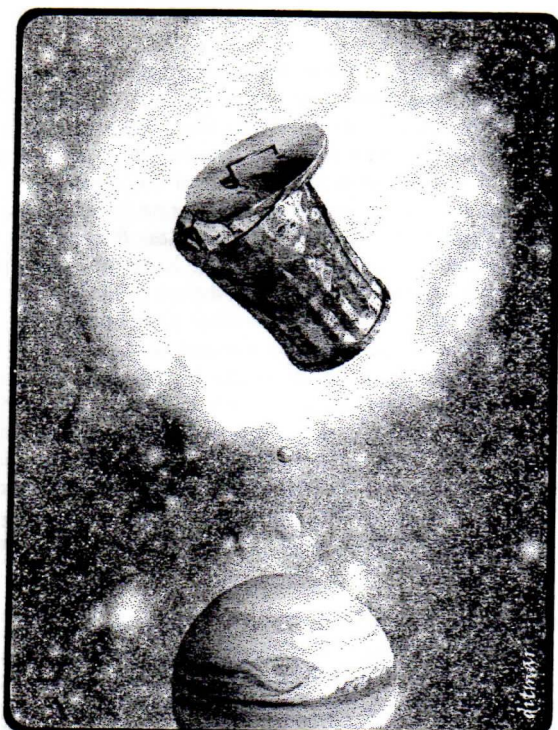


Out of the Bin



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A Newsletter from MERV BINNS
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'Space Bin' Artwork by Ditmar

When mailing out the first issue of this newsletter we inadvertently sent the master copy with the paste-up of the illustration and heading, to someone. There was probably text only on one side, so that person has not only missed page two, but we have lost our original heading. If the person who received it would please return it, we will send them a complete copy.

Dear Readers,

I have recently been made aware of the fragility of our existence. The illness of friends, and now myself, has brought it all home. The recent 50th Anniversary of The Melbourne SF Club saw a few of us together and made me realise that we are all getting on.

For some time I have been suffering high blood pressure. A few years ago my GP sent me to a specialist who discovered that I have "calcium cysts on the adrenal glands", which was causing the high blood pressure, but with medication it has been kept in reasonable control. However recent extra tiredness and chest aches prompted my doctor to send me for a stress test at the Alfred Hospital, which indicated that I may have blocked arteries. So in a few weeks if I live that long, I will be having an angiograph wherein they are going to pump some blue stuff up my main artery, which will show up on an X-ray and indicate if indeed I do have blockages. So after getting new false teeth later this month, going for an eye test and probably new glasses and then the heart tests, it is quite clear my old body is wearing out. Wish me luck!

MEN IN BLACK

The Victorian public transport authority, called the MET here in Melbourne, in cahoots with its creatures, the private companies now entrusted with our travel needs, instituted some years back now a machine ticketing system. Their machines often don't work, steal your money without issuing a ticket and so forth, but even so they have been really getting nasty about people travelling without a valid ticket, threatening big fines and worse to those caught without one. They must be saving a bit by not having stations manned now, but that is another story. When I got off the train at Melbourne Central Station and put my ticket through the gate machine, there was one of the Met "Police" standing there watching, while his mate was interrogating a passenger. He was dressed in a long black coat, and wide brimmed black hat, just like the characters in the movie *Dark City*. It was all I could do to control myself from giving a Nazi salute as I passed him. I am quite sure my old friend Paul Stevens could not have resisted the urge. I do not know if it was an intentional costume, designed to intimidate passengers, but he certainly did look very intimidating.

SHERLOCK HOLMES ON THE SCREEN

The Melbourne *AGE* newspaper ran an article in their "Culture" section on Thursday the 5th of September on the effect that playing Conan Doyle's literary character Sherlock Holmes on the screen, tended to stifle the careers of Basil Rathbone and other actors who came before him. Rathbone however *did* have some good roles prior in such as in *Robin Hood* with Errol Flynn, and in the long run I don't think he did too badly. They did not mention in the article Jeremy Brett however who after acting with such as Lawrence Olivier, appearing in the movie of *My Fair Lady*, and having had a reasonably good career, took on the role of Holmes in the British TV series. Apparently his mental attitude induced him to virtually become the eccentric detective with all his failings in reality and, unable to cope with life after Holmes, he committed suicide. The character Superman also was unlucky for George Reeves who took his own life. And everybody knows the tragedy faced by Christopher Reeve, who some years after playing Superman in three movies, was thrown from his horse and broke his spine, and since then has been confined to a wheel chair. (Recent encouraging reports say that he can now breathe unassisted for longer periods and is regaining some feeling in his limbs.)

HELEN MIRREN

Just watching a two-part mini-series, *PAINTED LADY*, on the TV starring British actress Helen Mirren, I realised that I have not seen as many of her movies and TV appearances as I would have liked. I guess I became interested in her after seeing the Australian made movie starring James Mason and her, based on Norman Lindsay's *AGE OF CONSENT*, made in 1968.

Being a Norman Lindsay tale, it inevitably had to have a naked lady somewhere in the plot and did, but not as many as in the movie loosely based on Lindsay's own life, *SIRENS*. Elle McPherson and Kate Fisher cavorting about and posing.... OH!! Where was I! James Mason as the artist trying to find inspiration, finds it when he spies the young, naked Helen Mirren wading through shallows on the North Queensland beach. I think I must have been inspired also, because ever since when I have noticed that she was appearing in something I made a point of watching. There was a big gap when I did not see much of her. (So to speak!) Some Shakespeare plays such as *AS YOU LIKE IT* on the TV, and as the commander of the Russian spaceship in the movie of Sir Arthur Clarke's *2010: SPACE ODYSSEY*. Then came her role as the woman police detective, endeavoring to do her job despite the animosity toward her from the male colleagues, in the mini-series *PRIME SUSPECT*.

