" with nature. *Urban Ecology (Australia)* proposed a slice of ecocity to be built on Halifax St in Adelaide [see my Master's thesis, *The Production and Re-production of Ecocities*, for all the gory details]. Despite winning a best practice award from the UN at *Habitat II*, it is unlikely this eco-vision will be built.

Almost a year ago, the people behind the Halifax Ecocity Project purchased a block of land in Adelaide to build themselves a slice of ecocity. A private housing co-op, Wirranendi Inc, is acting as developer.

I decided to buy into the project: Dwelling 5, a two-storey load-bearing straw bale house of approximately 48 square metres, is the **Roman Hut**.

Sometime in October/November, we will build the walls over two or three weekends as part of a straw bale workshop (Jan Finder will be press-ganged to help!). I hope to move in sometime in early January.

It's small, but the Hut includes a share in the community garden, and the co-house which has a laundry and kitchen/dining areas. Most importantly, we think we can fit the equivalent of six full-sized bookshelves!

I'm very pleased with the architect's design. Not least because Paul F Downton is a friend and fellow student at the Mawson Centre for Environmental Studies, Uni of Adelaide. As part of the "barefoot architecture" process, I've added a few minor improvements: the hoist and balcony, to allow for unwieldy furniture [bookshelves!] on the first floor; a small window in the northwest corner, above the sink now looks out over the main path into the site; and we have re-arranged the bathroom to allow for a full-sized bathtub [this involved full-scale models to test the usability of the design]. At last, I'll be able to soak my weary bod.

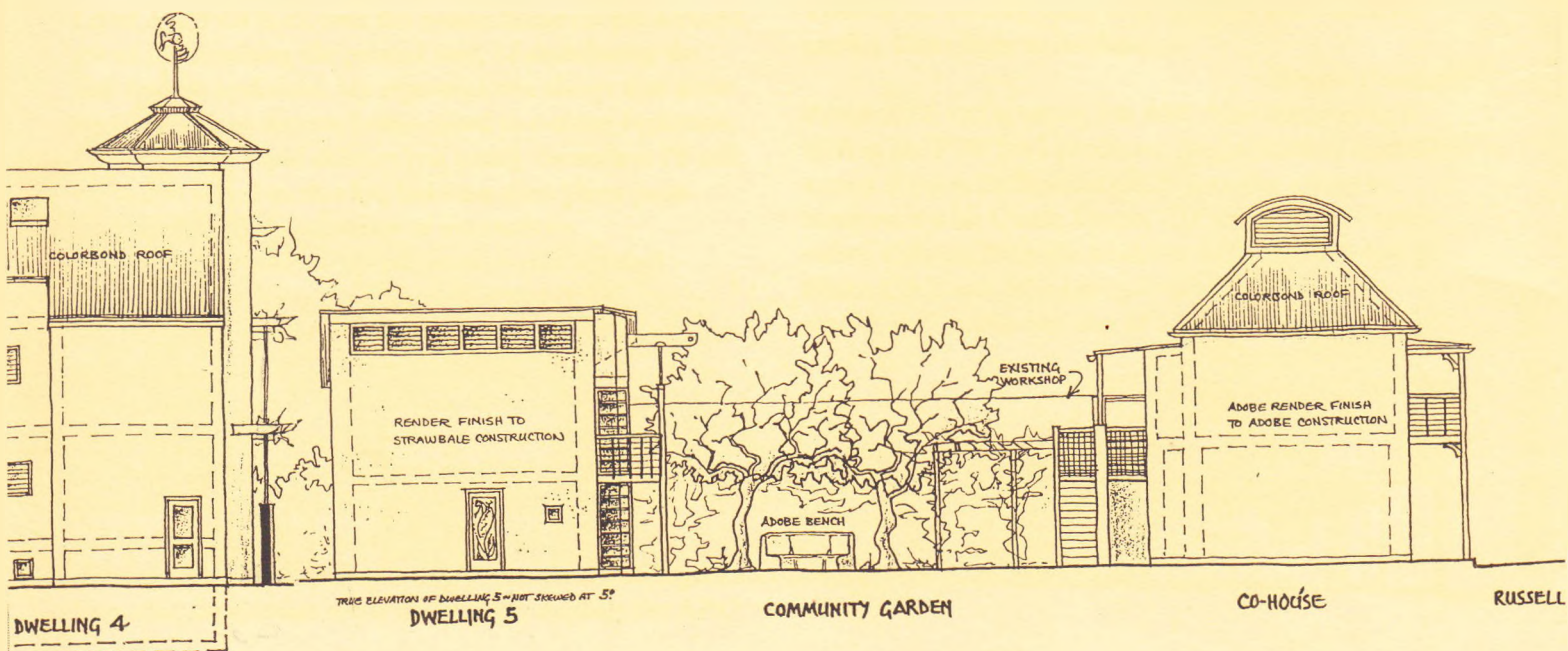
Some aspects of the design which may not be immediately apparent: the straw-bale walls are tensioned with chicken wire, then rendered with mud/concrete to make them waterproof, fire-proof and rodent-resistant. The straw forms excellent insulation ($R=7$, compared to $R=4$ for the other four dwellings in stage 1) for both heat and sound. The floors are going to be of bamboo planking, and my balcony looks out over the communal garden. (Note the lime, lemon and mandarin trees.)

