

LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 13

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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

Another election has come and gone since last I pubbed an issue of LBN; this time the Victorian State election. As expected the current government was returned, and it seemed that my electorate, Hawthorn, was in the news yet again. You'll recall that in the Federal election in May the sitting member for this Federal electorate of Kooyong, Josh Frydenberg, was upset by a "teal" independent. In the State election it looked like a similar prospect, with the current Labor member, John Kennedy, up against John Pesutto, the Liberal MP he famously beat at the last election in 2018, and another "teal" independent candidate in Melissa Lowe.

I had a feeling before the election that this was going to be a contest between Pesutto and Lowe, with Kennedy coming in a close third. And so it turned out. Pesutto, predictably, got the most first preference votes, with Lowe second and Kennedy a close third. But Pesutto didn't get a majority on first place votes so the seat went to preferences. And that took a while to figure out. At first it seemed that Lowe was in the lead, but postal votes and pre-polling started to lean Pesutto's way and he gradually pulled ahead. In all it took about 8-10 days to get a final vote. There was not a lot in it at the end, and within another week Pesutto had been elected leader of the Liberal Party in the Victorian Parliament, and therefore State Opposition Leader.

He seems like the best choice they could make. Parliamentary politics is a bit like a game of sport; it only works at its best when both sides are relatively evenly matched. Otherwise it tends to be whitewash. The Liberal Party in Victoria has a lot of problems and I can only hope that Pesutto can start to sort them out. Not that I want them to win Government any time soon, it's just that Labor will lose sooner or later – it always happens – and I'd rather the Opposition had a team that was halfway reasonable. Not something that we have seen this century so far.

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GOINGS-ON IN THE GROVE

On a couple of occasions here, and elsewhere, I have written about the problems I have with flooding on my front verandah. Part of those problems I was sure were being caused by a blockage of some sort in our storm drain at the end of the verandah. So I got a bloke in to have a look at it.

His technique involved running a small boring device down the pipe with some sort of camera attached which would allow him to see if any tree roots had worked their way into the pipe. He did that, took a few photos, and cleared out as much as he could within the time period he had quoted, ie about half a day.

It didn't look good. Roots had broken through the plastic pipe in a couple of places about 15 metres

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down the side of the house. “You’ll need to replace about five metres of pipe,” he said.

“Ah,” I replied, already starting to feel a major cramping in the general vicinity of my hip pocket. “What does that entail?”

“It will need to be re-sleeved,” he said. “We run a small balloon pipe down the drain which is covered in a plastic membrane with the glue on the outside. When we get to the right spot we inflate the balloon which pushes the membrane out to the interior of the existing pipe and seals the holes.”

“Is there any alternative?”

“Well, you could dig up all the plants and trees in that area and replace the pipe. But that would be messy.”

I couldn’t see a certain person being overly happy about that scenario. “Okay. So how much would that be?”

About 15 minutes later he came back with a quote – somewhere north of \$11,000!

The pain in the hip got suddenly sharper. I needed another plan. And it was then that I remembered that our plumber – a bloke I’ve known for about 30 years and who has always done well by us – had said, at some point, that he knew of a drain clearing bloke. So I contacted Bernie.

A week later he and his mate were running other pipes down my storm drain. “He uses a high-pressure water pipe to clear out the drains,” said Bernie. “And we’ll be able to tell exactly where the breaks are.”

Later that morning I went out to see how they were getting on. “The pipe is actually in good condition,” the drain guy said. “There are only two breaks where you said they were, and Bernie can fix those easily. The rest is good. It’s all cleared out now.”

And a day later Bernie was tying back the roses, removing the overlying dirt, and replacing the pipes in the two spots indicated. When his invoice for \$1500 arrived – which included some other work he’d done for me, and the drainage bloke’s charge – I paid it immediately. It was expensive, but hardly in the same ballpark as the other quote. And now I don’t need to worry about that part of the flooding problem. The question of what to do about the flooding coming in off the street is something I have to tackle with the city council in the months ahead. Bernie even offered me a possible solution there as well.

