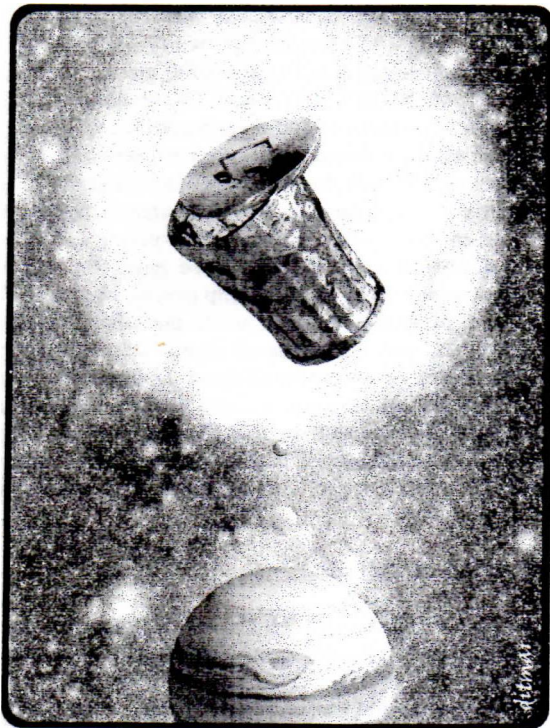


Out of the Bin



WYNNE WHITEFORD (1915-2002)

Photo by Merv Binns

We became close friends over the years and met on many occasions, both socially and at SF conventions and such. For quite a few years I attended a birthday dinner each year with him and his lady friend Gwayne Naug and my wife Helena, whose birthday was two days prior to Wynne's, just before Christmas - carrying on a tradition that they had initiated with Helena and her late husband Kelvin Roberts. The last time we saw Wynne was at Helena's 60th (and Wynne's 86th) birthday party last December at our old place at Arawatta Street.

Following failing health over recent years and an extended stay in hospital, Wynne passed away late on the 30th of September. We will miss this gentleman and his always cheerful attitude very much indeed. His funeral was a private affair, but a wake is being held at Paul Collin's home at 2 Ford Street, Clifton Hill on Friday the 11th of October at 2 pm.

I AM LIVING IN THE FUTURE – At least for a while yet.

I had an angiogram at the Alfred Hospital on the 2nd of October and to my relief was told that I only had minimal deposits in the main arteries and a little more in smaller arteries, which can be treated with medication. It was quite an experience laying flat on my back, looking up at all the paraphernalia in the operating theatre. Surrounded by monstrous gleaming white apparatus, I watched the "wire" being inserted into my body through a local anaesthetised incision in the main artery in my groin. As my heart pumped away on the video screen, I could just manage to see it with a turn of my head. It reminded me of some illustration in a SF pulp magazine or cover of the 1930s, but it was not fiction at all and I was really here, experiencing the wonders of modern medical science, in the real future!

After a few days of rest I've healed up from the small incision (except for some spectacular bruising). But the results of the angiogram tell me that I will have to slow down a bit. Helena insisted I take vitamin B and E tablets, which I have been doing for the last couple of weeks, and if I do not try to do more work than my body really wants me to I am feeling okay. Trouble is, once I start working in the garden I do not know when to stop.

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

OUR FRIEND,

AUTHOR WYNNE WHITEFORD DIES

Wynne Whiteford, along with the late Frank Bryning, were pioneers in science fiction writing in Australia, both having stories published in American and British magazines in the 1950s. I first met Wynne in the early days of the Melbourne SF Club. He attended OLYMPICON in 1956. We did not see him around for some time, as he was working in the USA, mainly I believe as a motoring writer. He returned to Australia and continued his journalistic career. In due course he had a number of SF novels published by Paul Collins here in Australia and by ACE Books in the USA, and by European and Japanese publishers.

FOOTBALL

All my life I have been a follower of the Australian Rules football team Collingwood, which was inevitable, as both my parents lived in Collingwood in their early days and I regularly visited my mother's relatives there who were dyed-in-the-wool Magpie fans. I started going to games in my teens and I bought membership tickets almost every year until 1970. I was even given an autograph book with all the players' signatures, for my 21st birthday. Collingwood had always been a top team, having won the premiership many times prior to the 1940s, but I did not see them win one myself, although they often played in the finals, until 1953, and then not again until 1990. Luckily they got one in before my father died in 1995. I was disappointed many times in the finals, especially when they lost by very small margins at least three or four times. In 1971 after another one I gave up and threw in the towel and I have not been to a match since. Actually I have to blame Space Age Books for that, as I started opening the shop on Saturdays and Sundays and could not go to the footy at any rate. Though I have always maintained a keen interest in the game and the Magpies' fortunes. Since 1990 they had not been very successful, having finished on the bottom of the ladder in 2000, until this year. Their new coach Mick Malthouse gradually put together a team of players who, even if none of them were mentioned in the best position players this year, still worked as a great combination. Miraculously, and to the astonishment of everybody, including their own supporters, they finished the season third from the top and after beating the two teams from South Australia in the final preliminary games, played the top team, the Brisbane Lions, in the Grand Final. The Brisbane coach was now Leigh Mathews who had coached Collingwood to their last Premiership in 1990. But final glory was not to be theirs and after a grating battle in which there was never much difference in the two teams' scores, the Brisbane Lions finally won by 9 points. It particularly hurt to see them lose a final again by such a small margin, when with a bit of luck, two kicks, and two easy goals were missed during the game, would have won them the game. Their courageous captain Nathan Buckley received the accolade of Man of the Match for the final. I felt very sad for him after his magnificent effort then and all through the years prior and receiving the Norm Smith Medal for best on the ground only tended to turn the knife in the wound. Well, there is always next year! The Collingwood boys performed this year like all the cliched teams in sporting literature, with the underdogs rising to the top and I am quite sure that they will be right up there next year, although the rest of the teams will probably not take them so lightly.