A small spiral staircase joins the two levels, and vines shade the front of the hut.

Power comes from the solar panel above Dylan's bedroom, and the wind-generators from the adjacent dwelling. For communications, we're talking about category 5 cable throughout the development. The stove is an AEG, about 30% more efficient than the nearest competitor. What's more, AEG have a "buy-back" scheme for old stoves. Ultimately we hope to upgrade the solar panel with the solar tiles used by the Japanese.

Eventually, we will capture stormwater run-off and make good use of grey-water.

Beverley, in dwelling 4, has a wine cellar...Now where did I put that pick-axe? ▲



Snapshots of Old Time Radio

Damien and I were arguing over AFR, the electronic fanzine we edit with Juliette Woods. Only one issue has appeared so far, and I had enquired when the next issue was to appear.

“But there’s no such thing as an issue” said Damien. “It’s more like a growing tree, with branches that are occasionally pruned or reshaped.”

“Yes, but at any given time, we can point to those pages which are new since time X: they constitute an issue.” I countered.

“Those ‘new pages’ depend on who’s reading them, and how long since they last visited.”

“OK, what about a ‘theme’ issue? Surely that set of pages constitutes an ‘issue’?”

“That’s just growth in a particular direction, of a given branch. I still hold that what we have is a constantly evolving set of pages, and the idea of ‘issues’ doesn’t make any sense.”

“It may be outmoded, but it is still useful, particularly if you want to refer to a particular article or column. Say, the Doc Smith article in Jan 97, rather than the revised one in Mar 98; or the May turkey-shoot column rather than the september one.”

“There are better ways to identify an article — perhaps a unique ID? Why try and impose the structures of the old medium on the new one?”

“What if you take a snapshot of the AFR at time T, then another at T+1. Then wouldn’t it make sense to speak of the set of pages which make up the difference as an issue?”

“It’s a totally artificial distinction. What about updates of individual pages? Are they a separate issue? Even if they’re completely unconnected? What about the context of all those pages?”

That’s roughly a re-construction of the argument we had over dinner a fortnight ago. Damien’s quite right, of course, if you’re looking at a web-site. Ironically, the original AFR was designed to be distributed via floppy disk, and we suggested that each “issue” would be cumulative (like Damien’s site).

I GOT A LOT OF FLAK over the e-zine. Some people accused me of undermining the printed zine, of abandoning the fine fannish traditions. My argument was always that there are some things that are better suited to e-zines: hypertext, colour photos, rapid delivery [via email]. Nowadays I’d add video and sound to that list, but even then [three years ago] there was the possibility of interactivity.

Despite some overwhelming cost advantages, e-zines just don’t generate the same frisson of excitement as a regular zine.

My suspicion is that this is because you actually know who gets your printed zine, whereas it’s possible to anonymously gather e-zines. Also, there’s somehow something stimulating about the physicality of a print zine: touch, smell, sound as well as vision, all wrapped up in an easy-to-use form. Whether the e-zine will displace the print version, I don’t know. Maybe it’ll just improve delivery times for remote printing & distribution by agents. I wonder, do internet news/ mailing lists displace the APA?

AFR WAS NOT MY ONLY VENTURE into electronic zines. Back in 1978, I published The Steam-Driven Fluglehorn, an audio-fanzine on tape. It was lots of fun, and a natural progression from my work in community radio.

There was never a second issue of SDF.

The big problem with tape zines was the sheer time to duplicate them. Unless you sent masters off to a tape duplicators (often expensive), you were stuck with duplicating three or four at a time. And if the original tape was an hour, it took an hour to duplicate [yes, I know there was high-speed dubbing, but that tends to drop the quality]. You’d need to take good care of the master to ensure quality, because you don’t want to degrade the quality with dubs of dubs.

All in all, just too tedious.

A month ago, I came across a web page devoted to the highly esteemed Goon Show. They were offering downloads of audio files: 30 minutes in 6 meg MP3 is a compressed format, which means you can download 30 minutes in 5.

And copying is a dream: one minute to create a perfect copy of a 30 minute show! *You can fit 100 Goon Shows on a single CD.*

John Foyster brought back an MP3 CD of ten Bob Dylan albums from Malaysia.

A few moments browsing on the net revealed a host of sites storing old radio shows: Dimension X, The Shadow, Goons and so on. My favourite was the Mercury Theatre Players version of Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday*.

If I were to revive an audio fanzine, it would be via a computer. Zip Disks, Mini-Discs or CD-Roms could easily hold a two hour tape, and the MP3 format is already widely spread.

Interestingly enough, radio people are already using MP3 and Real Audio compression to exchange programmes, interviews & pieces over the web. Have a look at <<http://www.oneworld.com/>> and their oneworld radio exchange system.

I wonder if it’s time to finally produce issue 2 of the *Steam-Driven Fluglehorn*? ▲

That’s it for another issue. 5am Sept 1st, and I have to catch a 10am flight to Melbourne.

Roman Orszanski

POSTSCRIPT: MELBOURNE, FRI AM: After discovering a fault in the PDF file I produced, (and a fruitless search for a copy-shop in Melbourne which provides access to computers with Quark Xpress, ZIP drives *etc*, to correct same), I am saved by the kindness of Bruce Gillespie & Elaine Cochrane, who have provided access to their machines — and a nice cup of tea. *many thanks!*