

# ***LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 12***

**LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 12**, August 2022, is an issue of a mailing comments apazine published by Perry Middlemiss, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, 3122. Produced only for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association).  
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This fanzine acknowledges the members of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it is produced in Hawthorn, Victoria, and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

## **INTRODUCTION**

I've had a few friends comment to me recently that they think that Scott Morrison was Australia's worst-ever Prime Minister. I disagree. I rate him second worst.

I have John Howard as third worst: I always detested the man, hated his politics and his two-faced approach to everything. Politicians, if they ever get a nickname in Australia, always get an ironic one. Calling him Honest John Howard explains it all.

Scott Morrison comes in second-worst PM. He set out on his Prime Ministership with no ideas, and no intention of implementing them even if he found any. I think in the years to come we'll look back at this most recent Government and struggle to think of a single thing they did that helped the country in any way. The only good thing he did was to lose.

But the worst PM, by far in my view, was Tony Abbott. Calling himself the love-child of John Howard and Bronwyn Bishop – God, what a devil spawn that would have been! – Abbott was smart enough to know what he wanted and intelligent enough to know how to achieve it. And what he wanted was to destroy any sense of progress this country may have made in the past twenty years. He lived in the pocket of Rupert Murdoch and did that man's bidding at all times. A nasty piece of work, hated even by his own colleagues.

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## **GOINGS-ON IN THE GROVE**

After the removal of the electioneering material from the street not a lot has been going on. A house on the corner of Liddiard Street and Elphin Grove sold recently. I'm not aware of the selling price as it was sold under an "Expression of Interest" arrangement; one that is generally reserved for the higher end of the real estate market. Such is the ridiculous state of Melbourne house prices that if you were to guess a figure somewhere north of four million I'd expect you'd be in the right zone.

At the other end of the street, or nearly there, a house is undergoing renovations. Last time I went past the back of it had been demolished and the interior had been basically gutted. All that remained was the weatherboard exterior, on three sides, and the roof. As far as I recall it hadn't been occupied for some months (maybe a year?) and I suspect that the renovation was delayed by a lack of either building materials or building staff.

Slightly further afield, but still within our household's sphere, has been the major tram works undertaken on Glenferrie Road. For about two weeks from the end of June into July the whole road was blocked off as the tracks were all taken up and then relaid. According to the reports from

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the relevant State Government Department, this was the first time such work had been carried out in close to 70 years. As you can imagine the local businesses were less than impressed. They were just starting to get back on their feet after the COVID lockdowns of the past two years and then to be deprived of passing custom again was a bit harsh. Still I'm guessing it had to be done.



For the first few days of the operation the workers provided pedestrians with a walk-way across Glenferrie Road across from MacDonald's. I took the opportunity to stop halfway and take a couple of photos of the works.

[The left-hand pictures above, and below, are looking north, and the right-hand pictures are looking south.]

But the works continued at a fairly rapid pace and within a week we had reached the following situation.



And a few days after that things were pretty much back to normal. Exciting times (cough!).

### Comments on Mailing 327

#### Chez Ashby 7 – **Derrick Ashby**

Some interesting predictions about the Federal Election. Some things correct, though I suspect, like a lot of other commentators, you underestimated the vote for the independents. Gary Mason will have a lot more insight into this state of affairs than me, but I see it as a steady disillusionment with the major parties. Which is perfectly reasonable, especially given the bloody awful Government we've had to endure over the past nine years, with the most recent three being especially dire. •

I read that you had bought a new walking stick, but I was then somewhat disappointed to read that it folded up. Where can he hide the sword? I thought. I hardly see the point in having a walking stick without a) a hidden sword, or b) one so sturdy that it does major bodily damage when used against miscreant pedestrians. Still, needs must, I suppose. •

Re **Time Was**: It may have been me who suggested you read this. Or, at least, I was one of a few. I just preferred it as I thought it was better written. •

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Re YctoDavid Grigg on Aussiecon Two: I can sympathise about the burnout resulting from helping to organise a second Worldcon. Rose Mitchell and I were in exactly the same boat after Aussiecon Four. I reckon I did practically nothing for about four years afterwards. Total lack of energy and ability to put up with people. I suspect that had something to do with me missing the London Worldcon of 2014, from all reports one of the better Worldcons of this century. Maybe that spurred me on to get back into things. I'm not sure, but it's the theory I'm running with at present. •

Re YctoMe re Christine: The comments on the podcast were the least we could do. •

### Quoz 83 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

**Mark** – My condolences on the death of your father. I was very impressed and grateful that my father and stepmother had made all the arrangements for his cremation a few years back. It is hopefully something that I will also get around to once Robyn and I finally decide where we are going to settle, which is still very much up in the air. •

Re YctoCath Ortlieb re ravens: If an “unkindness of ravens” is harsh then a “murder of crows” must top that. You probably are aware that the eastern states’ nickname for South Australians is “croweater”. As such we ex-pat South Australians have a soft spot for the poor maligned crow. •

