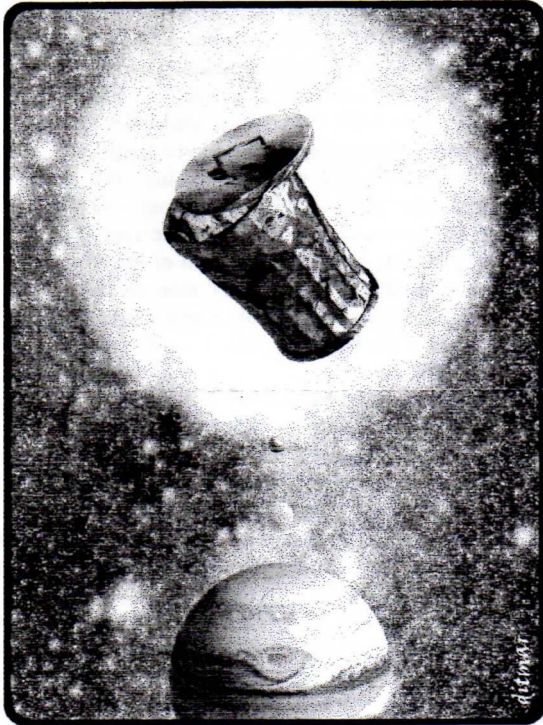


Out of the Bin



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A Newsletter from MERV BINNS
PO Box 315, Carnegie 3163, Victoria, Australia

Phone: (03)95028818 e-mail: mervbinns@optusnet.com.au

'Space Bin' Artwork by Ditmar

THEATRE

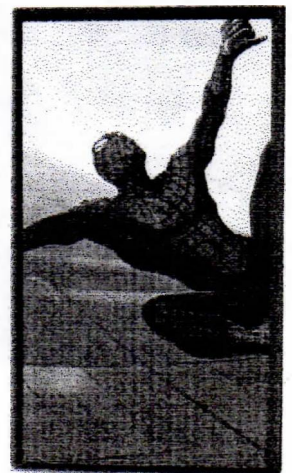
Our friend Peter Kemp is a theatre critic and writes for various publications including the Melbourne magazine *Stage Whispers*, as well as having his own web sight giving details and comments on current theatre shows. He has been offering to take me to shows, usually musicals, put on by small theatre groups around Melbourne. However it was never convenient or I was not very interested in the particular show. I finally got to see a performance by the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of *MERRIE ENGLAND*. Not a G&S but near enough too it, the music being begun by Sir Arthur Sullivan, but completed by Sir Edward German. I enjoyed the performance at the Monash University Theatre very much. One of the songs I am sure will be familiar to many people and that is *The Yeoman of England* but although no other pieces stood out, it was all very much G&S style. The overall singing, the chorus and some individual performances were notable, with the production, the costumes and the excellent orchestra making it a first class performance. I hope that I will be able to attend further performances next year including *The Gondoliers* and *The Yeoman of the Guard*. Peter is taking me with him to see a performance of *Iolanthe* late this month and I am looking forward to that very much.

MOVIES & TV

We watched *SLEEPY HOLLOW* starring Johnny Depp on the box, which we liked largely because of the great photography and scenes. Otherwise a great horror tale with shades of Gothic terror, but with a little bit of sick humour that modern horror stuff such as *Friday 13th* and all have introduced. Based on the original story by Washington Irving, 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow', it used the original concept of the novel but obviously changed and added a lot. Depp plays Ichabod Crane who is a constable sent from New York in the 1790s, to investigate a series of murders that have taken place in the small town of Sleepy Hollow, involving decapitation. Using the detective skills more like a modern detective, or at least Sherlock Holmes, he confronts the mystery expecting to find a living human perpetrator, but is soon confronted by the supernatural. However using his detective skills he deduces why the demonic headless rider from Hell is killing people, which is simply to get his missing head back and take revenge on the descendants of the people who took it. This movie is a pure fantasy-horror tale, very well done for what it is.

It is often difficult for me to see why friends like some movies, claiming that they are wonderful, when I find them boring. At least Helena agrees with me on the last show at Race Mathews' home, on his new gigantic screen TV. *THE CONVERSATION* is produced by Francis Ford Coppola and stars Gene Hackman, miscast as a one time top man in the hi-tech private investigating business. He gets himself into a situation, which should have been extremely tense and exciting to the viewer, but we found it slow and boring. Hackman is a good actor and does his best with the character, but it was simply not him and the story was too slow and labored. The movie just did not appeal to us.

