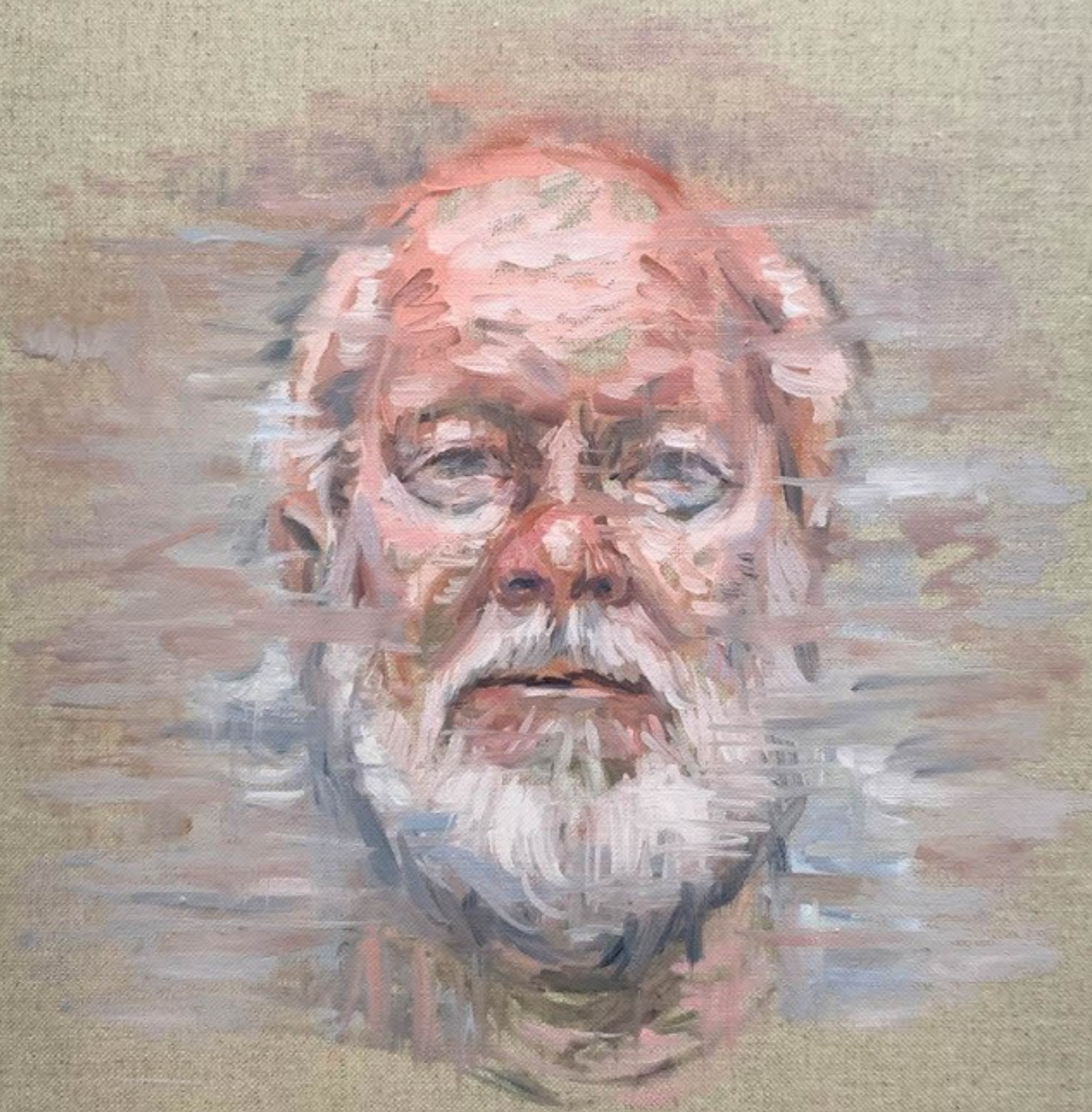


PERRYSCOPE 44



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Cover by Chong, April 2024.

INTRODUCTION

As happens from time to time this issue is a bit late, probably about a week later than I had expected and hoped. At the start of May I decided to take a bit of a break from thinking about this fanzine on a daily basis and just get out and do other things. So the first half of the month disappeared, then I went to a local sf convention which coincided with me coming down with a low-grade virus that drained all my enthusiasm, and then, as I should have expected, things got a bit hectic later in the month (you can read about some of that below). As I result I lost about a week, and here we are.

My wife keeps telling me that the production schedule I set for myself is only that, an arbitrary timeline that really has no meaning outside my own head. And in many ways that is perfectly true. But I look on this little project as a way to keep myself busy in my retirement, and I decided early on that the best way I could do that was to produce monthly issues and to attempt to stick to that aim.

It isn't always going to work. I know for sure that there will be a break later this year in August when I'm travelling for a full month around the islands and backroads of Scotland. I'm hoping, as I always do, to be able to continue to write small pieces each day or so about what we've seen and been doing. I'm also aware that I will more than likely fail to finish that and also fail to finalise anything for **Perryscope**. I'm okay with that. I'll do what I can and see what happens. I expect I'll be posting small snippets on my FaceBook account which will act as the basis for a trip report later, sometime later. It's a technique that I recommended to my friend Leigh Edmonds for his trip to the USA earlier this year, and that resulted in a report that ran to over 70 pages. I put that down to big print and lots of pictures! But it is also because Leigh has the professional writer's ability to write copious amounts of text with ease. He'll probably say something completely different but that's the way it looks from the outside.

We are just about fully booked up for the Scottish trip, with only a few minor things, like a train journey from Edinburgh to London, left to finalise. That's been out of our control as the tickets haven't been available to be booked up till now. The rest of the journey is all bedded down, and while it isn't my preferred way of travelling we've been forced into this approach due to the nature of the places we'll be visiting – small towns on small islands with few accommodation options – and the fact that far more people are travelling now than were about when last we were in that part of the world in 1987. We are also travelling in mid-August which I suspect is the height of the tourist season in Scotland the rest of the UK.

Such is life.

Cover notes:

Chong told me he was experimenting with a new technique and wanted subjects to come sit for him. He even gave me lunch, though I did have to tell him that the cooking time in his roast chicken recipe was way too short.

THE MOOCH OF LIFE

LIFE IN APRIL

April 1-7

The major event of the week was my son Will's birthday: 25!. Yes, standard cliches abound: "How did that happen?"; "It seems like only yesterday.." etc, etc. His mother likes to kid him about the stories surrounding his birth (what she was watching on TV the night before, how fast the labour was, the trouble I got into joking with one of the maternity nurses) which he groans at but I think secretly appreciates hearing as they really belong to him, and him alone.

We have been remarkably lucky with our kids. Neither of them caused us much in the way of worry and angst; both ended up in jobs they like and which are reasonably well paid; both remained healthy, and both seem fairly settled and happy.

Robyn and I took the kids out to dinner, his choice of restaurant. It worked out well with a decent set of dishes to share. I still quake when I look at the wine lists in restaurants with their average or unknown wines sitting at \$16-18 a glass. These lists seem to be put together by marketers for large wine syndicates and attempt to be all things to all people, and end up achieving very little. They pick the right Australian wine regions and then insist on not picking the varieties that region is famous for but opt for something obscure and expensive. I still long for, and seek out, BYO (bring-your-own) restaurants as I reckon I have better wines at home than are usually being offered. I fear, though, that the days of the cheap BYO place are severely numbered.

April 8-14

Thursday saw the second Second Thursday gathering of sf fans in Melbourne for a night at the pub. It was obvious that a number of people weren't happy with the venue, and that is something I can perfectly understand. Platform 28 (as the venue is named) in the Melbourne Docklands area has the advantage of being close to Southern Cross station which allows easy access for anyone close to a train line. But that is its one major plus, the negatives include being noisy, not having a great range of beers, being crowded and not having enough areas that are conducive to a quiet chat over a drink. The difficulty lies in finding anything in the same general area that is any better.

Rose Mitchell and I made a note to try out a few other places over the next few weeks to see if there is another site that better suits our requirements. Frankly I'm not expecting much but we won't find anything unless we try. I asked a few people on Thursday night if they had any suggestions and was met with blank looks. You could interpret those any way you wanted; I have no comment.

Wherever we end up I do think this is a good idea overall. We had Bruce Gillespie there on the first night, and Marc Ortlieb on the second (though he tells me that he is usually committed to Scouts on a Thursday night and this night just happened to be free), and Leigh Edmonds has travelled down from Ballarat both times. So I'm pleased with the numbers but I wouldn't want to get complacent about them as I suspect they could drop off very quickly.

April 15-21

I've bought a new pillow for about the first time in 15 years. It's amazing that a thing so small could seem so expensive and yet so cheap at the same time. Given the amount of time I'll be spending

with it – about a third of each day – you’d think it would be much more.