Sometimes you can just get lucky I thought.

Comments on Mailing 328

Chez Ashby 8 – **Derrick Ashby**

It will be interesting to watch the upcoming elections in the various Australian states over the next year or so. Generally voters like to split their affections, having one party in power at the Federal level and the other at state. But you just can’t see that happening in the near future. The Conservatives have moved too far to the right as Labor has moved to take over the centre. Maybe this is one of the reasons that the “Teals” did so well. We are still a week away from the Victorian State Election as I write, and it will certainly be interesting to watch to see how they fair in that poll. •

Your books: *The Dragon Waiting*, *Sapiens* and *A Morbid Taste for Bones* are all on my

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TBR list. Though I do have to admit that my GoodReads “Want to Read” list is now up to 371 and growing, seemingly by the day. •

Our television viewing does not seem to coincide. •

ReYCtoMe about funerals: There are always people who will complain about the way a funeral/wake is held. Just ignore them is my advice. These are usually people who couldn't organise a chook raffle in a pub but who always think they could have done it better. If they complain about cremation vs burial just say you're following the deceased's wishes. I have no idea why people say these sorts of things at such ceremonies. Maybe they just want to be noticed. It's all rather sad really. •

Quoz 84 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

Claire – Interesting comment of the mailing: “I couldn't dislike this (and I wasn't trying to), but I think I'd have liked it more if I'd expected to like it less.” I think I understand what you're getting at. I'm also glad you enjoyed “Where Oaken Hearts Do Gather”, the best of the short stories up for this year's Hugo. About the only one I got right at the awards. •

ReYCtoMe about funerals: I don't, as yet, have the details of my funeral requirements figured out. I should actually start to get that together at some point. It's rather like the idea of having a will: the fact you have one does not indicate an immediate desire to enact it. But having one certainly makes it easier for those left behind to figure things out afterwards. I think I'll start with the music. You may see some hints in various pieces I write in **Perryscope** in the coming months. •

The Fiery Participle 17 – Leigh Edmonds

ReYCtoBruce about Andre Norton: I can at least say that I have read an Andre Norton novel. The trouble is I didn't think much of it. Competent, but not much else. I certainly have no desire to go looking for any more of her work. •

ReYCtoMe about COVID: All symptoms seemed to dissipate relatively quickly. I was certainly full of energy at the start of our overseas trip. Not so much at the end! •

brg 124 – Bruce Gillespie

Thanks for the review of TAR 3. I need to find the space to be working on number 4. •

He Went Galumping Back 2 – David Grigg

I always believe it best to open sparkling wine bottles over a sink. I have had too many accidents, such as the one you describe, to do otherwise. And both Robyn and I are fans of various sparkling reds, though the base wine has to be of decent quality for it to work properly. Too often in the past winemakers have made sparkling reds way too sweet for my liking. Those, certainly, aren't worth drinking. •

A lot of my friends have Apple Watches, as well as my daughter. But I've pretty much given up wearing a watch since I retired. I've always hated being time-constrained, though I realised that I needed to pay heed when I was working and always wore one then. I also take one with me when I'm travelling as I feel that I will need to be somewhere at a very specific time and always hate being late. If you don't wear a watch you'll be amazed at the number of time-devices you have in your environment. Not least of which is the ubiquitous mobile phone.

