

Being an ANZAPazine produced by Marc Ortlieb of P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Vic 3131. This one is produced using MS Word 4 and the School's shiny new photocopier. All contents courtesy of the tortured brain of the hamfisted typist. This entry started Tuesday June 2nd 1992. Ghu only knows when I'll finish it. An All Piss and Wind Production.

It's been a bugger of a week. Michael came down with tonsillitis last Wednesday. Cath was in bed with a migraine over the weekend and had to be taken into hospital on Monday. Today I took Ursula to the vet, to discover that she needed \$180.00 worth of surgery to fix an abscess caused by fighting. I figured that there was nothing else to do but to rejoin ANZAPA.

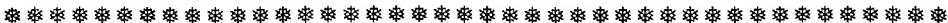
Mind you, there were other reasons too. ANZAPA has a nasty way of sneaking up on one. Bruce Gillespie started it all. At Nova Mob gatherings he'd say ingenuously "You must have known. I wrote about it in ANZAPA." And here I must make my first shocking confession. I haven't read an ANZAPA since I left. Okay. Slight exaggeration. I did egoscan the mailing or two following my resignation, with the sort of fascination normally reserved for people who pull rank with newspaper editors and get to read their own obituaries, waiting patiently on the spike for news of the subject's demise. But, other than that, the only ANZAPA contributions I've read have been Cath's and Weller's, because I run off both and I tend to eyetrack while working on them. Then there was the fact that both David Grigg and Leanne Frahm were rejoining. Two of my favourite writers back in ANZAPA—the temptation was growing by the minute.

Bruce Gillespie's land-owning party clinched the matter. There I was, standing nattering to David Grigg, while we watched the MSFC contingent cheerfully chattering. David and I were being aloof, as befitted our status as old fen and tired, though nowhere near as tired as, say, Bruce, or Damien. (Damien, I heard later, shook off his lethargy to be obnoxious. I guess that shows that we boring farts still have it in us.) David was nattering gafia and how ANZAPA wasn't the sort of place it used to be, and I was pointing out the Young Turks who had the audacity to be enthusiastic, different but, above all, disgustingly youthful. It struck me that ANZAPA had been abandoning its role as an elephant's graveyard for Australian Fandom, and that something really needed to be done to allow the Old Farts to reclaim it. Consider the Sudetenland to be thoroughly annexed. (The next annex I intend to be a cute little brick veneer job...)

So how was life after death ANZAPA? Rather pleasant, I hate to admit. No more panic on the first of alternate months. No more guilt because I hadn't read and inwardly digested each holy word of the previous mailing. No frantic pawing through the old notebooks for the germs of ideas from which to create articles for ANZAPA. Yep. I rather liked it. ANZAPA had, after all, been an important part of my life since December 1975. It still returns to haunt me. I had a delightful natter with ex-O.B.E. Don Ashby at Phillip Handfield's third birthday party. In between nattering theatre, folk music and New Scientist articles, we managed to dredge up a few old ANZAPAns, wondering what had become of them. Don sees his brother Derrick and sister-in-law Christine every blue moon or so. Neither of us knew where Keith Taylor was, though Don suspected that he'd moved back to Tasmania. It was a delightful way to kill an hour or so. I wish Don would write a little more, but I doubt that he'd be able to squeeze that into an incredibly full lifestyle.

Looking through the O.B.O. for Cath's mailing, I note that only Cath, Bruce, David Grigg and Michael O'Brien remain of those whose first appearance in ANZAPA predates mine. I'm getting more and more concerned about that sort of thing of late. I was carrying out a similar exercise at Kittycon, looking to see how many Boring Old Farts were still around. Strangely, there are quite a few of us. I'm even noticing an old fart's renaissance in publishing circles. Eric Lindsay has published issues of *Gegenschein* in consecutive months and Ron Clarke and Bruce Gillespie are still producing issues that gladden whatever passes for hearts in the Australia Post Accounting Department.

Those of you who enjoy following themes in literature may, by now, have noticed a common theme in this rambling natter. Yes. Bruce Gillespie's name crops up with alarming frequency. So I suppose I'll have to admit it. My rejoining of ANZAPA seems to be all Bruce Gillespie's fault. Thanks Bruce. My bill is in the mail.





