

# ***LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 19***

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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.

## **GOINGS ON IN THE GROVE**

As I write this at the start of December 2023, Robyn and I have been living here in Elphin Grove for exactly 30 years. We always figured we'd only stay here a few years before moving on, but, as usual, plans change. So here we are. Still.

I wrote about how we came to buy this property for a fanzine I published back in the early 1990s and then reprinted it in **Perryscope 25**, which you can find in ANZAPA mailing 328 — I knew those indexes would come in handy one day.

During the last thirty years we've made changes to each room of the house: the three bedrooms have all had built-in wardrobes installed; the bathroom has been completely re-done; and the 1960s lean-to at the back of the house was demolished and replaced with a large family room and outside decking, and a kitchen downstairs and my study upstairs; and the dining room layout was changed to make it more usable. The only room we had never touched was the main lounge room in the old part of the house. After thirty years it was starting to show its age with peeling paint and a lot of superficial plaster cracks that made it look rather tacky. So a re-decoration was in order. Nothing radical, but a full surface replastering and new paint job was certainly required.



First task, of course, was removing all of the furniture. This is always a bit of a problem when you have a house full of stuff, and now you have to find room for



another room's worth in various places. Luckily our hallway is reasonably wide and reasonably empty, so it could accommodate the two bookcases, the tv cabinet and a side

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table. The rest – rugs, chairs, lamps, books, etc – had to find a home somewhere in the house. I'm amazed we managed it. Though, to be frank, we didn't really. We usually have two two-seater sofas in the room and I just couldn't figure out where I was going to put them. So I just left them in the middle of the room and hoped that the plasterer and the painter would be able to work around them. Covered in plastic for protection they could, though the painter did want the two of them piled up, one on top of the other. No problem.

It took me about a week to clear out the room. Not that I couldn't have done it any quicker but I did find the process incredibly tedious so I just took my time. My son came over for lunch on the day before the plasterer was due to start and we moved the heavy stuff. All fairly easy and straight-forward.

The plasterer was with us for a week. He wasn't working on it all day every day but the nature of his work is such that he does a bit – scrapping, then filling or applying bandage strips – and then has to wait for it to dry off properly. I was extremely glad he did it this way. I've done something similar in another room in our house and I also only worked for a few hours each day, but, on that occasion, I got a bit of grief from other family members for taking too long. I can now point to a professional's work and say: "See, it takes as long as it takes."



*Photos here show the plastering (left), and the final paint job (right).*

The cracks in the room's plaster were mainly of a thin surface type which were easily fixed. There were a couple where a bit of extra scrapping and filling was required but not to any great extent. He did a great job.

Then the painter came. We have used him before and know that he does a good job and is rather meticulous about his work; we located him through the good auspices of Carey Handfield. Robyn wanted a lighter shade of yellow in order to "spruce" it up a bit and to make it look a bit more "modern". Even though I was happy with the old colour I do have to admit it does look rather better now. You can probably discern a slight change in paint tone in the two photos above. It seems subtle here but is rather more noticeable when seen with the naked eye. The rest of the house is still in the old shade. I suspect that will gradually change over the years ahead.

So now comes the hard slog of getting everything back into the room. We had a lot of pictures, and one mirror, on the walls which will have to be re-hung. And that's not a job for me. I have tried this before and messed it up so I now prefer to get someone into do it properly. I think it money well spent.

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### Comments on Mailing 335

#### OBE Stuff – David Grigg

Another good cover. Though it would seem to hark back to the days of printed fanzines. ●

And may I echo your hearty congratulations to Gary Mason on being elected El Presidente. I sincerely expect we shall not have need to resort to the standard manner of dealing with Presidents. (I have recently read *Day of the Jackal* and such thoughts sometimes float through this empty skull of mine.)

