

# **LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 5**

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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'm still messing about with the layout of this little publication.

The font size is now 11pt which seems about right – at least for this month. I'm coming to like the background colour as a distinct change from all-white all-the-time, so I reckon that'll stay – though not always this shade nor this colour.

Now I just have a problem with the font: currently Cambria. I like it but have been informed by one person that it isn't the best for a publication as it tends to imply "work document". Okay, I'm happy to accept that, but what do I use in it's place? Fira Sans was suggested but I'm not a fan. Bookman is a possibility though it looks a little chunky to me. The search continues.

## **GOINGS ON IN THE GROVE**

Elphin Grove is hardly what you would call a true "grove" – it's basically a wide street lined with trees. It can be a bit of a race track as drivers are known to use it as a means to skipping a very busy section of a nearby road, especially during the morning school drop-off peak time. But it does have three or four speed humps along the street which tend to slow down the travel during the day. At night they tend to act as launching pads. A story for another time.

Since the 1960s a number of the old houses in the street have been demolished and replaced by blocks of flats, some of them very ugly and austere. I suppose this comes about as we live only 5 minutes walk or so from Swinburne University, home to 10,000 students in the good times.

Since early April we seem to have acquired a cat. Or, rather, I should say that the cat has acquired us. I started spotting the large tabby sitting under my car watching the passing foot traffic and then noticed some of the pine bark in the garden had been shifted onto the path. A few days later and I saw the cat lying asleep in that same spot and figured it had decided that the bark was too uneven for a good snooze. He had found a spot in the sun, sheltered from the wind. But it was by the front gate so it tended to get disturbed whenever anyone went in or out.

Forward a couple of days and he had moved to a new spot – in the sun though with a little less shelter – away from the gate and more towards the house. He still goes back to this place from time to time when the sun's out.

And then the big move, to sleep on one of the cushioned chairs on our front verandah. And I do mean SLEEP – upwards of 18 hours a day in our garden area.

He does have a tagged collar so my son got the details and rang the indicated number, which took him

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through to the local town council. They weren't able to supply us with the actual contact details of the cat's owner for privacy reasons but were able to tell us that the owners had lived in the Hawthorn area ten years ago but had then moved away; the registration number on the tag was old one. Looks like they are back.

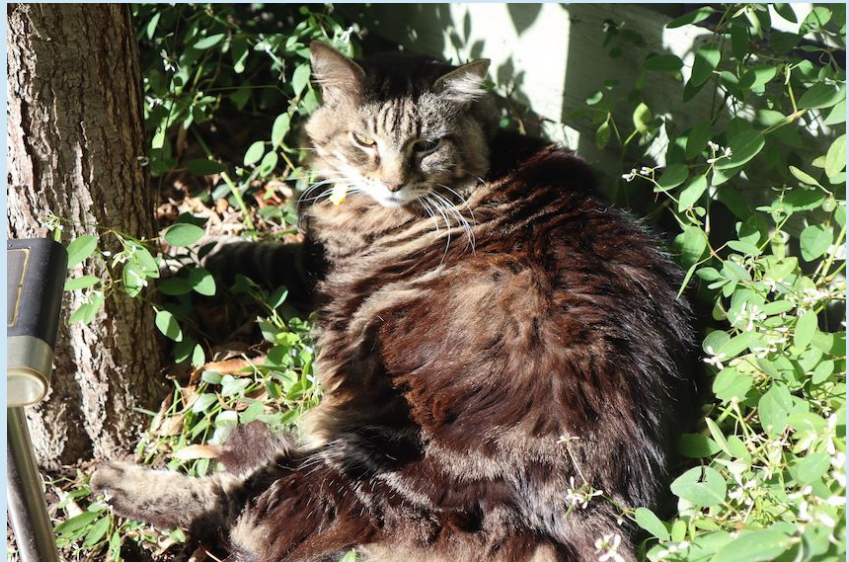
I tracked the cat one night back to a block of flats directly across the road from our house. It made it to the other side, went under the metal gate and then walked all the way down the side of the building and around the back and out of sight. Later that night it was back on the verandah chair, and still there in the morning.