Most recently she received acclaim for her role as the housekeeper in Robert Altman's Academy Award winning movie, (for the screen play), *GOSFORD PARK*, while she was nominated for her role in *THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE*. I think that she was getting a bit tired of playing the role in the *PRIME SUSPECT* sequence, but in *PAINTED LADY* she is at her top, portraying the somewhat complex character of a once big name recording artist who got caught in the drug scene in her younger days. To catch some thieves and the murderers of a friend who had saved her from herself, she transforms herself from a dowdy recluse to a superbly attired woman of the world, art buying countess. A quite different role for her in an exciting, both story wise and visually, production. It was made in 1997 but we are only seeing it now in 2002.

For the first time I used the computer to get information, I looked up Ms Mirren on the Internet and discovered that I have certainly not seen even half of her performances, but many I have and forgotten, such as *CALIGULA*, *WHITE NIGHTS*, *MOSQUITO COAST* and *EXCALIBUR* (how could I forget that?), and as Morgan Le Fey in the Arthurian mini series with Edward Woodward as Merlin. I certainly have a lot to catch up on, though. I also found that she has an English mother and a Russian aristocrat father, which explains her roles in *2010* as the Russian commander and her convincing accent as the bogus Polish countess in *PAINTED LADY*.

THE HAUNTING

I normally avoid watching remakes of classic or even not so classic, movies, so I did not intend to watch the new version of *THE HAUNTING*, starring Liam Neeson and Katherine Zeta Jones, but there was nothing else on the box one night last week and we watched it. More extravagant special effects did not make up for the bastardisation of the original movie's script. As in many movies now, the makers think that SFX is the be all and end all of a movie. Whether the story is logical or even consistent in its own way does not seem to be important with many of the Hollywood old school and those aspects were not important in this case. Unfortunately people seeing this version will probably never watch the original and see how a good ghost story can be properly interpreted into a movie.

FANZINES

I recently listed some of Wynne Whiteford's fanzine collection for sale and browsing through them I realize what I have been missing. Things about people, things that were going on around me that I did not know about, references to me and my activities which I was unaware of and so did not thank the likes of the late Roger Wedell for them, great articles by John Bangsund and Race Mathews' article in Bruce Gillespie's *Metaphysical Review* # 2

2/23 on the early days of Melbourne SF fandom, which I could have referred to in my recent *Memories* missive. Bruce Gillespie was born just a few miles away from here in Murrumbidgee and his parents actually lived here in Carnegie, and many other things. I could just go on! Many of the zines I actually have in my collection and all I have to do is find time to read them. Meanwhile I would like to at least acknowledge the recent zines that I have received.

Many people are simply putting their zines on the net and I appreciate John Foyster sending us a printout of his zine *eFNAC* and in fact issue number 14 discusses just that, "Will the Fanzine Survive the Internet?" A very informative article it is, but for the time being I will continue to produce my larger zines such as *The Rubbish Bin(ns)* and *Merv's Memoirs* in magazine format and we will continue to send paper versions and *Out of the Bin* to most of our friends. However when we fully get the hang of it we will send *OoB* to those people we know are on the net and to any other people who ask us to. We may put the other zines up also if we find it practical. In issue #13 John runs a report on Aussiecon One (1975). It starts off with a bit about the Masquerade and the winner of one of the costuming awards Fiona Wood, the gist of which Helena finds puzzling, as she met and corresponded with both Fiona or "Chris" and John Cummings, independently and from two different addresses, for years after Aussiecon. Both these issues of *eFNAC* are from 2001, so maybe I am a little late referring to this and perhaps some 'fiendish fannish plot' has already been exposed?

I cannot do justice here to Michael Waite's zine *TRIAL AND AIR*. All I can say is that Michael is making great use of his computer graphics program to illustrate the text. Dick "Ditmar" Jessen's artwork and photographs in issue number 8 are great and I am very pleased that fans in the USA can get to appreciate Dick's work. Reproducing the old fanzine covers is a great idea. I have missed a lot of movies that I would have liked to see recently and *Hearts in Atlantis* is another one to add to my list. Tim Marion's reference to cable channels prompts me to add that Helena and I decided to connect up with *Optus* here, a package deal in which we pay for the 'basic' cable package and get our telephone and dial-up internet line rentals thrown in free with it. However we only did it because it gives us the "free to air" channels (as our rented house does not have an antenna), plus a limited number of other channels such as 'Turner Classic Movies', screening all the old MGM movies and more. We cannot afford to pay the extra (double what we are paying now) for all the additional channels such as National Geographic and the recent movies.

I will mention more recent issues next month.

My special thanks to the Melbourne SF Club for sending me the issues of *ETHEL THE AARDVARK* as they are published. Early this year we saw the 100th issue. It gives me great satisfaction to see how well the club, that I helped start, is going. Thank you Murray Moore for sending me *AZTEC BLUE* with number 4 carrying on the tradition of reproducing the late Bill Rotsler's illustrations, with one on the cover. Great letter column! You can't get more fannish than this zine. Another good issue of the review and comment zine *NOVA EXPRESS* with Vol 6 #1 to hand. Finally, thank you John Hertz for send me copies of your zine *VANAMONDE*, but I think it would be prudent to drop me from your mailing list. As I can't keep up with all my reading and it keeps arriving so regularly, I feel that I'm accepting it under false pretences.

That is all for this month folks!

Merv B