THE OLD METER WINDER

It was just before 6:45 am and I was standing waiting for a tram on Burke Road, just next to the Camberwell Station, about six shops down from Alternate Worlds. I find that I spend quite a bit of time there, given that my exercise regime, in which I walked the twenty five minutes from Camberwell Station to school, was toppled in a bloodless but rather fatty coup a year or so ago. Not that I begrudge the time.

One can learn the most fascinating things while standing waiting for a tram. I regularly see one particular street cleaner there, sometimes astride a horrendously loud street vacuuming machine, but occasionally simply with a broom and bin, clearing up the rubbish that has built up around the tram stop bench. (They used to have a bin there, but most of the rubbish ended up piled around it and so the Council figured that they might as well leave the seat to serve the same function.) He and I occasionally pass the time, depending on our varied moods. Sometimes he's taciturn merely grunting a "G'day" in response to my cheery morning greeting. On other occasions I'm too deep in the latest New Scientist to return his "Hello." Every now and then, though, we natter. Thus it was, a few mornings before the morning of which I speak, that he nodded to the line of cars, parked unfashionably early, along the street—Volvos, Porsches and one elegant Mercedes.

"Second floor of one of those buildings," he said. "They're playing for sheep stations. Beats me why the cops don't do anything about it. Everyone around here knows about it. Don't know why the cops don't. Sometimes go until eight in the morning. Some leave earlier."

Since he'd mentioned it, I did note a well-dressed gentleman, looking less than happy with himself, getting into a Volvo.

"No thanks," I said. "Penny a point will do me."

"Too right," replied the cleaner. "More bloody money than sense."

Summer mornings aren't too bad. It's light enough to read and warm enough to stand in one place, waiting for the tram. Winter mornings pose different problems. There is street lighting there, but seldom at the right angle for reading. To get adequate illumination requires standing on the very edge of the pavement where the wind whistles up the hill and tunnels up the trouser leg, leaving one with vivid mental images of soprano brass monkeys. Occasionally I walk the six shops up to Alternate Worlds and peruse the window for stuff that I'll later order from Justin Ackroyd. Often I'm reduced to reading the publicity blurbs for New Idea and Woman's Day that cover the window of the newsagent's shop just behind the tram stop. The passing jogger provides brief respite from the Royal Family's catastrophes. I don't often natter to the people waiting at the stop. Although there are one or two regulars foolish enough to brave the morning chill, I haven't had cause to break the silence. Usually that sort of ice-breaker only arrives in the form of a phenomenally late tram, and the trams along Burke Road are fairly reliable.

So I tend to be left with my musings of a winter's morning and thus it was I had cause to notice a bod, running up the road, stopping at every parking meter. Eventually he got close enough for me to see what he was doing. He was using a long, thin handle to wind up the parking meters. Until I saw him, the thought that parking meters needed winding had never entered my mind. I haven't had much cause to contemplate the things, being a confirmed user of public transport. Once I saw him, it was obvious that parking meters had to work on some sort of clockwork mechanism but I had never carried that thought through to its logical conclusion, that the council had to hire someone to wind them up once a day.

It's just one of those mysteries that keep our society functioning. There must be all sorts of things like that that occur in the wee small hours that we don't even think about. Mind you, what really sets me wondering is what the meter winder thinks of his job. Does he take personal satisfaction from the thought that, because he has wound the meter up, some poor sod will be cursing a red flag later that day. The parking inspectors can at least show some compassion in the job, and, on seeing a suffering driver, coin in hand, rushing to the meter, can give a cheery smile and a "Better luck next time" as they superglue the ticket to the window. The meter-winder simply sets the machinery in motion, having no idea of the people he'll catch in his clockwork. Perhaps there's a story in there. Perhaps Harlan Ellison has already written it. Be that as it may, the tick-tock man still winds his way along Burke Street.

This apazine supports the Australia in 1999 Worldcon bid. If Eric Lindsay's behind it, it must be fun.