Re YctoMe re the WSFS Constitution: I have a feeling that quite a number of clauses within the WSFS Constitution will require amendment over the coming years to better align themselves, or cope with real-world problems; the bidding practices of committees being just one of them. I note that there are some amendments in play for Chicago that will attempt to clean up the problem of some categories not receiving the required percentage of overall votes and which are thereby set to “No award” for a year. The fan awards are in particular danger of being thus affected. If I feel like a morning of self-flagellation I might drag myself along to that discussion. Gives me somewhere to sit anyway. •

The Queen’s whatever-Jubilee completely passed me by. I have some recollection of “things happening” but I took zero interest in them. Bring on the Republic I say. •

**Claire** – I note that only your Hugo reading crosses over with mine. •

I hadn't noticed the original publication distribution among my genres. Must keep an eye on that. •

### The Fiery Participle 10 – Leigh Edmonds

Re YctoBruce re the Monash University: I would reckon the major problem the uni has in regards to their fanzine collection is a lack of staff. What they really need is some graduate student to decide that Australian sf fandom was a wonderful thing to study and voila!, things might actually start moving. Can't see it happening otherwise. Even the cataloguing of contents seems a bridge too far. •

Re YctoMe re the Federal Election: Let us say that I did not vote FOR John Frydenberg, which I suppose amounts to the same thing as voting him out. Just this morning I watched our new local member, Dr Monique Ryan, give her maiden speech in Parliament, from a day or so ago. A pretty good one overall. Gave some details about who she was, where she came from, how her family got to Australia, and what she hopes to achieve. All pretty basic stuff but I was impressed that she got teary a few times, and made it through to the end. I especially liked her comment about Menzies, Peacock and Georgiou being good Liberal members – pointedly omitting Frydenberg who, by all accounts, was very pissed off that he'd lost and wouldn't even acknowledge her identity when they had a debate during the campaign. Frankly I'm not sorry to see the back of him. •

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Re YctoMe re the Australian fandom: I do see the importance of Merv in retrospect now. Maybe that is what Sydney lacked: someone with enough energy and not too much ego to get things moving and for people to congregate around. •

### Rhubarb 96 – Diane and John Fox

Re John's ctoMe re the cover of **Perryscope 18**: I have absolutely no recollection of the day that this photo was taken. I can only assume it was very shortly after we had moved to Laura in late 1958, which would put me as around three years old. •

### \*brg\* 123 – Bruce Gillespie

Re YctoMe re the reading targets: All my reading targets are aspirational. Mostly they aren't met though, on occasion, I have been known, even now, to get through 300 pages in a day. It depends on the book. And I'm finding lately that this target is getting harder and harder to meet. •

Re YctoMe re old books: Both the *Nebula Award Stories 3* (ed by Zelazny) and *Best Sf 1* (edited by Aldiss/Harrison) have been languishing on my bookshelves, unloved, since probably the 1970s. It was good to be able to show them the attention they deserved, and then to add them to the discard box. •

### He Went Galumping Back 1 – David Grigg

Like you I remember the old adventure games like Zork from the early 1980s. Though I don't think I ever finished any of them. That may have been the reason why I never got into the computer based role-playing games that my son now likes so much. That, or the fact that I had many other things to do. And the problem with coding new games is that it can become totally addictive; chewing up hours, days and weeks. And before you know it you'll be turning up at some support group or other saying "Hello, I'm David, I'm a code-aholic." Take care. •

### Second Verse – Jack R. Herman

Thanks for the warning regarding the photo you reproduced. And it's good to read that you're progressing back to full health. •

I have taken to going to the gym a couple of times a week over the past few months. When I first started the gym instructor was very adamant that I should practise balancing on one leg – well, one leg at a time. Actually he wanted me to balance on each leg for 10 seconds at a time, three times each. And I started to notice rather quickly how much better you get at it when you do practise so "simple" an exercise. •

### Gaston J. Feeblehare 25 – Kim Huett

I did laugh when I read: "I would suggest certain of you print this out and leave by your computers (you know who you are). It will save on a great deal of faffing about in future if you do." And then I thought: he probably means me. So I'd better get to that. •

I agree with you that the Brisbane Greens vote was the biggest shock of the election. Even more than the Teal Independent tally. I'd always thought that the next House of Reps seat for the Greens would be in inner city Melbourne. Just goes to show how wrong we can all be about these things. •

ReYctoMe re Hugo Award nominations: I believe it has gone back to the idea of allowing nominations from members of the current Worldcon and the previous year's. As you note I do think the idea is to allow for as many nominations as possible. That way there is more chance that

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a small cohort of nominators will not be able to sway the process. And we don't want to go back there again. •

ReYctoMe re Hugo Award nominations: I can't speak for Marc but I won't be moving back to Adelaide any time soon, if ever. Both of my parents have died and my two siblings now live in Victoria. I left because there wasn't any work in IT in the early 1980s. So there is really nothing left there calling to me to return. •

### Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay

ReYctoMe re remembering personal history: The interesting thing I've found is that, by concentrating on one incident that I may have a firm memory of, a lot of other related items start to spring back into focus. For example, a couple of issues back I was aiming to write about my primary school years when I remembered that we used to as kids go down to the river and watch the water come down the channel after a long dry-period. This was only intended to be a smallish paragraph, a throwaway as part of a piece with a wider focus. But more and more started to bubble up from the memory banks and, as I began to write, it all started to come out. And I still have to go back and write up more of my Primary School years. •

ReYctoSally Y re The National Times: Yes, I miss it as well. But, oddly enough, I occasionally go into the State Library of Victoria and trawl through a reel of it – about four months' worth. I'm looking for a particular article by Peter Corris, the late Australian crime writer, that I remember from the late 1970s or early 1980s. Even if I don't find that this has been a fascinating exercise in going over all of that political and social commentary from around 1980. There's been lots of good stuff in there, as you no doubt recall. This may be a topic for a future piece in **Perryscope**. And you may be amused to know that I'm writing this on the day before the Anzapa 328 deadline (it's Thursday) and just this morning requested another reel of the newspaper to scan through tomorrow (Friday). •

### Crash of the Hard Disk 59 – Gary Mason

Sorry to hear about the recent water damage. We were lucky in that we were at home when the water came into the house and we were able to get to it before it did anything other than wet a few rugs and towels. •

Re you use of my photo: my solicitor wife tells me that she doesn't do civil cases, so I guess that puts the thought of any plagiarism action off the table! No, it's all good really. I'd actually forgotten I'd posted this photo to FaceBook so it was good to see it again. It's probably there on the phone somewhere. It worked out okay. And it wasn't a bad snag at all. •

ReYctoMe re people dying: Each month I go through the RIP lists in **Ansible** from Dave Langford and specifically look for people younger than me. As you say, there appear to be more and more of them every year. Luckily I haven't come across any notification of my passing yet. But I do keep an eye out. •

Thanks for the photo of Golden North honey ice-cream. Back when my brother worked at the factory there over summer – say, early 1970s – the ice-cream was made with honey from a small factory on the southern side of town. I was therefore able to correctly say that I came from the “land of milk and honey”, though probably should have amended this to say “ice-cream”. I've introduced my wife and kids to it and they all want some whenever we go back to South Australia. •

### Not Falling, Flying 2 – John Newman

Quote of the mailing: “Money talks, but mainly in obscenities.”

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I hope the final decision on the placement of your parents' ashes works out. We have ours in place now, but have really only delayed the final outcome for another ten years or so. I suspect that time will pass very quickly. •

### **Knot a Kevil – Marc Ortlieb**

Thanks for the intro to Grace Potter and the Nocturnals. I've been impressed by what I've heard so far. Interesting classic rock setups and chords with interesting lyrics. It's always a problem finding new things. Spotify tends to stick to very limited play-lists based on your likes and dislikes. It might be interesting to see what they come up with after I add Grace into the mix. I did notice that "liking" Florence and the Machine didn't do much. •

ReYCtoMe re Unley in 1972: I'm sure there will be further pieces to come. I reckon I need to get to this stuff before the old brain cells start coming apart and I can't tell the difference between Unley Road and Upway. •

### **Debussy 20 – Bob and Margaret Riep**

ReYCtoMe re my lunch project: This has recently been superseded by the need to do other things but I am aiming to revive it when we get back from Canada in October. I can see that things might just be getting a little less hectic then. Ha! Famous last words! •

### **Antipodean Bestiary A – Alison Scott**

Welcome. Best fannish quote of the mailing: "I am planning to dial back my fanac a little...". Ho, ho! I thought I was busy, but you...! •

### **The Erotic Wombat 23 – Gerald Smith**

It seems you picked up COVID just before I did. You also seem to have experienced similar symptoms and outcomes. Which I also put down to having had two vaccinations and one booster. And, like you, I now have to wait for the second booster. •

I like the idea of a guided tour of the Adelaide Oval. I was talking about the ground just yesterday over a few beers with a friend, and mentioned to him that I used to go watch the Test cricket in the late 1960s and early 1970s, sitting under the Moreton Bay fig trees at the northern end of the ground. I saw Dennis Lillee's first Test match from there in 1971. A wonderful place. •

ReYCtoMe re **Perryscope 19** cover: I can only estimate Will's age when he drew the picture. He doesn't remember so he's no help. I have another one coming up before the end of the year. •

### **Les Chattes Parties 180 – Sally Yeoland**

Josh was not only annoyed but rather angry about losing, as I suppose you might expect. But his behaviour since election night has been anything but exemplary – attempting to wangle his way into the top job at the AFL and then acting very poorly, and rudely, to Dr Monique Ryan who won the seat of Kooyong from him. He wasn't the same as those that came before him in that seat. •

I'd estimate that Will was about 9 or ten when he drew the portrait of me. Unfortunately we didn't date it on the back when it turned up. •

**And that's it:** thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but...