I look forward a year hence to learn of the possible convoluted voting and vote tallying processes. Should be interesting. ●

#### DAJA VOO #SUCKS – Derrick Ashby

I get the impression that the move went about as well as might be expected. Some mis-packing but not huge amounts. So I'm glad that has worked out for you. It is not something that I desire to be doing any time soon. Emptying one room hardly seems anywhere in the same sort of league. ●

I will make no comments about your recent history of falls other than to say that we all have to be sure of our footing at all times. I'll take your stories as a caution. ●

The recommendation for *Five Decembers* came from me, and its publishers are Hard Case Crime. I can't say as I've read any duds from them. A couple have been only so-so but, in general, the imprint is certainly one to follow. I'm glad you enjoyed the book. ●

ReYCtoMe about book apps: I think I'll stick with GoodReads. Adding another book recording app like LibraryThing seems like double the work. ●

#### Quoz 91 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

**Mark** – Like you I lived in Public Service provided accommodation when I first moved to Canberra in 1981. I suspect the Macquarie Hostel, as it was, is now no more. I'm not sure what they do with such public servants these days. Fling 'em out on the streets probably. ●

Australian medical authorities have only just recently made available the anti-shingles vaccine for over-65s. I spoke to my doctor about this a few weeks back and I've now been placed on the medical centre's waiting list. It seems they only get a small allocation each month so it might be a few more months before I move to the head of the list. My father had shingles once and told me it was excruciating. ●

ReYCto me about Eve Harvey: Yes, she could be rather blunt at times but I suspect most Australians took this in the best fashion, probably being rather used to it at home. ●

Your tale of the injured fox indicates a very different approach between our two countries. Here, of course, they are considered vermin, and shot on sight in the country. I'm not sure what I'd do if I saw one injured in the Melbourne suburbs. I have certainly seen one or two

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but they always seemed rather robust. ●

ReYcto Murray Moore about Wikipedia: It may well be that the use of the word “fan” acts as some sort of trigger for exclusionists, but it’s not the only thing. A lot of them don’t get the idea of context, looking on a minor novel of some writer as not being worthy to be in the encyclopedia without understanding that you need to have all of a writer’s books detailed in order to understand their full scope. And they love to spend longer arguing the toss over whether or not to delete a page, rather than spending any time actually fixing it, because “that’s not what they are there for”. I am mostly restricting my attentions to Australian literature on Wikipedia these days. That seems to fly under the radar. ●

**Claire** – Some interesting thoughts on recent sf&f novellas. Yes, there do seem to be a lot of stories about stories lately. Mostly the first one in a series is okay and then they start to go downhill after that. McGuire’s series is, as you say, rather restricted in that you really need to have read them all in sequence. Luckily I have and generally find them enjoyable, if not of the highest order. And I agree that *Sea of Tranquility* and, for that matter *The Mountain in the Sea*, should both have been on the Hugo novel ballot. I had some hopes, a few years back, that increased involvement by nominators for the Hugo Award would mean that a better and wider range of selections would appear. That has not been my experience. ●

### Oh My Poor Nerves – Leigh Edmonds

ReYcto Me about **Perryscope**: I continually find myself in a state of bewilderment about how I’ve been able to produce a near-monthly fanzine for three years. Will I make it to 100? Maybe, but I suspect there will be some spluttering and missed production schedule deadlines along the way. I still have a lot of things to write about and, you will have noticed, that I have now started dragging other people in on the act. It might be the only way to keep it going. ●

### \*brg\* 132 – Bruce Gillespie

ReYcto Me about **Perryscope 31**: The best from *The Best of F&SF No. 16*? I’d chose: Phil Dick’s “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale”, and Zelazny’s “This Moment of the Storm”, as well as “And Madly Teach” by Lloyd Biggle Jr., “The Key” by Asimov, “Experiment in Autobiography” by Goulart and “The Adjusted” by Ken Bulmer. ●