For readers not familiar with the Australian Rules Football setup, the game originated in the State of Victoria and all the teams were part of the Victorian Football League. The organizers of the game wanted it to be truly national and after bringing in teams from Western Australia, and South Australia, where the game was well established, they encouraged South Melbourne to move to Sydney, in New South Wales and created a new team in Brisbane. A lot of people in the older bracket had moved to Brisbane warmer climate, so a ready made supporter base was there. But the Sydney Swans (The original South Melbourne Swans team's ground was situated by Albert Park Lake, around which the Melbourne Grand Prix is now run) were up against the big interest in rugby, but despite that they managed to win a premiership a relatively short time after their move. The supporter base in Melbourne in some areas such as South Melbourne and Fitzroy, because of the European migrants, had swung to soccer, so after "South" moved North, Fitzroy after ironically now, considering a merger with Collingwood, joined with the Brisbane Bears and the Bears became the Lions. Now having won two premierships in a row, following eight as Fitzroy Lions many years before.

SPACE

Our passionate interest in space travel has been fulfilled recently. Firstly we watched the series on TV which actor Tom Hanks, who played the lead role in the *Apollo 13* movie, which recreated the story of the almost fatal Moon shot, produced, titled *Journey to the Moon*. That was very well done. A few months after that series was completed on the TV we traveled out to Latrobe University, in Melbourne's northern suburbs, to attend a lecture given by astronaut Harrison Schmidt. Actually listening to and seeing a man who has walked on the Moon was a great experience. To top it off we went to the IMAX theatre to see the 3D movie made by the astronauts themselves, of the construction of the International Space Station. These IMAX movies on the giant screen, are a tremendous experience.

To be sitting there, looking up at the space station as though you are actually standing on it, staring down at the Earth slowly moving below, is the next best thing to actually being there. Forty-five minutes of sheer delight for any space nuts such as us.

SUPER HEROES GALORE

Besides the footy on the box we have been watching a few others things as usual and we caught up with Bruce Lee in *UNBREAKABLE* which was made by the same guy as *Signs* and *The Sixth Sense*, M. NIGHT SHYAMALAN. Picking on such subjects as ghosts, alien invasion and super heroes, he gives a very different view of all these themes. We have been watching James Cameron's series on TV *Dark Angel* and the Marvel Comics series *Mutant X*, and then a crazy comedy movie, *Mystery Men* starring among others Ben Stiller and Geoffrey Rush giving a Vincent Price style performance as the villain. Three guys who believe they have talents, which they can use to help people, like the super heroes in comics, eventually win out, while the villain zaps the real super hero. The two TV series of course take themselves seriously while this movie makes fun of them. *Unbreakable* takes a different tack in that the man with powers doesn't realize what he has got and how he can use it, until in the course of the movie he is made aware of it. Mr Shyamalan tackles his subjects side-on but succeeds in making some very different and interesting movies.

MORE MOVIES & TV STUFF

The final series of *X-FILES* began on Channel 10 here last night and is as obscure and complicated as ever. We can only hope that it does reach some sort of logical conclusion. It was nice to see Lucy Lawless (from the fun fantasy series *XENA*, which we did enjoy when it was on at a normal time, but when it was relegated to 2 AM in the morning we gave up) in it as a super bio-enhanced character. She seemed to meet an untimely end in this episode though could more than likely regenerate and turn up again in a future episode.

We had a book in Space Age Books twenty years ago titled *DINOTOPIA*, which using the new techniques developed for such as *Walking With Dinosaurs*, has been adapted as a mini-series for TV. A bit of a silly concept, with people living with dinosaurs, even some intelligent talking ones, in a lost world. However the artwork in the original book was very nice. Pure kids' stuff really, both book and movie, but the scenic artwork and the spectacular sets and dinosaurs in the movie, along with a bit of adventure and humor, made it well worth watching.

ZINES & THINGS

Another issue, August 2002, of Michael Waite's zine *TRIAL AND AIR* arrived this week and is a nice a looking job as ever. Since I put Michael in touch with Dick Jenssen, he has been not only using Dick's great computer generated illustrations, but articles and photographs about Melbourne fandom. In this issue we have an illustrated report on *CONVERGENCE*, all in glowing colour. Michael is doing such a terrific job, not just information and comment wise, but the reproduction of photographs and all illustrations is so good it makes me very envious.

Last week I spent quite a lot of time trying to get through a computer game given to us by our friend Cedric Rowley titled *MYST*, but could not do it even with the help of our mutual friend John Straede. After literally tearing my hair out by the roots I have given up and relegated it to the bottom of the CD shelf. Agh!!!!!! Sorry Cedric, but I am afraid that it is quite beyond my patience and capability to solve it.

MERV