But you list quite a number of interesting things it can do. Am I tempted? Not particularly. I have a new Mac that I need to buy at some point. That will do me for a while. •

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For a guy who says he doesn't read much, you certainly read a lot! Good reviews, thanks. •

Frank and Earnest [but Jack in the country] – Jack R. Herman

Good to read that you are on the mend, though you do look a little thin in your photo. Time to hit the steaks I reckon. •

Sketchy 14 – Christina Lake

Robyn and I spent the week between Christmas and New Year 1992 in Portugal, starting in Lisbon and driving down to the Algarve and some parts inland. It's all so long ago and mostly forgotten, except for the sardines and beer for lunch that I took a liking to. A place I should go back to, if only I could find the time. But that is a statement I could say about a lot of places. •

ReYCtoMe about accidents: I didn't consider myself overly accident prone as a kid. A couple of scrapes, but just the one potentially fatal one as described. No run-ins with cars as yet, well, none as a pedestrian anyway. A couple of minor bingles while driving, only one my fault as I recall. •

Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay

I'm guessing a number of us suffer from Plantar Fasciitis at one time or another. I know I've had a few problems with it over the years. My doctor at the time suggested I stand on a coke bottle and roll the arch of my foot over it, back and forth. The idea was to put a bit of weight behind it, probably trying to stretch the tendons or break down the lump, or something. I used a rolling pin instead as I don't drink coke and had no suitable bottle of the right size. All I can say is that it BLOODY hurt, a lot. I can't remember if the exercise helped or not. I was probably too busy screaming from the pain and just happy it was over. Maybe this was just a case of the quack thinking, "Ha, you think that hurts? Try this!" Hope you can get yours under control. •

Crash of the Hard Disk 61 – Gary Mason

ReYC regarding private energy companies: You will no doubt have noticed that the Victorian Premier, during the recent State election campaign, announced his government's intention to bring back the SEC (State Electricity Commission). He's also now stated that he thinks that this announcement was one of the major reasons why the Victorian Labor Government was returned. I'm not so sure about that though it will be interesting to see a new energy provider in the market. •

I note with amusement your comment on expecting bad weather in Canada at the end of August, and into September. As you'll probably now be aware, the good weather continued on well into October, for which I am grateful. •

ReYCtoKim regarding the National Party: I can only agree that the National Party is now the preferred mouthpiece of the fossil fuel industry and mining companies in general. Somehow they seem to think that mines create the same number of jobs as they once did, and that having all that industry in the country is good for the local economy. That isn't true now, and will increasingly be "less true" in the future as mines reduce their workforce and run most things with robots. Or Fly-In-Fly-Out workers who stay on the mine site and spend little or nothing in the local towns. •

ReYCtoSally regarding the Victoria IBAC hearings: I fear that any government that has been in power for some time will find themselves in the same situation as the current Victorian Labor Government. Sooner or later some minister or minion is going to get a "great idea" that borders on the illegal or unethical, and then which draws the attention of the corruption commission. The Premier and other ministers may be drawn into the hearings to provide witness evidence only. The

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fact that they are there at all seems damning to some people, ie the Opposition. Sound and fury, etc etc. •

MOZ 33 – Murray Moore

ReYCtoMe regarding the John Bangsund letters: The long-term aim is to get the letters in order and then to scan them before they are deposited in some library or other. Maybe that will lead to some publications, or maybe not. Speaking for myself, I'm not looking too far ahead in that regard. Irwin may have plans that I am not aware of, but I somehow doubt it. Mostly we use the afternoon for a catch-up and a cup of tea. The letter-sorting is really an excuse. Slowly, slowly. •

I must get myself to Laura, Queensland at some time. •

Not Falling, Flying 4 – John Newman

ReYCtoMe: The more I think about my early years the more that keeps bubbling up to the surface. More material. •

A Knotted Tail – Marc Ortlieb

I realise this is coming very late, but you have my sympathies on the death of your mother. It's always hard. •

Is this Leicester Square? 2 – Nigel Rowe

Welcome aboard. •

Antipodean Bestiary 2 – Alison Scott

Your comments about the Best Fanzine Hugo finalists not having a letter-column, or not much of one, strikes me as being the heart of the current problem. To me they don't really read as fanzines, but as something else entirely. What's the solution or response? I honestly don't know. Another Hugo category is rather out of the question. I fear that the old print (or now PDF) fanzines of yore are on the way out. We might get another 20 years out of them if we're lucky. •