### Frabjous 3 – David Grigg

I did laugh at your description of the strange and brave new world you discovered in a new car. We hit the same problem when we bought our current Subaru about 5 years ago. It comes as something of a shock at first. I still haven’t figured out an easy way of changing the dashboard clock (yes, I know I have to RTFM) so I just tend to leave it on “winter time”. Good luck with the new vehicle. It opens up a whole new world. ●

### Frank’s Ate Earnest – Jack Herman

I did get to see *Oppenheimer*, but not *Barbie*, at the cinema. But certainly my attendance at the local Lido Cinema here in Hawthorn has been rather lax of late. I expect to change that over the next few months as the end of year offering starts to roll out. I will also be able to drag my wife Robyn along as she’s now only working three days a week

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(Mon-Wed) which opens up the prospect of a Thursday or Friday afternoon sitting. I'm hoping my first such excursion will be in the week after this mailing date when we wander off to see **Napoleon**. I'm sure there will be a number of other interesting films popping up soon, though it does appear that a lot have had their original release dates pushed back due to the recent actors strike (no actor publicity for the films allowed during the strike period). Thankfully that has now been resolved to a degree, though I suspect the big studios will find some new way around the agreements. It's what they do. ●

ReYCto me about being Fan GoH: I probably will attempt to publish the GoH speech at some point, probably in an issue of **Perryscope**. I'm not sure how long it runs in terms of pages as yet. I suspect it will take some editing; in fact, a lot of editing. ●

ReYCto me about our tagine: We have used ours a few times this year and are seriously considering buying a bigger one next time we are in northern Victoria. We found a shop in Myrtleford last year that sells Moroccan goods at reasonable prices. Our current tagine is good enough for two people but not for any more than that. We can cook a whole portioned chicken in the next size up. ●

### **Gaston J. Feeblehare 32 – Kim Huett**

Your graph title "Oz Fanzines by Year" is very interesting; I'm sure Leigh Edmonds will get more out of it than I can. Could you add in numbers on the x-axis please so we can get an idea of quantity? I will not ask you to measure the "quality". ●

### **From the Lair of the Lynx 130 – LynC**

Thanks for the photos from the Conflux banquet; good to see Leigh pouring me a drink. It reminded me of the time that John Foyster was doing the same when he was supposed to be speaking on a panel. He replied: "I'm pouring Middlemiss a drink, and as you know, that's a full-time job." Not so full-time now, but still appreciated. ●

### **Crash of the Hard Disk 68 – Gary Mason**

Based on your experience of attempting to enter the US I shall try to remember to check updated visa requirements everywhere I go. I have heard that I will need something similar to the ETSA for the UK next year. Tony Abbott will be spewing at the thought. ●

ReYCto me about ageing: Yes, I suspect that as I approach 90 I'll be thinking that I should attempt to kick on a bit. But my father had pretty much decided, in his last six months or so, that he'd had enough. His health wasn't the best then and he had generally been in robust health all of his life, so that may have had something to do with it. I still think 90 will make me totally decrepit. ●

### **Moz 40 – Murray Moore**

Thanks for the GoH shout-out. It was an odd, but enjoyable experience. ●

### **Mathom Volume 3 Number 3 – Mark Nelson**

ReYCto me re ANZAPA essay: A noble idea I'm sure, I just don't know when I would be



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able to get to it, or even help out with one. I have quite a number of things on the go at present and none of them seem to be progressing anywhere quickly. So... ●

### **Knot Much More Than Mailing Comments – Marc Ortlieb**

As far as I'm aware Continuum are re-starting in 2024. I think it's only over a regular weekend (Friday night to Sunday) which seems like a sensible approach. ●

### **Debussy 27 – Bob and Margaret Riep**

It was also good to catchup in Canberra. I feared that Leigh might have started to get a bit sick of seeing me every day but, if he did, he hid it well. A very good lunch. ●

The serving dishes for the Moroccan feasts were either from there or could pass for such. My wife tends to be rather picky about these things. ●

**And that's it for mailing 335:** thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but no comments. Here's an illo from *The Bulletin*, 8 December 1923, just for a filler.