The old foam pillow was starting to lose its shape after a while and my head was sliding down towards my chest. I’m a side-sleeper and that was putting a lot of pressure on my neck and shoulder causing some pins-and-needles and numbing in the left arm overnight – waking me up – and some occasional sharp nerve pain in the index and forefinger of my left hand. I’m hoping the new pillow will help to alleviate that. I’ve been taking a few anti-inflammatories to tide me over until the effects of sleeping with a proper upper-torso shape start to kick in.

The whole thing is not debilitating but it is annoying. And, yes, I’ve been to the doctor about it and we have a graduated plan: “try the pillow, if that doesn’t work, then try these prescribed heavy duty anti-inflammatories, and if that doesn’t work then here’s a referral for an MRI so we can figure out what’s really going on.”

I must be getting old as I’ve been to the doctor more times in the past year than in the previous 5.

April 22-30

We received the car insurance notice recently for Robyn's Skoda Fabia. It came in at a lazy \$2,347.89 which I thought was rather high! A few phone calls to other insurance companies and we determined that, yes, it really was high.

I thought that it was mainly because we had my son listed as a driver: a male under 25 bumps the insurance through the roof. But he's just crossed that age threshold so I thought I'd give the insurance company another try.

"Yes, we have adjusted the insurance for him," they said.

"Well, can I remove him from the list of drivers, and remove me too." We both only drive her car about once a month.

"So, that leaves just Robyn as the sole driver?"

"Yes."

After a few minutes they came back with a new quote of \$1,216.92!

"And the other drivers will still be covered if they don't drive the car regularly," they informed me. So, after almost 50 years of having car insurance I discover something new. Better late than never I guess.

LIFE IN MAY

May 1-7

The Nova Mob, Melbourne’s monthly sf discussion group has been running for almost fifty years and while I have attended sessions on and off over the years I hadn’t settled into regular attendance until the kids were off our hands. So I started attending, via Zoom, during the early COVID years and thought it a good idea to give a little back by actually giving a presentation once a year or so. The first of these was on the rather obscure topic of “The Best Short sf of 1965”. What a great ball of laughs that one was.

So funny in fact that I followed that up the next year with “The Best Short sf of 1966”. Oh, how we laughed. I certainly discovered some gems in the middle of all of that but there was also a lot of dross as well. But, oh, I decided it was just too much work, and called a halt to the series.

Back in the middle of last year I noticed that I didn't have any topic set up for 2024 so I thought I should draw on all the reading I'd done for the podcast over the years, especially the sf novels that had been nominated for awards in the 1960s. Which seemed like a great idea until I realised that I'd need to do a whole lot more reading to make it sound even vaguely like I knew what I was talking about. Unless, of course, I could rope someone else in on the act. And the obvious candidate for that was my podcast partner-in-crime David Grigg.

Luckily David agreed and after a few changes of date, because I was away for the March meeting and had my son's birthday dinner coincide with the date of the April one, we had to shift it along to May.

David came up with the idea that we should both settle on a final list of six novels each. Which sounded okay until we realised that we would doubtless overlap and there would be a lot “Yeah, what he said” comments in the discussion. The solution was to run the talk like a sporting draft, tossing the coin to see who would start first, and then taking it in turns to pick one novel each and review our choice. If a novel was chosen by one person then it couldn't be picked by the other.

It all seemed to go well and the topic brought out a few old Nova Mob members who we don't see very often. David and I recorded the session and may attempt to turn it into a special episode of the podcast if we can ever find the time to actually do some cleanup work on it.

Now I have to start thinking about a subject for next year. Gawd help me.

May 8-14

The new pillow appears to be helping though things still aren't where I'd like them to be. I'm not crunching the neck as much as I was before though I still find myself sliding down the pillow and putting pressure on parts of the neck that I'd like to avoid. I'm starting to think some slim-line side pillow will help. Maybe I just need a cocoon! The trouble is everything is good for a few days and then I slip back into the old habits of not lining myself up in the bed properly.

The prescribed anti-inflammatories were basically steroids; they did the trick but caused some interesting gastric side-effects, and a mild sense of euphoria. Both the doctor and pharmacists warned me to only take them with food and I'm glad I followed their advice as even with something in the stomach I still had problems with indigestion. Definitely something to remember for next time.

May 15-21

Mid-May and it was time for Continuum, this year's National Science Fiction Convention held in Melbourne near the Queen Victoria Market. It's good to see this long-running convention back on its feet after COVID and I was happy to support it, to attend and to participate by appearing on a couple of panels.

My convention started on the Thursday night with a drinks catchup at a pub near the convention site. I had heard that a number of interstate fans were aiming to be in town for the con and were arriving that day so the idea seemed a good one. We had about 10-15 in attendance though I did

think for a while that we were running a small Western Australian convention, given the number of Melbourne-based and visiting fans from the west.

The hotel seemed to get its wires a little crossed when it closed down the bar early on the Friday afternoon but this seemed to have sorted itself out by Saturday, it gave us somewhere to sit and chat. My main involvement with the convention consisted of a panel on Worldcons, especially concerning the problems that arose in China last year, a panel on fanzine preservation and fanzine repositories, the book launch of Leigh Edmonds's history of Australian sf fandom from 1936 to 1961 (more on that book next month), and helping Justin Ackroyd with the fan fund auction. If you throw in a lunch I organised for Sunday for ANZAPA members (where we had to work our way around competing political demonstrations about the current war in Gaza) then I was busier than I had been at a local convention for a long time. I enjoyed it. Long may it run.

May 22-31

I first came across Anderson's winery in Rutherglen when I toured the area around 1994 and was immediately impressed with the range and quality of the wines on offer, especially the sparkling reds Howard Anderson was making. So when I received an email from the winery stating that they were holding a series of winemaker's dinners around the country to celebrate Howard's 60 years in the industry I jumped at the chance. Julian Warner and Lucy Sussex agreed to join us (I've finally converted Julian to the quality to Howard's product though I don't think he's as big a fan as I am) and one night at the end of May we were lucky enough to find ourselves sitting next to Howard on one of the long tables.

It's not often that you get such a chance to have a decent chat with your favourite winemaker so I



grabbed the opportunity. Hopefully I didn't bore him too much. I'm passed the age when I feel the need to gush my enthusiasm all



over someone but I was certainly glad that Julian was there, across the table, to be able to fill in the gaps when my stock of questions and comments started to run a little dry. He can always be guaranteed to come up with some weird factoid.

What didn't run dry was the wine on offer with Howard and his daughter pairing some excellent drops to the menu of canapes, four courses and dessert. Luckily none of the plates was large, just enough to satisfy. It was an excellent night overall and

Robyn ran into someone she knows from her work with the Mental Health Review Tribunal. Melbourne can seem a small place at times.

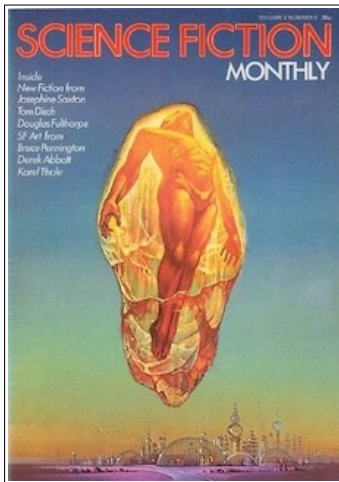
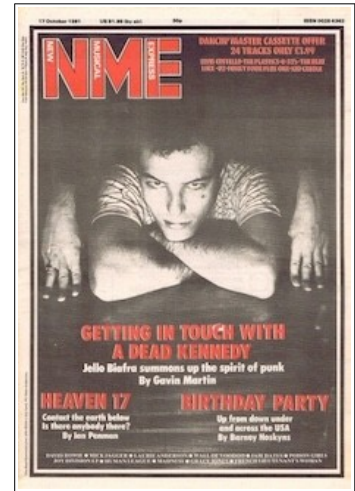
The next day we spent at the Melbourne Food and Wine Show trying the wines and food samples on offer from a vast array of merchants. I don't think I was able to appreciate it to the fullest as I was still feeling rather replete from the night before. I'm going to have to keep this in mind for the next time a confluence of this nature happens again.

WANDERINGS AND READINGS – An Occasional Column by Julian Warner

So Put it Right Back in the Rack, Jack! The end of magazines?

[With acknowledgement to Louis Jordan for his Choo Choo Ch'Boogie]

My life has been punctuated with magazines but the supply of magazines is drying up. I might have to resort to reading books. It all started with comics, like **The Beano** and **Commando** and the educational mags like **Tell Me Why** and **World of Wonder**. As a teenager I wanted to know more about music so I bought copies of almost all of the available music weeklies and monthlies that I could get hold of. I settled eventually on the **New Musical Express** from the UK as my favourite but I would still buy the occasional copy of **Melody Maker**, or rarely **Sounds**. Australia's own Rock Australia Monthly — **RAM** — offered tempting visions of music and bands in the big cities in the Eastern States. My bedroom walls were plastered with posters from **Science Fiction Monthly**. I subscribed briefly to **Heavy Metal** magazine from the US but gave up due to the destructive depredations of various postal services.