The Erotic Wombat 24 – Gerald Smith

ReYCtoMe: If you are contemplating driving up to the Flinders Ranges then I can recommend the route up through Clare, Laura and Melrose. It's a much better drive than the boring Highway 1 on the Port Pirie side. That way may be quicker but it is certainly more tedious. •

Les Chattes Parties 181 – Sally Yeoland

ReYCtoMe regarding FANAC: As far as I'm aware full mailings of apas are not on the current agenda for scanning. The problem lies in getting permission from everyone involved. Individual fanzines within an apa are being scanned when they become available as a physical copy and with the relevant permission. So, copies of **Perryscope** are on FANAC but not the apa mailings they appear in. •

And that's it for mailing 328: thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but...

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Comments on Mailing 329

OBO - **Derrick Ashby**

Congratulations to Leigh on becoming our new esteemed President. A good result. •

Chez Ashby 9 – **Derrick Ashby**

As much as I'd like to downgrade Morrison even further, the fact that he rarely used his extra powers means I'm happy to leave him at number 3. YMMV. The distance between numbers 3 and 4 just increased a lot however. •

The Conservatives in this country just keep finding themselves on the wrong side of history – even their ex-leader John Hewson said just the same thing in a recent edition of *The Saturday Paper*. They want to return to the 1950s, but, I'm sorry to have to inform them, we've moved on from there, and there ain't no goin' back. •

Quoz 85 – **Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer**

Mark – I think I may not be the only one here to point out that One-Day matches (international or otherwise) are not classified as “First-Class” games. Those games need to be of three days' length or more. One-Day games, such as the one you attended, are referred to as “List A” matches. Why that and not something else slightly more intelligible I cannot say. •

While it may seem not like cricket for a bowler to Mankad the batsman (sorry, batter) at their end, you have to remember that the batter is attempting to gain an unfair advantage by moving out of their crease before the ball is bowled. Complaining about it is rather like complaining about getting fined for speeding. Don't back up so far and you won't get run-out. •

ReYCtoMe regarding Chicon Business Meetings: No, didn't get to any of it. For “reasons”. Mostly to do with not being arsed. •

ReYCtoMe regarding Alastair MacLean: I shall seek out the Mike Ripley book you mention. The Desert Island Discs story is wonderful. •

ReYCtoGary Mason regarding QC/KC: We have the same designations here, as I'm sure Gary will note in the next mailing. Some time back barristers were also offered the choice of referring to themselves as “SC” (Senior Counsel) rather than “QC” as it was at the time. Some took it up, though not nearly enough in my view. •

Claire – ReY review of the Martine: I am aware that somewhere in Wikipedia there is a page dedicated to imaginary books, ie books mentioned in novels or stories or visual media which don't actually exist. Philip Jose Farmer used to make a habit of writing some of them. It would be interesting to see someone else give that idea a try. •

The Fiery Participle 24 – **Leigh Edmonds**

ReYCtoC+M about reading: Where do I find the time? Well, I am retired so the 8 hours a day I spent at work is no longer required. And I don't watch a lot of television, though I find I can rather easily read a book while monitoring the cricket on tv in the background. Energy? That comes in waves, sometimes strong and sometimes weak. Also I try to read one short story a day. You'd be amazed at how many books you can get through if you follow that regime. •

Rhubarb 97 – **John and Diane Fox**

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I like the cover, even though I missed the wrong mailing number! •

John – I think C. J. Dennis probably attended Gladstone Primary School, about 10 kilometres south. I don't think he was at Laura Primary, but I really should check. •

brg 125 – Bruce Gillespie

Cover: I agree with the sentiment about books, not so much the rider about cats. •

ReYCtoC+M about Best S.F. No. 1 (Aldiss/Harrison): It has been retrieved and I will pass it on when I see you next. •

She Went Galumphing Back 3 – David Grigg

Plumbing? Ah yes, I have some recent stories of my own, as detailed on page 1 here. I hope it all works out okay. •