Conversations began in the household concerning what we should do about it. I was not in favour of letting it inside, at least for the near future. The others decided it needed to be fed and watered. So bowls were purchased along with cat food, both wet and dry. Feeding it was an interesting exercise in feline curiosity and disdain. Some was eaten, most was not.

The days started to get colder and Robyn decided to buy a cat bed. I was happy enough with the cardboard box arrangement I'd set up. Stronger voices prevailed.

By now the cat had truly made itself at home. My son contacted the council again to find out that they had been unable to contact the cat's owner. So no help there.

The next-door neighbour then told us that she had spoken to someone in the street about the cat and been informed that it was being fed by a 12-year-old boy. We were getting nowhere so I figured the only sane course of action was to leaflet the mailboxes of the apartment blocks to see if I could attract the owner's attention.



A week went by and then a knock at the door. Yes, it was her cat. It didn't like being inside and they had recently moved to a second-floor apartment from a house with a garden – hence it's liking of our front yard.

So now we have the owner identified. The cat has a name – “Jessie” – and also arthritis, and an eating problem. So no feeding by us, and the cat gets to sleep where it wants. I'm okay with that.

### Comments on Mailing 320

#### **The Every-Day Book VII – Derrick Ashby**

The gerrymandering in the US political system is outrageous. That, and their recent run of voter disenfranchisement, indicate that they are really a very poor democracy indeed. The political boundaries being drawn by political officials was quite common here in Australia as well (eg Queensland under Bjelke-Peterson, and SA under Playford) until we introduced an independent government authority to take control of such things. But I can't see that happening in the US. The populace there hates government control over anything and introducing a bi-partisan, independent

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Electoral Authority would presume that there already exists an independent civil service. When you elect all office-holders you haven't got a hope. They seem determined to stick with a 200-year-old political system come what may. ■

I think it is quite reasonable to have an interest in military history, while at the same time be anti-war. I can't see you marching into battle at any time soon. I also think a lot of people (other than British historians) have a poor view of Montgomery. Too many tickets on himself. ■

### Quoz 76 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

**Claire** – I actually got my wife to read *Piranesi* and she enjoyed it. Her early impression (possibly given the legal work she does with the mentally ill) was that the main character was in a mental institution and that The Other was a visiting psychiatrist. Everyone who has read the book seems to have assumed the main character was male, and yet I seem to be the only one who had doubts about that early on in the novel. ■

**Mark** – I've always pronounced Scythrop as "sky-throp". I'm sure I heard John say it that one once. Though chances are I am surely mistaken. ■

ReYctoMe: I think it safe to say that the blue tint of this paper was specifically chosen to reflect the certain shade of Australian fanzine blue of yore. Good pick. ■

Target Setting Day in the Grove is usually December 31 or January 1 when I open up a fresh sheet in my Excel workbook, copy over last year's sheet, add six to the overall target (with an aim of getting this to 120 in a couple of years) and then set all the sub-targets under that.

The first target setting is by genre which is given below. The SF/Fantasy is given as zero purely because I don't actually set out to read any in that mixture – they usually just arrive in the shape of a Best of the Year in SF&F Anthology.

		Target
Literary	0	14
SF	0	35
Fantasy	0	25
SF/Fantasy	0	0
Horror	0	6
Crime	0	14
Thriller/Spy	0	8
Non-Fiction	0	6
	<b>0</b>	<b>108</b>

The second target setting is by book "type". As you will see I don't tend to read a lot of non-fiction. And that is mainly because of the amount of fiction I set out to get through for my various projects. There just isn't time.

		Target
novel	0	70
novella	0	20
collection	0	6
anthology	0	6
non-fiction	0	6
	<b>0</b>	<b>108</b>

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And how, you may ask, am I going this year? Not too well as it happens. By the end of April, when I should have read 36 books to be on target, I had only read 30. I put this down to the amount of short sf I'm reading, especially from 1965, as I do the research for an article I'm writing about the Short Sf of 1965, re-imagining a world in which the Hugo Awards for that year (the 1966 awards) actually had 4 fiction categories (novel, novella, novelette and short story) rather than just novel and short fiction. Why? Yeah, good question, and I'm sorry I don't have a good answer. I plead the streaker's defence: it seemed like a good idea at the time. ■