When I left school, I was supposed to go to University but I didn't fancy having to work and study at the same time. So I looked for full-time work. I liked music. I thought I knew a lot about it from reading magazines and I had reasonable diction (from nursery school elocution lessons). So I applied for jobs in radio stations. I sent an audition tape to 6KG in Kalgoorlie. They told me they had already filled their position but they passed the tape onto 6GE in Geraldton. The person from 6GE who rang me was a bit dismissive of my vocal talents but I was told that if I showed up on Monday, I could have a job. I became Western Australia's youngest radio announcer after a two week apprenticeship. Most of the music I had to play was not music I liked and I hadn't bargained on having to write radio commercials for concrete sheep troughs and dubious burger bars.

The 45rpm singles which we played were generally three and a half minutes long, sometimes shorter but rarely longer. This fit in neatly with three thirty second commercials which allowed the day to be carved into five minute segments. The job gave you an appreciation of just how much you could achieve in thirty seconds. Once you had got used to the rhythm of the job, you had ... ooh ... two whole minutes of nothing to do while some pop band droned on. You couldn't really read a book in two minute instalments but you could dip in and out of a magazine. I became an obsessive buyer of magazines, haunting the few newsagents in the town. My preference was for music, science and science fiction magazines but after I'd read all of those I explored what was left. Hence I would also read **Cleo**, **Cosmopolitan**, fashion magazines, photography magazines and computer magazines.

This made me mildly knowledgeable about some fairly diverse things but it didn't really substitute for reading proper novels and non-fiction books. I did some of that too but not at work.

When I was sacked for laziness and a distaste for commercials, I returned to Perth for a six-month holiday, living on the dole and my pay-out. Slight poverty didn't affect my devotion to buying records and magazines. When I almost accidentally got a government job, it allowed me to further feed my habits. By the time I moved to the flat in West Perth which I shared with various SF fans I had enough copies of the **New Musical Express** to wrap them in plastic and use them as crude furniture. I did all of the standard penurious furnishing with milk crates, bricks, planks and bread crates. Wherever I lived there would be stacks of magazines lying around, waiting (...waiting...) to be re-read.

One odd phenomenon was the cassette magazine. A few of them appeared. To me the most notable was **Fast Forward** magazine, put together by Melbourne music scene personality Bruce Milne. I bought my copies from a shop in North Melbourne which sold punk clothing and punk fanzines and even fanzines which verged on the SFnal. I sold my remaining copies of Fast Forward to a record shop just recently.

There were piles of SF fanzines around the house (or flat) as well. I had no concept of throwing them away unless they were produced by the most odious idiots. People kept sending me fanzines, long after I had been particularly active in producing them myself.

Despite having a regular habit which encompassed quite a number of magazines, I was constantly on the lookout for something newer and better. I read American music magazines — most of which disappointed for their slavish adherence to the mainstream. There were sparks of brilliance in **Creem** and **Trouser Press** magazines. Australia had plenty of short-lived music magazines like **The Virgin Press** which had moments of brilliance but which flopped when the money ran out. I flirted with **Private Eye**, but British politics still confused me. My understanding of British 'culture' was updated through reading **Viz** comic. Confusingly we got both locally produced and imported versions which were only intermittently available. As my taste for wine developed, I started to buy **Winestate** magazine, which maintained a fair balance between consumer information and industry news and gossip.



When I moved from Perth to Melbourne, I had to leave most of my books and magazines behind. Only the essentials came with me — clothes, records and a few reference books.



That might have been a useful clear out but I simply took up where I left off. I became a regular buyer of **Mojo**, **Uncut** and **Vox** magazines — all populated with journalists from the old **New Musical Express** — which had been waning in its hold over me. I wanted to read about alternative music and music of the dim past but not radio-friendly pop music. **Rolling Stone** remained as a very occasional read. It was too rooted in soft white rock to really appeal. Hunter S. Thompson's writing for them was one good reason to buy a copy.

The Wire (*not* Wired, of which I've read a couple of copies) is a magazine which I've read for decades, although it has changed substantially from the jazz-focused magazine which it used to be. I had boxes of them stored in the shed with little hope of being re-loved. Into the recycling they went, sadly.

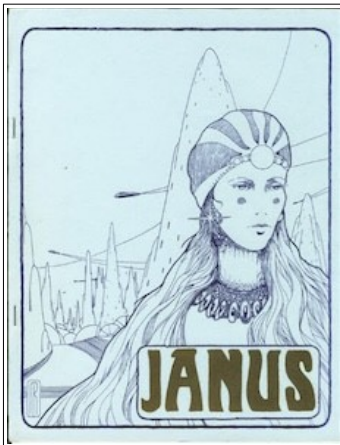
Over the years I have probably spent more money on computer magazines than computers. I followed **PC User** magazine for pretty much most of its life. I sometimes bought its more serious sister publication **Australian Personal Computer**. I don't bother keeping up with what is the fastest CPU or GPU or graphics card these days. I spend a reasonable amount on a new PC and expect it to do its job. I could have relatively meaningful discussions with the computer techs at work and this meant they didn't treat me as one of the usual idiot users. But otherwise, computer knowledge is not a great social skill.



The magazine which I now buy consistently is **Record Collector**. Although it focuses — as the name suggests — on collecting vinyl records, it has the best reviews section of any music magazine, in my opinion. I try to avoid buying vinyl records, preferring to concentrate on CDs. The fact that there is no online digital version of the magazine (yet) is possibly a reflection of its old-fashioned ways or its old-aged readers. **Record Collector** is now the last one left. The redundancy of reading both **Uncut** and **Mojo** magazines was made clearest when both of them had Bruce Springsteen on the cover in the same month.

As their review sections were not as comprehensive as that in **Record Collector**, I have given them up.

There are still magazines to be seen in the newsagents shops. Not as many as there used to be and not the diversity. I suspect that the titles on offer might reflect on the age of the readers. Do younger people read any print magazines at all? There are so many online magazines and replacements for magazines that there is possibly no need. I tried reading **The Wire** as an online magazine — the content was still all there but something just didn't feel right. My perspective is a bit skewed by age anyway. Whilst I regard skateboarding as "kid's stuff", it has been around longer than me and there have been skateboarding magazines for decades. Some readers of those magazines will be just as old as me. If I was really mean-spirited I could say that they were sad losers who can't let go of their childhood. But then you could say that about Science Fiction fans. So will magazines die with their readers? Comics are still around and they seem to maintain a healthy readership, if the anime/manga sections in bookshops and libraries are any indication. The death of the book was predicted prematurely.



I suppose the indicator is whether that stalwart dummy of law, "the man on the Clapham omnibus" is reading a book, a comic, a magazine or his mobile phone. I'll be the man on the Bourke Street tram, reading a book.

PS: In the course of background research for this piece, I found out that Howard Devoto was a better lyricist than Pete Shelley and that **Janus** was the name of both a British magazine devoted to depicting the spanking of secretaries and schoolgirls and of a feminist fanzine closely allied to Wiscon.

MORE SWINGING LONDON by Martin Field

It was kind of weird. There I was, a young Boronia Boy, fresh out of the army, living in Knightsbridge, visiting exclusive clubs I'd only read about in the newspapers. Among them were the Cromwellian, The Bag o Nails, the Playboy Club, and Sybilla's. I loved every minute of it and wrote shameless name-dropping aerogrammes home.

The Playboy Club had just opened – in July 1966 – at 45 Park Lane. As it happened, my housemate Kevin got a job there in their administration. He in turn introduced me to his boss, a Sydneysider named Lorraine, who I went out with for a while.

Lorraine worked directly for Victor "Vic" Lownes an American big-time hustler who had set up the London Playboy Club for Hugh Hefner.

The club was the hottest thing in town at the time and membership was very expensive. Kevin, who had a bit of Vic's hustle about him, created a counterfeit membership card of an existing member, which he gave to me.

Kevin had also scored us a house in Ennismore Gardens Mews in Knightsbridge. This was just across Hyde Park from the Playboy Club. Typically, a couple of us would don our glad rags, walk across the park, present the counterfeit membership card, and avail ourselves of the club's many delights. Different floors featured a casino, restaurants, a cabaret, and so forth. Thanks to Kevin and Lorraine I also frequented parties about town, attended by various Playboy Bunnies and well-known actors.

My relationship with Lorraine ended when she was invited to join Sybilla's, an invitation only club near Piccadilly Circus. Sybilla's was funded by various aristocrats and George Harrison was one of its illustrious shareholders.