Neat stuff you've produced using the new AI image creation product. I may just send you a photo of me to manipulate. I could use it as a cover for **Perryscope** though I suspect Chong would give me a hard time over that. •

ReYC about podcast transcripts: It's pleasing to read that you've been able to increase the accuracy of the automated transcripts you produce. I agree with you that producing them on a regular basis is just way too much work. None of our conversations, once transcribed, read like anything intelligible: too many repetitions, diversions, and just plain errors. It takes ages to go through it all, editing line by line. As you note, some might be workable but not all of them. •

Frank, and Earnest Too – Jack Herman

Less and fewer? Always a point of contention. I get the idea that you would say "fewer than 20 trees" rather than "less than 20 trees". And I also understand that I would say "less than one litre" rather than "fewer than one litre". So where does that leave us with a quantity of 200mm? Is it a quantity, like a litre, or is it a countable amount, ie 200 of those things we call millimetres? I think I'd go for quantity and use "less". Doesn't really matter because I suspect English is changing in this regard and we now find "less" being used for everything. A good thing? Maybe not, but it's just another indication of the changing nature of language. •

ReYCtoDavid regarding sparkling shiraz: I have also drunk excellent sparkling reds made from durif, merlot, sangiovese and pinot noir, and probably one or two others. The best purveyor of these, in my humble opinion, is Howard Anderson from Rutherglen. He started working for Seppelt's at Great Western back in the 1960s, learning the *methode champenoise* and how it applied to Sparkling Shiraz. He started his own winery in Rutherglen back in the early 1990s. I first discovered him there in about 1995 and have been returning to his wines ever since. In fact, the week after this mailing is published, I will be seeing him in person again for the first time in nearly 5 years. •

ReYCtoMe regarding Prime Ministers: I bow to your greater knowledge of Billy McMahon, a man my father described as looking like a VW Beetle with the doors open. I remember him but he was PM when I was too young to be taking any notice. I fear Abbott may well have been taking his instructions from Rupert Murdoch on a similar way. •

ReYCtoMe: "John", "Josh"? Forgotten him already. •

ReYCtoMe regarding **Dorian Gray**: See it if you can. Brilliant stuff. •

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Sketchy 15 – Christina Lake

Robyn and I were travelling in Canada when the Queen died so we missed a lot of the extensive television coverage here about the event and the subsequent funeral. We didn't watch a lot of television while we were travelling though we saw bits and pieces. I must say that was enough. •

I like your idea of writing something about each year of your life. I may just steal that sometime. Your reminiscences were very enjoyable and interesting, please keep them coming. My future writing will act as my comments, sort of. •

ReYCtoMe regarding TV: I'm glad some of my suggestions have been helpful. I have noticed **The Outlaws** getting some good notices so that is on the cards for later in the year. I'm always looking for something lighter in tone than the murder mysteries my wife enjoys so much. Well, I must admit that I enjoy them as well. Though I do need something lighter from time to time. •

Crash of the Hard Drive 62 – Gary Mason

Robyn and I really enjoyed Vancouver and Vancouver Island. To the extent that I was able to quietly suggest incorporating a possible Seattle Worldcon in 2025 into a trip starting in San Francisco, travelling north through Portland on to Seattle, and then Vancouver and more time on Vancouver Island. She seemed to think this was doable, though I suspect it was just because she was tired and she just wanted me to shut up. We didn't get to Hatley Castle but will certainly attempt to do so on another trip. •

The "maiden" speech description was more likely mine than Monique Ryan's or anyone else's. •

ReYCtoMarc about South Australia: I will only be returning for visits. My whole family is now living on Victoria so that pretty much settles that question. •

Not Falling, Flying 5 – John Newman

I need to get back into the gym visits and also practising standing on one leg. I didn't get any suggestions about "windmilling" the arms while doing so, though was asked to try it with my eyes closed. That didn't not work that well. In all aspects the balancing is a very good exercise. •

And that's it for mailing 329: thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but...