Various friends are updating their TV viewing with big screens and DVD players. We got to see Race's new setup in operation this month, but not D.J.'s yet. He has hundreds of movies, old and new, on video and DVD, but somehow we never seem able to settle on a time to see them that suits him and us. Another local friend, John Straede, had us over with DJ to see his new equipment in operation, kindly passing on his old small TV set for me to set up here in my study. Well, sort of, as Helena grabbed that for the bedroom, it having convenient remote control, and I have her original small set which doesn't have a remote but which I can easily control from right here. John screened *SPIDER MAN* for us, which we enjoyed, but apart from the spectacular effects of him flying through the air from skyscraper to skyscraper I did not consider it any better than a lot of other movies we have seen full of SFX. However the movie going public have made it the top, most popular movie in the USA of late, out-grossing other recent blockbusters. Okay, I never said it was not good, but is it really all that good? Maybe I am getting a bit jaded with all these SFX every second movie we see. No, not really, but they do have to have something extra like a good plot and perhaps some new gimmicks not seen before. As an interpretation of the comic strip I guess it is very good, although *Marvel* comics have never really been my things, apart from *Conan*. I always liked *Superman* particularly in its early days as a newspaper strip and all. Getting back to *Spider Man*, the artist originator of the strip, Stan Lee is suing *Marvel* because he says that he is not being properly recompensed for the movie, particularly when it has made so much money.

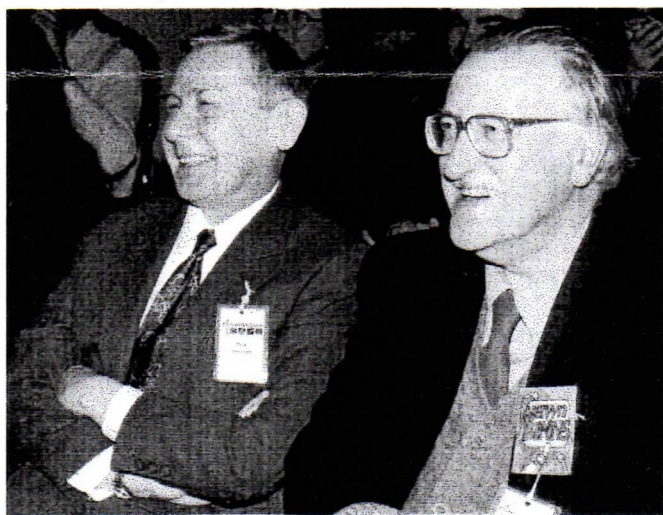


No doubt I am a romantic at heart and although I can appreciate movies such as *Road to Perdition*. I prefer watching lighter fare, although when it comes on TV or perhaps friends screen a DVD, I will see it. I have put off watching so many movies either at the theatre or on TV, *The Colour Purple* comes to mind, that I know I should see, but I have to be in the mood. Some I have caught up with on TV but there are probably many I have not. Meanwhile we are anxiously awaiting the second *Lord of the Rings* movie and of course the new *Harry Potter*, even if just to see Richard Harris in his last role. Actually our finances have prevented us getting to any movies recently but we did want to see *Red Dragon* and *Reign of Fire*, the latter at the very least to see more of the marvelous dragons, but we will see them eventually. And talking about dragons - which they can conjure up now on the screen as easily as dinosaurs - when are we going to see a movie based on Anne McCafrey's *Pern* series? Also, after the success of *TLOTR*, will we see a live action version of *The Hobbit* and the famous dragon Smaug?