So, Lorraine and I went along one night to Sybilla's. Beforehand, to get the vibe up, I must have consumed the best part of a bottle of Metaxa Brandy. This, as it turned out, was very unwise.

By the time we arrived at Sybilla's I was virtually legless. After a brief period of chatting nonsensically to other patrons and being rather loud, I had the honour of being the first person to be ejected from a club that was already so famous it was in the newspapers.

Next day I suffered a classic hangover.

I never saw Lorraine again.



Martin Field and Bob Hall in Ennismore Gardens Mews

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING LATELY

Codes – F: format (e for electronic, blank for paper); R: rating, out of 5.0.

Abbr – Anth: Anthology; Aust: Australian; Edgar: Edgar Award winner; Gdn: Guardian Best 1000 Novels; Nvla: novella; PEN: Pen/Faulkner Award winner; Trans- translated.

April 2024 books

Title	Author	Genre	Date	F	R	Pub Date	Notes
<i>Hopscotch</i>	Brian Garfield	Thriller	Apr 5		3.3	1975	Edgar
<i>The Year of the Quiet Sun</i>	Wilson Tucker	Sf	Apr 8		3.6	1970	
<i>The Buddha in the Attic</i>	Julie Otsuka	Lit	Apr 9		4.0	2011	PEN
<i>The Battle of Pollocks Crossing</i>	J. L. Carr	Lit	Apr 16		3.2	1985	
<i>Camp Concentration</i>	Thomas M. Disch	Sf	Apr 21		3.7	1967	Gdn
<i>Sleepless Nights</i>	Elizabeth Hardwick	Lit	Apr 24		3.4	1979	
<i>Nebula Award Stories 4</i>	Poul Anderson (ed)	Sf	Apr 28	e	2.4	1971	Anth
<i>The Transmigration of Bodies</i>	Yuri Herrera	Lit	Apr 29		3.5	2013	Trans (Spanish)
<i>Standing by the Wall</i>	Mick Herron	Spy	Apr 30		3.2	2022	Nvla
<i>Sorry</i>	Gail Jones	Lit	Apr 30		4.2	2007	Aust

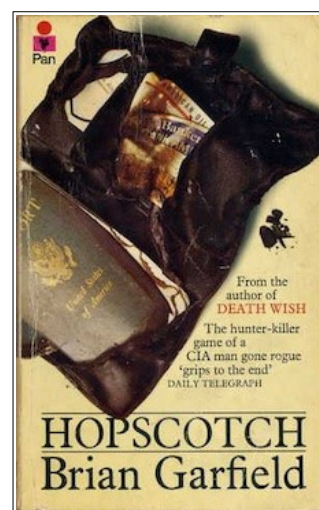
Books read in the period: 10

Yearly total to end of period: 31

Notes:

Hopscotch (1975) – This novel won the 1976 Edgar Award for Best Novel.

Miles Kendig is a CIA field man who has been put out to pasture and he's not happy about it. So he decides to get back into the "game" by making himself the target. He starts to write an exposé of all the dirty tricks the CIA and KGB have pulled over the years (assassinations of elected Presidents, overthrows of unfriendly governments, kidnappings, blackmail, etc etc) and sets up scheme where he sends a chapter each week or so to a number of publishers around the world. The CIA gets wind of this and, going along with Kendig's plan, decide to seek him out and eliminate him. So begins a cat-and-mouse game between Kendig and various intelligence agencies from around the world, as he jumps from one weird location to another, in North America and across Europe.

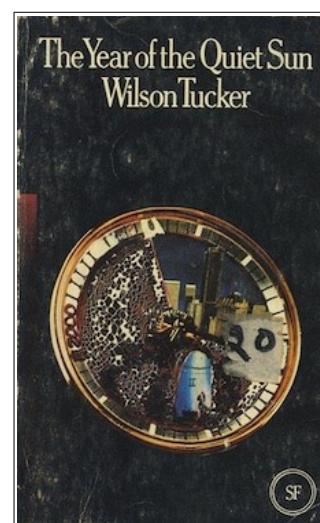


This is a reasonably good thriller for its time and shows a lot of detail about how intelligence agencies, and undercover agents actually work, rather like *The Day of the Jackal*. And like that previous novel it was also filmed, this time in 1980 with Walter Matthau in the leading role. He was sixty at the time of filming, only slightly older than the novel character's age, though the film was pitched as rather

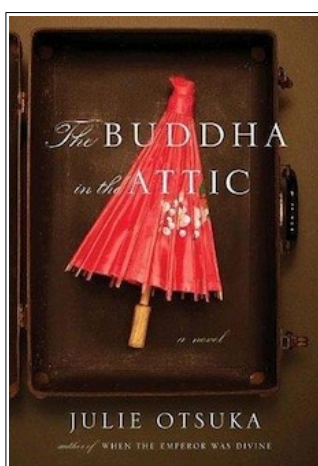
more comic than the dark tone of this book. The story-line and intelligence techniques are all rather dated now but it is interesting and shows a mastery of the cliff-hanger technique. R: 3.3/5.0

The Year of the Quiet Sun (1970) – This novel was on the ballot for the 1970 Nebula Award and 1971 Hugo Award for Best Novel.

Wilson Tucker's time travel novel starts in June 1978 and follows the commissioning and use of a TDV (Time Displacement Vehicle) by the US Bureau of Standards. This bureau is very secretive and answers directly to the President. Three men are recruited to be the first human team to travel through time, the system testing has been undertaken using monkeys. The novel's protagonist, and only civilian among the three men, is Brian Chaney, an expert in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a couple of which he has translated and published just prior to the beginning of the novel. The team's first mission is a political one, the current President wants to know if he will be re-elected in 1980. The three men are sent forward in time in hourly intervals and return to 1978 with enough data for the mission to be deemed a success. The second mission pushes them forward to 1999 and beyond the year 2000, where the political situation has become very dire indeed.



The initial section of this novel is rather slow as it attempts to set up the interrelationships between the three men and their recruiter, Kathryn van Hise. She is the only significant woman character in the novel and, surprisingly, for an sf novel of this time, is the most fleshed out and mature character of the lot: the men seem to be rather more simplistic in their ambitions, most of which seem to revolve around ogling women of the future in their short skirts or trying to get van Hise to show some interest in them; and this starts to get a little tedious after a while. But Tucker redeems the novel in the last section of the action as Chaney travels further into the future than his teammates and finds the world and himself in a state of turmoil. You need to be aware of the Bible's Book of Revelations when reading this book, as various characters, themes, and meanings are reflected here. R: 3.6/5.0



The Buddha in the Attic (2011) – This novel was the winner of the 2012 PEN/Faulkner Award.

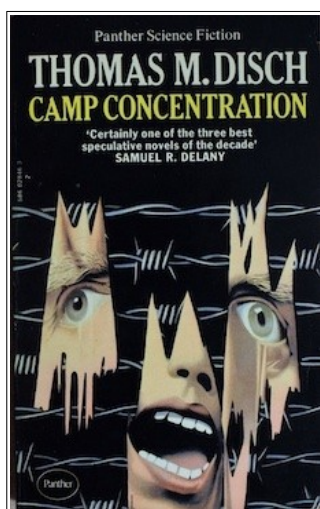
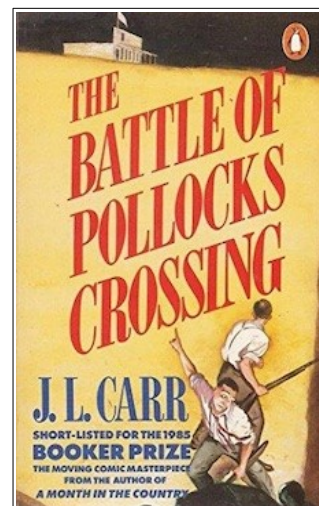
During the 1920s a large number of young Japanese women were sent over to America to become the wives of Japanese men who had already migrated and were working there. They were “picture brides”, promised in marriage based on a dodgy photo and even dodgier promises of wealth, home and a bright future. This novel tells their story; all of them. From their initial departure from Japan, to their arrival in America, their meeting with their husbands, the treatment they receive from them, their work, their families, and their interactions with the white Americans; ending as they are rounded up during World War II, after Pearl Harbor, and placed in internment camps. And when I say “all of them”, I do mean that. Well, mostly.

The author has chosen the approach in this novel of not following one specific women, but many; detailing a number of various options, actions and outcomes in any situation, attempting to cover as many women's lives as they can. The omnipotent narrator uses the pronoun “we”. At first this is rather unsettling as it seems to distance the reader from a direct involvement with any of the characters but the further you get into the novel the more you see that it seems to work, building up

a more detailed picture of the lives of these women; all of the story threads seem to inter-mingle and, just on the edge, seem almost distinguishable, though of course they are not. The added bonus here is that Otsuka has decided to keep it short, avoiding the problem of reader tedium. It is possible, as I did, to read this in one sitting. In reflection that is probably the best approach. Very interesting, both in style and subject matter. R: 4.0/5.0

The Battle of Pollocks Crossing (1985) – This novel was shortlisted for the 1985 Booker Prize.

