

September 2013

One of the best days we spent recently was looking at the display at the Arts Centre featuring the career of Geoffrey Rush, followed by the Hollywood Costume display at ACMI. Rush's award winning performance in the movie *SHINE* only led to enhance his impressive earlier and later career achievements, fully covered in this wonderful display of photos, posters, costumes and much more. The costume show at ACMI, however, reminded me of my whole life going to the movies, beginning as a young child in my mother's arms, through weekly visits to the local cinemas and Saturday arvo matinees. From Disney's *SNOW WHITE* to 2001 *A SPACE ODYSSEY*. Simply seeing all those costumes, including, amazingly, Emperor Ming's robe from the *FLASH GORDON* serial was unbelievable, and brought back some very special memories. Photos with each costume of the from silent to 3D actors who wore them were silently saying "I wore this in..." It all brought tears to my eyes, but my tired old legs would not let me go the two hour trip around the display again. Also at ACMI, on the same day, we saw an exhibition celebrating the unique artwork of our friend SHAUN TAN for his Hugo winning book and subsequent Academy Award winning short film of his story *THE LOST THING*. Actual developmental and finished artwork and explanations of the techniques that went into the making of the movie gave us a wonderful insight into Shaun's amazing imagination and talent. There was also a showing of *THE LOST THING* at the exhibition, so we had the pleasure of seeing it again (and of being able to sit down for a while as we watched it).

Last week on the TV news we saw the Australian actors and movie makers attending the film festival in Toronto Canada and it reminded me that at the same time of the year forty years ago, 1973, when I was with a group of Australian science fiction fans in Toronto, Canada. We were there to celebrate the culmination of a few years' hard work to win the bid to hold the World Science Fiction Convention here in Australia in 1975. Previously only held in the USA or Canada and later England and Japan. Our association with the American fans, who had been holding the World SF Cons from the late 1930s, culminated in this amazing happening. And since then three more have been held here in Melbourne. Fandom in Australia had been in existence from the 1940s, first organised in Sydney but it is now very active all over Australia.

My bookshop *SPACE AGE BOOKS*, the first in Australia specialising in Science Fiction, fantasy and movie books, opened in 1971. In its 15 years of operation it was associated with SF fandom and helped in the bid to get the World SF Convention. Many people remember it with fondness and many people helped publicise it and one of those was journalist KEITH DUNSTAN. He sometimes mentioned *Space Age Books* and SF conventions he attended, in his column in the *Sun News-Pictorial* paper. He was quite a character and *Space Age* and Melbourne SF fandom sincerely appreciated his interest in us. He passed away on September 9th this year.

At my age of 79, one must face the fact that time marches on and nobody lives forever, so I am reaching that time when I am wondering why I am still here. As each issue of *LOCUS*, the long running American SF news and review magazine turns up, I am wondering who we have lost amongst well known SF people this month. Regrettably most recently Richard Matheson, Ian Banks and the wonderful Jack Vance. Not directly associated with SF, but our artist friend Lewis Morley's father (after whom Lewis was named) died on the 3rd of September. Lewis Morley was a quite famous photographer in Britain of some years back, and he was deservedly remembered in a tribute in *The Age* newspaper, 16th September 2013. Our sincere condolences to Lewis.

Finally, September 7th 2013 was in my eyes a "day of infamy". The dreaded Coalition won the Australian Federal Election and on the same day my beloved Collingwood football team lost their game in the AFL (Australian Rules) Premiership finals. A day I would like to forget but never will.

MERV BINNS