LETTERS & ZINES RECEIVED

BRUCE GILLESPIE'S *brg* #33/*Great Cosmic Donut of Life* #34/*CONVERGENCE: THE GATHERING OF THE CLAN* is our prolific fanzine producer's review of the 41st Australian National Convention. It is a very comprehensive report on all that took place, illustrated with a great range of photographs taken by Dick Jenssen, Cat Sparks, Richard Hryckiewicz, Alan Barton, Rose Mitchell and my wife Helena Roberts Binns. It is great that Melbourne fan photographers are getting together and providing illustrations for Bruce, and others as well as overseas fans such as Michael Waite with the help from Dick Jenssen. With the use of computer printers and all we are even seeing a lot of colour photos and in Michael's case old fanzines, magazine covers and sexy actresses. Bruce has used some of my old photos of the old Melbourne SF Club, but the one of me with the old duplicator was taken I think by Lee Harding at my home at 4 Myrtle Grove, Preston in the early '50s. My photo collection will provide a lot more in future editions of my memoirs. Over all a great souvenir of the convention, but it is a pity that the reproduction of the black and white photos was not a bit better.

MICHAEL WAITE'S *TRIAL AND AIR* Number 10/11 dated August 2002 includes photos supplied by Dick Jenssen of the MSFC's 50th Anniversary party and *CONVERGENCE*, all beautifully reproduced in full colour, along with reports by Dick Jenssen.



DITMAR winner DICK JENSSEN with Merv at CONVERGENCE

Photo by Helena

(printed by Michael in *TRIAL AND AIR*)

Mike, I hope you sent a copy to Joe and Gay Haldeman as I am sure that they would have liked to see the photos from *CONVERGENCE*. Michael, like me, is indulging in some memory jogging with past convention programs and a Trans Atlantic Fan Fund report, including how that got started. Not having been a great reader myself I cannot add much to your discussion of great books, having only read *Moby Dick* from your list. Henry Kuttner's *Fury* I remember that I did enjoy very much when I read it many years ago but A. A. Merritt's *Ship of Ishtar* did not leave a lasting impression on me. I never was a fantasy fan but I was encouraged to read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, which I loved. Perhaps I was looking for more writings like that and even tried Edison's *Worm Orobouros*, which I found very hard going. Whatever, in my memoirs piece *My Life in Books*, coming up soon, I talk about much of what I have read and liked over the years. Virgil Finlay was a great artist. I have a nice collection of his work that Gerry del la Ree produced and two sets of reproductions from pulp magazines. My late Space Age Books partner Ron Graham, had a bookplate designed for him by Finlay. (I must talk about all the artists in the field that I have appreciated such as Ed Cartier, Kelly Freas and many more.)

Nice little tribute to the late Queen Mum. My background is also British, with my grandparents and my father and his sister coming to Australia from Bradford, Yorkshire about 1914. My mother's family, Collis, I think were of Scottish origin with my mother being at least third generation Australian born, but I never did get to know much about my mother's family's history. We never saw Bruce's *Great Cosmic Donut of Life* #32 or #33, so we do not know which photograph you are referring to that Helena should have put her self in. She has done just that on other occasions and I hope she will in the future but I always get the blame when she does not get included in such photos. (*Nobody ever thinks to include me in such photos. I always have to ask! Helena*) Bruce and Bill Wright hand out their zines at Race Mathews' movie nights more often than not and if we are not there it seems we often do not receive Bruce's or Bill's zines. Shame! How very true is your little filler, "NOTHING IS WORSE THAN THE AGONY OF INDECISION, Except The Grief of Having Decided Wrongly". The story of my life! It was very interesting to see the photographs of actresses playing *T Pol* in *ENTERPRISE* and *Seven of Nine* in *VOYAGER* as they were in their original roles as models. Incidentally we are still enjoying a lot, I think the second last season of *Voyager*, on "free to air" TV, after watching the first season of *ENTERPRISE* which we could have easily missed, because it is simply not real *Star Trek*. It has its moments but they are few and the cast and their characters are infinitely forgettable.

BILL WRIGHT'S *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* #209, October 2002 has another one of those computer graphics cover illustrations that won Ditmar his 'Ditmar', which no doubt has some inner metaphysical meanings known only to the artist himself. However as usual, Bill's collection of writings is largely on a much lighter note. A report on his trip to Queensland, a new little moon for Earth turns out to be an old rocket coasting around, and 'Yabby Robots on Mars' talks about research into copying living organisms as robots. (Yabbies are really quite delicious, boiled like lobsters in salted water with dill, but alas I have not been able to get to places where I can harvest them for some years). There's a great South American trip report by Danny Donaghy (John Litchen might like to read that) and old adverts like the one on your last page, Bill, certainly give us a laugh.

That's all for this issue folks!

MERV