In May 1929 George Gidner travels from his home in Bradford, England, to Palisades, South Dakota to take up a one-year contract teaching English in the local High School. He looks on it as a major adventure, but he arrives to find the small town surrounded by a vast wilderness. Initially he fares well in the school until one day he refers to the conflict at the nearby Wounded Knee as a “massacre” rather than the preferred “battle” and is finally dismissed. But he decides to remain in the town for the duration of his one-year original contract and gradually gets to experience the violent underbelly of the townsfolk in the wake of the local bank’s collapse just after the Wall Street Crash of October 1929. This is a classic “fish-out-of-water” scenario and uses the idea of a gormless outsider to examine the lives of people in the US Mid-West. Amusing in parts and poignant in others it doesn’t really sustain either long enough for it to be overly memorable. R: 3.2/5.0

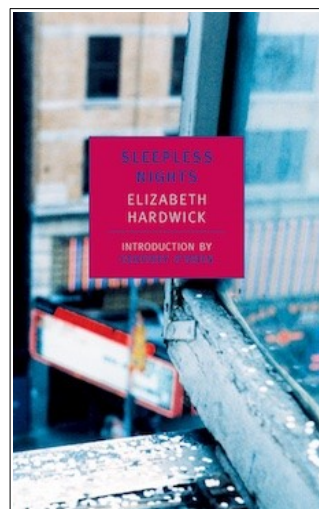


Camp Concentration (1967) – This novel appears on the Guardian Best 1000 novels list.

As this novel starts Louis Sacchetti is serving a five-year-term for conscientious objection, although we are not informed what he is actually objecting against. After some months he is transferred to a secret military establishment where he is informed that certain experiments are being carried out on the detainees there. These men have all been in military prisons and Sacchetti has been included to act as an interface between them and those running the experiments. The experiments are designed to increase a subject’s intelligence over a short period by the injection of a variant of syphilis, hence the punning title. Sacchetti was a poet in civilian life and it is felt that he can communicate with the “enhanced” detainees in ways that other cannot. He is encouraged to keep a journal and that’s what we read in this novel. A lot of the book is spent in establishing the intelligence levels of the detainees via very long dialogues which don’t seem to go anywhere. But clues to the final outcome of the book are sprinkled throughout though I doubt you would pick them up on a first reading. Considered one of the great 1960s sf novels I found this rather laboured with a lot of padding around a short story. Luckily the novel is also rather short. Very much influenced by the 1960s Vietnam war. R: 3.7/5.0

Sleepless Nights (1979)

This slim “novel” might well fall into the genre of “autofiction”, the definition of which I had to look up. That genre covers works that are a

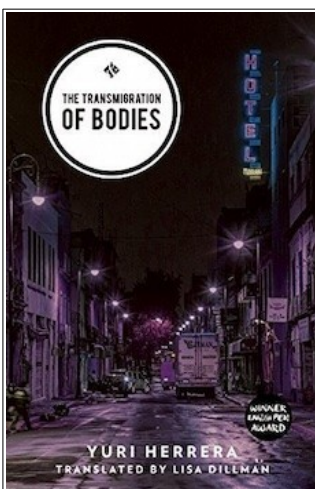
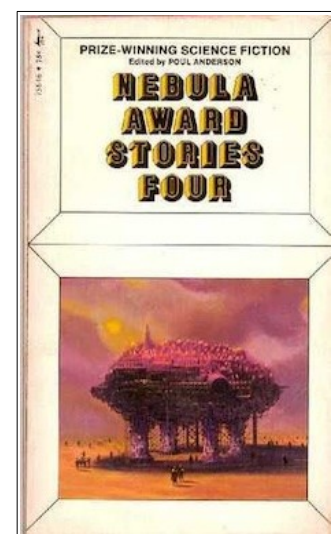


form of fictionalised autobiography. Though, of course, you really only have the author's word for it if it is really "fictionalised" or not.

This plotless, episodic "novel" features incidents in the life of a character named "Elizabeth Hardwick" as she looks back on her life, the people she has met, the places she's been, and is really a scrapbook of writings cobbled together. As such it doesn't so much tell a story as colour in various portions of an overall life. Some of that is interesting and some deadly boring. When Hardwick gets on a bit of a roll as she tells of her encounters with Billie Holliday, or American communists she is very entertaining and you wish that she would just continue on in that vein. But, rather like Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, you just start to get interested in a story-line when you jump to something else. This is the type of book that will greatly divide readers; some will love it and some will absolutely hate it. Which is only reasonable. It is a hard book to get into and very easy to put down. I'm rather ambivalent about it. I recognise the passages of writing that shine but am left just a little disappointed. R: 3.4/5.0

Nebula Award Stories 4 (1971)

The fourth in this ongoing series of short sf anthologies for the Science Fiction Writers of America, features works from 1968, specifically stories that either won or were nominated for the Nebula Award. Major and longest featured work is **Dragonriders** by Anne McCaffrey which won the Best Novella Nebula. I'm not a fan of this series as it features a setup that, to me, is blatantly one thing while trying to convince you it is something else, and not succeeding. Also included is "Mother to the World" by Richard Powers (Best Novelette) which I thought a really poor and predictable end-of-the-world scenario, and the Short Story winner, "The Planners" by Kate Wilhelm, which I did like. Only one out of three winners is not a good start. These stories are backed up with a novelette, "The Listeners" by James Gunn, which is much better than the novelette award winner, and two short stories "The Dance of the Changer and the Three" by Terry Carr, okay, and "Sword Game" by H. H. Hollis, not so good. We are never going to know why certain other stories were not chosen – anything by Delany who was at the top of his form in short fiction at that time; "Masks" by Damon Knight; or "Hawksbill Station" by Robert Silverberg – and we can only lament a missed opportunity. R: 2.4/5.0



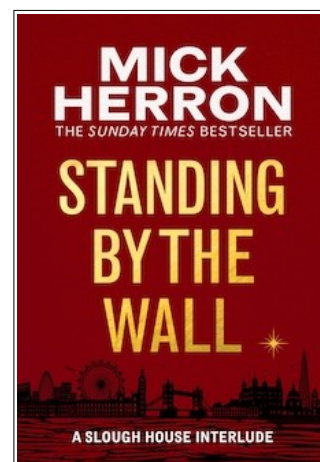
The Transmigration of Bodies (2013) – Translated from the Spanish by Lisa Dillman.

In an unnamed city – probably somewhere in Mexico – a young man from one criminal gang is seen being "kidnapped" by one crime family, and, in retaliation, a young woman is taken by the other. The kidnapping of the second is seen as collateral for a later exchange. But the city here, and country, is suffering under a mosquito-borne plague and the previous hard life is now even worse. The novel's protagonist, known only as The Redeemer, is contacted by the father of the young man who wants him to find his son and bring him back. And the only way to do that is to act as the go-between for the two families, work he has done before. Getting around the city is difficult as the army is out on the streets demanding people return home and quarantine so The Redeemer has to be innovative in his approach, calling in favours all over town. This story is told in a sparse, noirish style, and owes a lot to the American PI tradition though has a number of elements

that are uniquely its own. This is the second in a trilogy of novels by this author though there appears to be no indication of this on the book's cover here. I'll be seeking out the others. R: 3.5/5.0

Standing by the Wall (2022)

This is more a short story than a novella but it was published as a stand-alone so... A note on the cover states that the story is set after the events of Herron's *Bad Actors*, the eighth in his Slow Horses series of novels. And I'm only up to number 4, so a lot of the characters here are unfamiliar to me. Yes, I've read the thing out of bloody order, again. Here Slough House IT hacker Roddy Ho is ordered by Jackson Lamb to "fix" a photograph that he has received in the mail by removing the middle figure of three. On either side of this unidentified male are Lamb and a woman, one who we have seen before in this series but who isn't exactly obvious. It does seem to be setting up a situation for Herron's next book, which makes for a slight and rather confusing read. But it was there at the library and I just had to have it. R: 3.2/5.0



Sorry (2007) – see major review below.

REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS

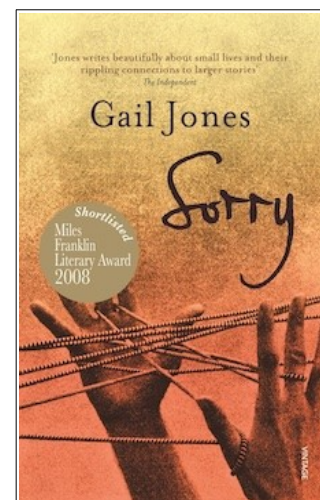
Sorry (2007) by Gail Jones

Genre: Literary

[This novel was shortlisted for the 2008 Miles Franklin Award, the Prime Minister's Literary Award and the Prix Femina Etrangere (France).]