Are the books read for the Hugo Time Machine on the podcast shorter: yes, I do think so. Though we are starting to get to the "bloat" stage of things in the mid-1960s. Heinlein in particular. ■

**The Fiery Participle 42 – Leigh Edmonds** – Re Aussiecon anniversaries etc: you may recall that I helped run ARCon back in 1995 which acted as 20 and 10 year anniversary reunions of the two Aussiecons (to that time). I would also like to see some sort of recognition of the worldcons in 2025, though the major question is: who would run it? I get the impression that a lot of the younger fans running today's conventions really don't know who we are. If it happens then great, but I'm not going to hold my breath. Nor may I say, am I going to be on any organising committee. I've done my dash, well and truly. ■

I use LibreOffice which certainly has the "export as PDF" function and it is free to download. So the options are out there for people to get their documents into the right format. They just have to look for them. ■

ReYcto Derrick: When I said that using Zoom was easy I suspect I was being a bit flippant. Mostly it's a matter of playing with the settings to ensure the camera and microphone are using the correct inputs. Which is okay for someone like me who is okay playing around with these things, maybe not for others. Also it's a bit like the old days of young people fixing up their own cars – it always helped to have a friend you could go to for advice, but you did need to have some basic idea of where the problem might be, could describe the symptoms properly, and then were willing to get your hands "dirty" doing the fixing. These days you just need a "young person" handy, or a geeky friend. Luckily I have both. Good to hear you have it all set up now. ■

ReYcto Michael: I don't consider myself to be a BNF either. I'm known by a few people in a few circles but that's about it. It is amusing when people walk up and say "hello" at conventions, specifically because of who you are. It happens rarely and is always a bit of a shock. Remember that time you had to introduce me to Race Matthews a few years back? ■

ReYcto David: Ah yes, the creeping influence of the spreadsheet. I use them basically because I'm never going to remember what I have read otherwise. ■

ReYcto Kim: after ten years I'm just about over the cold sweats at night worrying about convention finances. The best part of Aussiecon Three was the proximity of the hotel to the convention space, with the bar in the lobby between them. That arrangement just wasn't available for Aussiecon Four. The best small convention site, in my view, was the Victoria Hotel in Melbourne. The bar was obvious and easily visited and had some wonderful small table areas to congregate. Hotels these days like to put their bars in out-of-the-way places unfortunately. ■

The FANAC crew is attempting to fix the lack of Australian newszines on the site. Irwin has been doing a bit of work in this regard. I've been concentrating more on the Bangsund material thus far but will be moving onto Foyster and then other certain "old-time" fans. You have been warned. ■

Did you pass the audition? Yep. ■

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**Rhubarb 89 – Diane** – ReYCto Me: Spoilers regarding *Bodyguard*? No, I'm not giving anything away. You'll just have to watch it. ■

**brg 115 – Bruce Gillespie** – Excellent piece on Yvonne. I didn't know her well as she moved to Adelaide soon after I moved to Melbourne, and, as you say, her visits to Melbourne afterwards were fleeting. ■

**Necessity 159 – Jack Herman** – ReYCto Kim: The presence, or absence, of fanzines on the fanac site is purely down to who has done the scanning work. Leigh Edmonds is pushing for more newszines to be added and your suggestions would certainly fit the bill. It's just a matter of finding the time to get the issues together and to do the work. ■

**Gaston J. Feeblehare 18 – Kim Huett** – David and I recently covered the 1966 Hugos on the podcast, which was also the first year of the Nebula Awards. A quick look ahead at the following years' awards and I can see that the standardisation is about to occur. A good thing I say. ■

I believe that Straczynski is aiming to only have one or two new stories in *The Last Dangerous Visions*. I also heard that the submission window was only going to be open for one day. Presumably he's now figured out the story or stories he wants. ■

I think the bird sounds you may have been hearing on the podcasts were due to David's old Mac firing up its internal fans too much. He tells me that he's found an interim solution, which was to shut down all other apps he didn't need that were running during the recording. Hopefully that has worked. ■

You'll be pleased to note that your research into the plagiarism by William De Lisle, re the "When the Darkness Came" story, has been noted on the isfdb.com website. ■