Gail Jones is a Western Australian author who had her first novel published in 2002 and who has written another nine novels since then. She is regularly either shortlisted or longlisted for the Miles Franklin Award, she's won a few Western Australian Premier's Awards as well as the Australian Literary Society Gold Medal, yet I suspect she is nowhere near as well known in this country as she should be.

This novel explores Australian Aboriginal-white relationships in the period leading up to World War II, through the war, and for a short period after the end of hostilities. The first half is set around the northwestern town of Broome before the war when it was populated by a wide variety of people – black, white, and Japanese being the major ones under consideration.



Nicholas Keene, an Englishman, marries in haste and later brings his wife pregnant Stella to northwestern Australia where he has the vague hope of making a name for himself as an anthropologist. But he and his wife are woefully unprepared for the harsh land and climate. After a daughter, Perdita, is born, Keene's dreams slowly begin to fade and both he and his wife both start becoming mentally unwell. She begins to lose touch with the world around her and Keene takes out his frustrations via domestic violence against his wife and sexual abuse against the young Aboriginal girl, Mary, who is employed as a housemaid. Only Perdita seems to have found a way to survive by be-friending Mary and her people, and Billy, the slightly older deaf-mute boy who lives next door. But there is a sense of foreboding hanging over the family which is finally realised

when Stella, Perdita and Billy arrive home unexpectedly one day and find Nicholas raping Mary in the main room of the house. Suddenly Nicholas is dead, bleeding from knife wounds in the back and neck, and Mary is arrested for his murder.

Stella becomes even more mentally isolated and Perdita develops an almost uncontrollable stutter as a result of the violent incident. Around this time World War Two has started in the Pacific and the Japanese are bombing northern Australia, including Broome. Perdita and her mother are evacuated to Perth where they become separated when it is discovered that Stella is unable to look after either herself or her daughter. Stella goes into hospital and Perdita to a foster family where she starts to thrive for the first time in a loving environment.

There is a great beauty and simplicity to Jones's writing, integrating themes of memory and loss, the Stolen Generations, race relations, ways of communicating and deep emotions into an engaging story about a family broken by isolation and despair. The title of this novel is a telling reminder that, at the time of its writing the Australian Government had not had the integrity to offer an apology for the shameful and criminal way so many Aboriginal people had been treated. That would finally arrive in 2008, a year after this book's publication. So maybe we can read this book as this writer's attempt to step up in their place and put forward that simple, yet evocative word, "Sorry".

R: 4.2/5.0

"Imagine, in one global day, the pages of prose turned, plays performed, films screened, the unending stream of television comedy and drama, twenty-four-hour print and broadcast news, bedtime tales told to children, barroom bragging, back-fence Internet gossip, humankind's insatiable appetite for stories. Story is not only our most prolific art form but rivals all activities – work, play, eating, exercise – for our waking hours. We tell and take in stories as much as we sleep – and even then we dream. Why? Why is so much of our life spent inside stories? Because as critic Kenneth Burke tells us, stories are equipment for living." – Robert McKee, *Story*, p11

WHAT I'VE BEEN WATCHING LATELY

Television

Codes –Sn: season (blank for mini-series) ; R: rating, out of 5.0.

April 2024 television

Title	Sn	Eps	Genre	Platform	R	Rel Date	Notes
<i>Slow Horses</i>	3	6	Espionage drama	Apple TV	4.2	2023	
<i>Upstart Crow</i>	3	6	Comedy	DVD	3.8	2018	
<i>Ted Lasso</i>	1	10	Comedy	Apple TV	4.4	2020	
<i>The Suspect</i>		5	Crime	ABC	3.2	2022	
<i>Shogun</i>		10	Historical drama	Disney +	4.0	2024	

TV shows watched in the period: 5

Yearly total to end of period: 19

Slow Horses (Season 3 — 6 episodes) (2023)

Platform: Apple TV+

Genre: Espionage drama

A year before the main action of this series we are shown a sequence set in Istanbul. A British intelligence operative has stolen a secret file and attempts to pass it on to a contact. But the operation goes badly wrong and she is murdered. Cut to the present day and Catherine Standish, Jackson Lamb's personal secretary, is kidnapped and held by an armed gang. At the end of the first episode River Cartwright receives a photo of Standish on his phone along with a message to do as he's told or she dies.

And so this third series, based on Mick Herron's novel ***Real Tigers***, is off and running. Along the way we meet a number of old acquaintances – James "Spider" Webb, Diana Taverner and the rest of Lamb's Slough House crew – as the Horses try to work out where Standish is located, who has snatched her, and what they can do to get her back. It's all good fun and I did note this time that the screenwriters here have removed a lot of the excess flab from the original novel. Way too much was made there about Standish's alcohol problem. Here it is a factor but not the dominant one it seem to become in that novel. This is one of the better series currently showing and it is better to start at the beginning rather than jumping in here at season 3. Jackson Lamb is an even more gross caricature if that was at all possible.

R: 4.2/5.0



Upstart Crow (Season 3 — 6 episodes) (2018)

Platform: DVD

Genre: Comedy

In this third and final season of this wonderful little comedy Will Shakespeare continues to try to live up to his own description of himself as the world's greatest writer, ever. He still needs to deal with his disruptive actors, especially Condell, the ageing male actor who plays all of the female roles, who he thinks is just getting too old to play his women characters, especially the teenagers. Kit Marlowe is still hanging around after faking his own death and is getting more than a little bored, until he decides to come back as his long-lost twin brother;

Richard Greene is still trying to get Will's body separated from his head, or failing that, have

all of him locked up; Kate, the landlady's daughter, continues to supply Will with ideas for his plays and still longs to appear on the stage; and Will's wife Anne still comes across as the only sensible one of the lot of them. While I enjoyed all of these, plus the Christmas specials, I think I may have watched them too close together. It would be better to spread your enjoyment over a longer time span.

R: 3.8/5.0

Ted Lasso (Season 1 — 10 episodes) (2020)

Platform: Apple TV

Genre: Comedy Drama



I'm finally getting to this sports comedy drama after everyone else has reviewed it favourably. And I'm glad I did. Ted Lasso (Jason Sudeikis) is the coach of a US college football team when he is

engaged to be the new manager of AFC Richmond, an Association Football (soccer) team in the English Premier League. The team is in trouble after the team's major shareholder divorced his wife who gained the club in their separation settlement. She (Rebecca Welton, played by Hannah Waddington) is hell-bent on destroying the club in order to get back at her ex-husband and, she thinks, has chosen the worst possible coach for the team, one who knows nothing about soccer and little about English life and culture. But, of course, Lasso has other talents, not least of which is a way of getting the team to bond together in order for them to play to the best of their abilities. This is a gentle, amusing, insightful and very charming comedy that is about sport, and isn't at the same time. The sport and the sporting team is the framework that holds the whole story together and you can enjoy this without caring a jot about sport or soccer at all. All of the supporting and bit characters are finely drawn and well acted. A very enjoyable piece of work.

R: 4.4/5.0

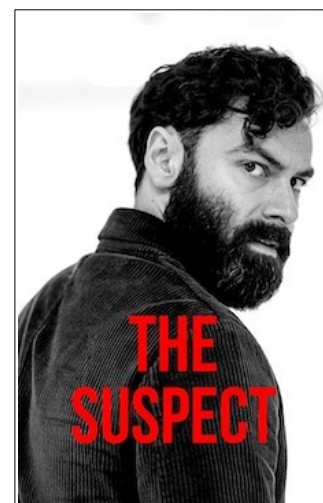
The Suspect (Mini-series 5 episodes) (2022)

Platform: ABC iView

Genre: Crime

Based on the 2004 novel by Australian author Michael Robotham this mini-series of 5 one-hour episodes follows the police investigation into the murder of a young woman whose body has been found in a shallow grave in a London cemetery. The police ask a local clinical psychologist, Dr Joe O'Loughlin (Aidan Turner) to put together a profile of the possible killer but soon come to suspect that he might be the actual murderer when he fails to tell the police that he recognises the woman in the morgue, that she had once accused him of sexual assault, and that he was at the cemetery the day the body was found. The indications of his guilt begin to mount and O'Loughlin determines that the only way he can prove his innocence is by solving the case for himself. This leads him to the discovery of connections with a case he worked on ten years earlier and also with some people rather close to him in the present day. The trouble is that it all seems too contrived: the police pick O'Loughlin as their suspect early on and never let up on him, and the coincidences pile up with rather unconvincing explanations. The tension levels just don't seem to reach the heights they should with this sort of material. There are a number of other books in Robotham's O'Loughlin series but I can't find any indication that they are being adapted.

R: 3.2/5.0



Shōgun (Mini-series 10 episodes) (2024)

Platform: Disney+

Genre: Historical drama

Language: mostly Japanese with sub-titles

Based on the 1975 novel of the same title by James Clavell, this series details historical events and characters in Japan from about 1600 until the months before the battle of Sekigahar later that year, which lead to the installation of the Tokugawa shogunate and the beginning of the Edo shogunate that would last until 1868. The story starts with the arrival in Japan of a lone European ship (out of 5 that set out) from the Netherlands. The fleet was dispatched in order to try to break the hold that Portugal and the Roman Catholic Church had on Japan. By the time

the ship makes landfall most of the Dutch crew is either dead or dying from scurvy with the last officer left being an English pilot named Blackthorne. He, along with his ship, guns and crew are delivered up to Toranaga who heads the Council of Regents, a group of five factional lords who rule

Japan while the Heir is still underage. But Toranaga is in a minority on the Council and sees a chance to enhance his position using Blackthorne as a wedge against the other Councillors and their Portuguese allies. Slowly, over the months that follow, Blackthorne becomes integrated into Japan and Toranaga's house, proving a key component in the political intrigue of the time.

This novel is based on the real-life story of William Adams who arrived in Japan in 1600 and was the first Englishman to land there. He eventually became a key advisor to the Shogun on European matters, and organised the construction of a number of Western-style ships in the country.

The original novel is very large – my paperback edition runs to 1243 pages – so a 10-episode min-series seems the appropriate way to handle this material. It has been many years since I read the book but from all accounts the mini-series ends at the same point as the novel, and, as of this time, there appears to be no plans to continue the story in any way.

It was certainly the best choice to ensure that Japanese actors took on Japanese roles and that most of the dialogue is in that language with subtitles. At first I wasn't that pleased with Cosmo Jarvis in the lead role as John Blackthorne but I slowly warmed to him. Hiroyuki Sanada as Lord Taranaga and Anna Sawai, as Lady Mariko who acts as translator and love interest for Blackthorne, are both excellent.

Overall the producers have done a good job with this difficult material. I'd be happy to see it continued. R: 4.0/5.0

[The late, late word is that the producers are looking very closely at season 2, going so far as to re-engage Hiroyuki Sanada to continue his role as Lord Taranaga.]

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.

Film

Codes – P: platform (c for cinema, blank for home); R: rating, out of 5.0.

Abbr – 1001: 1001 Films You Must See Before You Die

April 2024 films

Title	Director	Genre	Date	P	R	Rel Date	Notes
<i>The Red Shoes</i>	Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger	Drama	Apr 7	c	4.4	1948	1001
<i>Civil War</i>	Alex Garland	Drama	Apr 16	c	3.8	2024	
<i>The Creator</i>	Gareth Edwards	Sf	Apr 24		3.4	2023	
<i>Gaslight</i>	Thorold Dickinson	Thriller	Apr 27		3.5	1940	

Films watched in the period: 4

Yearly total to end of period: 21

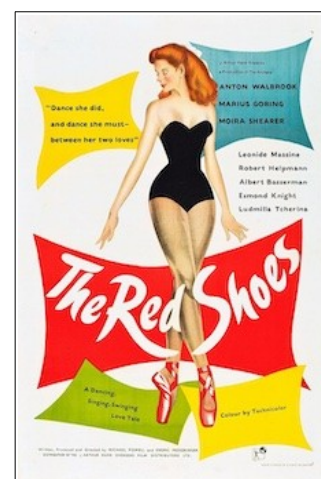
The Red Shoes (1948)

Platform: Cinema

Genre: Drama

This film appears on the list of 1001 Films You Must See Before You Die, and as number 70 on the Sight and Sound Greatest Films of All Time 2022 list.

The Red Shoes, written and directed by Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger, was restored about 15 years ago under the UCLA Film & Television Archive project, and was shown at my local cinema, the Hawthorn Lido, as part of their 2024 program of weekly cinema musicals. I think it a bit of a stretch to put it in that company — one that I generally do not enjoy — but I was glad they did as it finally gave me a chance to see the film on a large screen. The Sunday 4pm session is repeated each Wednesday at 11am, and I was glad to see the house about half full for this. I know I've seen it before though I suspect it was many years ago, probably on a small tv screen in black-and-white which would have severely dented my appreciation of this fine film.



The film follows the Ballet Lermontov company as they develop new, and stage old ballet productions in both London and continental Europe. At the beginning we are introduced to a young woman, Victoria Page (Moira Shearer), who longs to join a ballet company such as the Lermontov but is rather dismissed by the director Boris Lemontov (Anton Walbrook) as he believes she is a just a privileged young woman with no possible talent. Until he sees her on stage. We are also introduced to music student Julian Craster (Marius Goring) who is a brash, headstrong young man who also impresses Lemontov to the extent that he is taken on as second conductor almost immediately.

These two characters join the company, travel with them, and very quickly rise up the ranks with Victoria taking over as principal lead and Julian given the task of writing a new ballet based on the Hans Christian Anderson story "The Red Shoes". You can doubtless guess how their relationship progresses. The film has its major turning point when Lemontov learns of the blossoming romance and pressures Victoria to chose between her love of Julian and her love of dance.

Supporting all of this are a number of wonderful actors including the South Australian Robert Helpmann but it is really the central ballet performance of "The Red Shoes" that holds the key to this film. With its mixture of classical staging and experimental special effects it creates a mood and tone for the rest of the film, as well as providing a framework and metaphor for the non-ballet life of Victoria and Julian within the plot. Very impressive.



R: 4.4/5.0

Civil War (2024)

Platform: Cinema

Genre: Drama

In a near future USA an authoritarian President has disbanded the FBI, run rough-shod over the US Constitution and now faces a rampant Civil War. One of the opposing forces in the south is based around Florida, and another (called the Western Force) is an alliance of Texas and California (and I have no idea how that happened). The armies of both of these are

rapidly advancing on Washington DC when the film opens with a suicide bombing in New York. And we have no idea who is who.

Watching and reporting on all of this is a small band of photo-journalists headed up by Lee (Kirsten Dunst) and Joel (Wagner Moura). These two find themselves mentoring young Jessie (Cailee Spaeny) as they drive across a ravaged and very dangerous landscape from New York to Washington, hoping to get there before the approaching rebel forces.

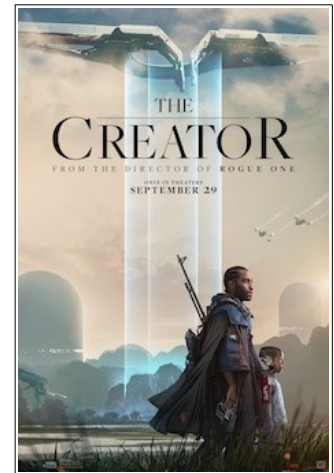
At first I thought that writer/director Alex Garland had made a misstep by concentrating on the journalists' point-of-view but it soon becomes clear that he is using them as a substitute for us the viewer, asking the questions: can we stand by and just watch without making any judgments? how does this violence impact us as observers? is the situation made worse just by our presence? It's an interesting set and while Garland lays it all out for you he doesn't provide the answers. You'll see some reviewers lamenting this film as being apolitical which seems extremely strange to me as I think it is purely political, and yet doesn't lower itself to mention party politics (I don't recall the words "Democrat" or "Republican" being used anywhere in the film). It is violent and very disturbing in parts. Keep an eye out for a cameo by Jesse Plemons who is about as scary as it gets. R: 3.8/5.0

The Creator (2023)

Platform: Disney+

Genre: Sf

In 2065, ten years after an AI has allegedly detonated a nuclear device over Los Angeles, the US has totally banned any development of AI and declared war on them. Meanwhile, in New Asia (an amalgam of a number of Asian countries) that development has continued, with humanoid AIs now fully integrated into normal society. The US Army has now taken their war to the countries in Asia and is using a space-based platform, NOMAD, to target AI bases and factories. US Army sergeant Joshua Taylor (John David Washington) is undercover in New Asia and living with his pregnant wife May, who is believed to be the daughter of Nirmata (a Nepalese word meaning "the Creator"), the US army's chief target. NOMAD attacks and Maya is presumed dead.



Five years later (it's now 2070) and Taylor is ordered to join a strike force aimed to eliminate "Alpha O", a new AI weapon developed by Nirmata. But Taylor has other plans as he's been shown evidence that Maya survived the NOMAD attack, and he sets out to find her.