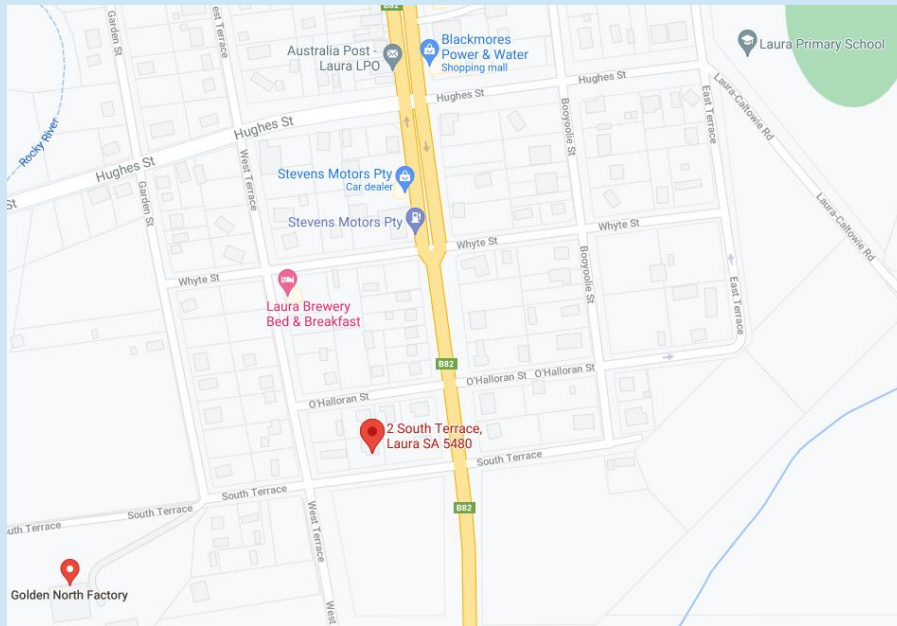
**Crash of the Hard Disk 53 – Gary Mason** – I wonder if the Western Australia election result will be duplicated in the other states as their elections roll around? That is that the incumbent government wins an overwhelming majority. ■

I have had success in scanning photographs, framed behind glass, with the overhead scanner I've mentioned here and elsewhere. Saves having to remove the framing. By the way isfdb.org lists David A. Hardy as the artist of your painting. He is still alive (born 1936) and has a dedicated Wikipedia page. He was nominated for a Hugo Award for Best Professional Artist in 1979. ■

I moved to Melbourne at the end of 1985, before the Adelaide Crows became an entity within the AFL. At that time I kept on getting asked who I barracked for and tended to reply that I would only follow Adelaide when they joined the competition. It was a bit of a joke at the time but then, Adelaide did join, and I followed them. It is a national competition so didn't feel too bad about being an "outsider", so to speak. ■

I think you'll find the Golden North factory in Laura is in South Terrace, as it was at the end of street where my parents lived from 1958-1983, or 1981 for Mum. You can see the factory noted on the Google map on the next page. I dropped a pin on another property in 2 South Terrace and that indicates our old house. (I'll be reproducing a painting of that house as the cover of *Perryscope* 13.) You should also be able to see the location of the Laura Primary School where I attended for seven years (1961-67) and you'll also see the Post Office in the middle of town. Dad's Pharmacy shop was originally about 8 shops north of that (just off the top of this map) though he later moved to a better shop about 2 north of the Post Office. I think he had to shift, not only to get a larger floor space, but also to comply with new regulations relation to having a lockable dispensary. He wasn't allowed to leave that unlocked if he left it for any reason. That wasn't possible in the old shop. ■

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**The Erotic Wombat 19 – Gerald Smith** – Lovely piece about your mother. You have my sympathies. ■

Looks like you have a large number of other wineries to visit in the McLaren Vale region. Take a “designated driver” or plan to stay overnight would be my suggestion. I’ve been lucky over the past 30 years in that my father and step-mother live in the outskirts of Willunga within easy driving distance of the best of them. ■

RYctoMe: You may be pleased to know that I am currently re-reading the *Earthsea* books. Still as great as ever. ■

**Ytterbium 134 – Alan Stewart** – I would still have used blue paper for *Little Blue Number* if it was printed. Probably not for *Perryscope* though. ■

Thanks to all the other contributions in yet another massive mailing. I keep reading them but am not finding anything to comment about.

Stay well.