The visual effects in this film are exceptional and there are a number of stunning set pieces but it tends to be let down by a plot that sets up a lot of interesting ideas only to ignore them in a race to blow things up. It's also extremely sentimental and rather predictable. This is an entertaining movie, and that's what it sets out to do, so we can't really criticise it for that; just for missing an opportunity. R: 3.1/5.0

Gaslight (1940)

Platform: YouTube

Genre: Drama

Not as well-known as the 1944 US remake starring Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman, this version of the 1938 play by Patrick Hamilton has

Perryscope 44

thankfully been restored by the BFI. It features Anton Walbrook as Paul Mallen (who we saw recently in *The Red Shoes*) and Diana Wynyard as Bella Mallen. In this psychological thriller the Mallens move into a house on Pimlico Square in London where, 20 years before in 1865, a woman was murdered and her house ransacked. The murder was never solved but a policeman, who worked on the case, sees Mallen in the street and thinks he bears a striking resemblance to one of the dead woman's relatives. Meanwhile Mallen is carrying out a campaign of manipulation and control over Bella, making her believe that she is "losing her mind", hearing things in the house, stealing items and hiding them and then forgetting she ever touched them. He eventually threatens her with having her committed for her "madness".

The story here is all about the plot and the manipulation of one character by another. In 1940s style the acting is rather melodramatic with lots of close-ups for reaction shots. But who cares? It's a compact little gem of a film.

Whether it was this original version or the MGM remake that brought the term "gaslighting" into common usage a viewing of this will give you a good understanding of it. It is also interesting to note that when MGM bought the rights to the play for the remake they attempted to destroy all copies of this British film's negative. Thankfully they did not succeed. R: 3.5/5.0

PERRYSCOPE Responses

Perryscope 42:

Julian Warner: "For what it's worth, Zevon's **Transverse City** is about to be re-released on CD 10 May."

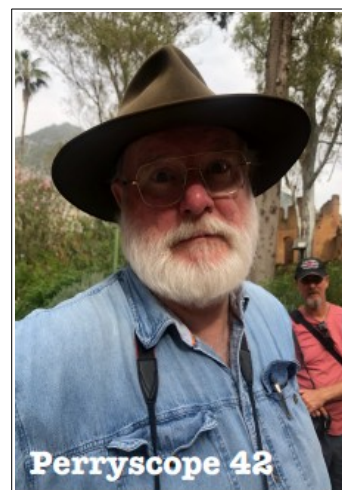
[**PM:** This is Zevon's cyberpunk record, heavily influenced by Gibson's book *Neuromancer* I reckon. Tracks on the album include "The Long Arm of the Law" (maybe Larry Niven's ARM stories?), "They Moved the Moon", "Networking", and "Gridlock". But the standout song would have to be "Splendid Isolation" including the lines "I'm putting tinfoil up on the windows / Lying down in the dark to dream / I don't want to see their faces / I don't want to hear them scream".]

"This is according to the website for Redeye Records in Sydney. I couldn't find any other references to this event online.

"I note also that **Excitable Boy** is now available as a (supposedly) super hi-fidelity double LP that plays at 45rpm and as a Super Audio CD."

[**PM:** I asked Julian what was on to second disk...]

"Nothing extra. As the discs play at 45rpm, there's less space on each disc for the music, so they space the tracks out over four sides. Now that you ask that, I don't think I've ever seen any out-takes and unreleased tracks offered from the Zevon canon. There's certainly a few live albums, official and unofficial. There's also a disc of material recorded before his first album (ignoring the Lyme & Cybelle single). You would have thought that if there was anything left at the bottom of the barrel, it would have been seen by now."



Perryscope 44

[**PM:** And I asked Marc Ortlieb about this as well and he didn't know of any bootlegs floating around.]

Perryscope 43:

Mark Olson: “Thanks as always. I should also thank you for performing an important service: Liking *Dune* (the book, any of the movies, I don't care.) Someone has to.’

[**PM:** I'll take the praise, faint as it is.]

“I did not think it was great when it came out and nothing since has persuaded me differently. It's supposedly a ‘great ecology book’ but its science — ecology, biology, physics, and everything else — is nonsense. (Precisely what do the sandworms eat to power their vast energy needs?) So's Herbert's grasp of history and government. (Think how hard it is to run a country. Now try to run hundreds of planets and do it without computers.) And this notion that organizations will hold to their principles for millennia — ha. But it has a lot of words.

“(Lest I seem too completely negative, the original Schoenherr illustrations, cover and interior, were magnificent.)”

[**PM:** I certainly agree that the ecological framework in the novel leaves a lot to be desired. I get very annoyed with sf novels and films that depict planets as having only one type of environment, in this case desert. Yes, Herbert's lack of computing power seems, at this distance, rather peculiar, and the idea that a bureaucracy, of whatever size, could run and “empire” that stretched across a galaxy is a nonsense. There are many, many criticisms that could be made of the book, and the subsequent films but I found it rather easy to suspend my sense of disbelief in all of that and just enjoy the ride and the spectacle. We're on a very slippery slope if we demand that major sf works hold together logically.

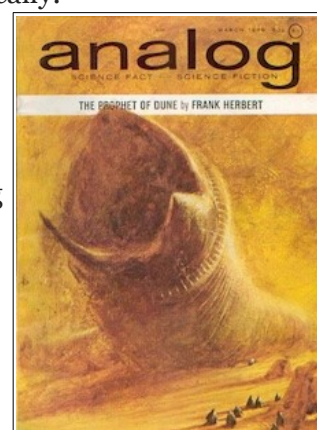
As for the Schoenherr illustrations I can only agree — see right.]

Later: “Another gripe: Herbert liked to include mental supermen in his work, but he wasn't good enough to show them being really smart (admittedly a hard thing to do) so he has characters around them thinking to themselves, ‘Oh, what a profound thing he just said.’ or ‘A True Null-A thinker! How can I do other than be amazed at the depth of her thought!’ or ‘The room pondered the interlocked complexities of her command when the Bene Gesserit Mother turned to her guard and said, ‘Can you bring some tea?’”

“I'm not saying *Dune* is a *bad* book, but it's far from being one of the pinnacles of SF...other than what it earned.”

Rose Mitchell: “Thanks again for sending **Perryscope 43**. I enjoy reading it, more so now you are adding guest articles.

“Your *Dune Part 2* review was in depth and thought provoking. I surmised you liked it a lot! References to other seminal films resonated with me especially the *Lawrence of Arabia* comparison — many scenes where people are gazing intently across sand dunes as the breeze gently



lifts the sand into a swirling eddy; that sort of stuff. However, I was really bothered that Alia, Paul's witchy sister had not been born by the end of **Part 2**. I don't really know why I am so bothered by this digression from the books, but I am, a lot. The books eventually bored me, not reading further than **Children of Dune**. However, I will trot off to the cinema when **Part 3** is released, but suspect I won't be all that invested in it. Bit like how I regard the Marvel Universe franchise."

[**PM:** I can certainly see the reasoning behind Villeneuve's decision to continue on with Part 3 of his Dune saga. My worry is that the studio will only see a cash-cow and decide to make further instalments. And that way disaster lies. I might be surprised but I've always held that it is impossible to make a "good" film out of a "bad" script. (The other way round is easy by comparison.) And the word is that the books after **Dune Messiah** started to really go downhill. Though Mark Olson might well contend they were halfway down the hill even with the first one.]

"Martin Field's adventures in Germany reminded me of an incident some years ago when I first moved to Docklands. Had a beer and meal at The Hoff, a local establishment specialising in German type beers, whereby the waiter convinced me that frankfurts in curry gravy was a Berlin delicacy. Martin names it as Hohe Kuche: curryworst. It was not to my taste (an understatement) and I thought the waiter had taken a lend of me and at \$20 to boot."

[**PM:** I am always willing to give these dishes a try but frankfurts are at the worst end of the "sausage spectrum". They tend to have the absolute worst filling, mostly leftover bits and pieces from the better dishes, ground down to a pulp and bulked up with all sorts of unidentifiable ingredients.]

"Lucy's trip report from Corflu has piqued my interest in this con, despite me not publishing a fanzine. Both Leigh Edmonds and Lucy have convinced me that Corflu sounds like my type of con: small and intimate with not too much structure. Glasgow Worldcon daunts me with the expectation of 8K people or more."

[**PM:** Sooner or later European and North American Worldcons will come to the conclusion that too many attendees just ruins things for everyone. The whole site becomes too crowded, everyone has to queue for everything and autograph lines stretch around the block. I can see myself just finding a spot somewhere and sitting with a beer waiting for the world to go by. Actually that my go-to technique no matter what the size of the convention. Which will come as a surprise to absolutely no-one.]

I also heard from: Marc Ortlieb; Martin Field (while travelling in Japan, experiencing the odd earth tremor and trying the saki); **Nic Farey** (agreeing with me about Zevon and **The Americans**) **Heath Row; Leigh Edmonds;** and **Chris Garcia.**

