

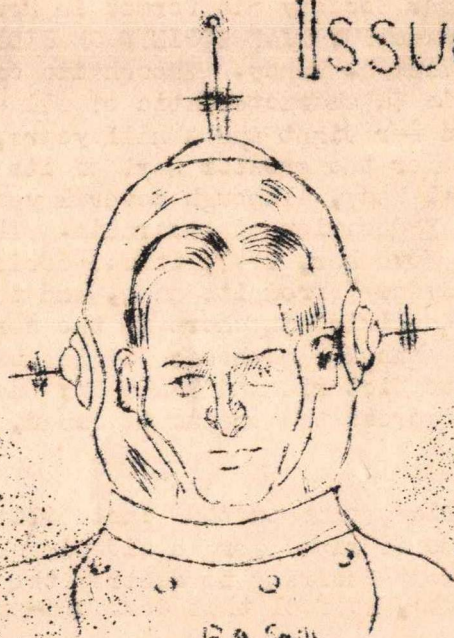
THE SYDNEY
FUTURIAN

#8

Special

TORCON

Issue



R A Smith

GREETINGS FROM OVER THE OCEAN!

To some of you attending the Toronto Science Fiction Convention, it may well be news that there is such a thing as an organised fandom in Australia. To others, it will be like renewing an old acquaintance. You may have known of fan activities "down under" before the Pacific incident that began with Pearl Harbour and ended with Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but perhaps you did not know that activities have now been revived.

Because we feel that we are a part of a world-wide interest in imaginative literature, a global fandom that recognises no boundaries, we have produced this special TORCON number of THE SYDNEY FUTURIAN. We hope that it will serve as Australian representation at the Convention, and that you will derive some pleasure from reading it.

When our Society was formed in November, 1939, we adopted the name FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY, at the suggestion of William D. Veney. Though its career has been at times hectic (a characteristic of all stf groups) the club has existed for eight and a half years, and has held 86 meetings. For the greater part of its life it has been a purely local body, although several years ago it sponsored a Futurian Federation of Australia. Then, at a special meeting in November, 1947, it was decided to delete the words "of Sydney" from its name, and to admit as Associate Members fans living anywhere in the world. The Futurian Society now has 27 members; it has expanded from Sydney southward to Victoria and Tasmania; northward to Queensland; and across the oceans to Japan, England, Canada and the U.S.A.

We believe that in the instability of this postwar era the time is ripe for a widening of the scope of fandom. Without desiring to destroy the independence of local fan clubs, we feel that some non-partisan organisation

could be set up, to which fan clubs and individual fans in unorganised areas could affiliate. A basis for such a global organisation has been created by the formation of national associations -- the N.F.F.F. in America, the British Fantasy Library, the new Canadian Science Fiction Association, the Futurian Society in Australia -- which in practice overlap; we hope for some truly international body in times to come, for there are many ways in which fans in different countries can assist one another in the collection and appreciation of stf, weird and fantasy fiction.

The Futurian Society (no "of Sydney") was born, we said, in November, 1939. But science fiction fans had existed in Australia long before that date, as evidenced by the rapid sale of American prozines. At least twice, clubs had been formed; The Sydney Chapter, Science Fiction League, and later the Junior Australian Science Fiction Correspondence Club -- to which several members of the early FSS had previously belonged. There are rumours of a club in Adelaide, S.A., but these cannot be verified.

While we enjoyed the steady arrival of U.S. magazines, and the conditions of the 1919--39 truce were not seriously disturbed, the Futurian Society grew until it had thirteen members. Then the intensification of the war, the Ban, and internal disagreements cut this number back to a handful. In May 1940, a general ban was imposed on the importation of American magazines. This ban has never been lifted, and so Australian fans have had to rely on the generosity of overseas fans to obtain any stf. From time to time, Australian books of interest to fans have appeared, and we have been able to return the gesture; but it is a paradox that today, with science fiction magazines rarer than unargumentative fans, the Futurian Society is stronger than ever before.

At the moment the Society has ten members living in and around Sydney, and seventeen associates scattered over the rest of the planet. Possibly in the future it may be found advisable to resume the original status of a local club, per-

haps as a unit of that world-spanning association; but in the post-war revival of fandom we consider that the greatest service is rendered by acting as a blanket organisation.

The headquarters of the Futurian Society are in Sydney, where meetings are held at least once a month. Fans able to attend meetings may become full members, for which the subscription is one guinea per year. Associate members, living outside the metropolitan area in Australia or elsewhere in the British Empire, pay half this amount. U.S. and Canadian supporters may pay their annual subscription by sending one dollar's worth of current stuff to the club library. Either form of membership entitles the fan to receive all club publications free. For those living in the Australasian postal area the club conducts a rapidly-growing library of books, magazines, excerpts and fanzines.

Australia has had its crop of fan publications, although since the war THE SYDNEY FUTURIAN is its sole voice. The first mimeographed fanzine was a one-shot, AUSTRALIAN FAN NEWS, published in May 1939. Then came ULTRA, LUNA, FUTURIAN OBSERVER, COSMOS, ZEUS, AUSTRALIA-FANTASY, MELBOURNE BULLETIN, PROFAN, FUTURE, SCIENCE & FANTASY FAN REPORTER and FUTURIAN SPOTLIGHT. The news-sheets pure and simple published the greatest number of issues. OBSERVER lasted 57 issues and REPORTER 34 issues. REPORTER was a weekly, and never missed a week or appeared late. Of the others, Eric F. (not Frank) Russell's ULTRA ran for 14 issues, from October 1939 to early 1942.

Who are the Sydney Futurians? Glancing at the membership list we discover a University Tutor, half a dozen University students and several ex-students, a radio writer, a magazine editor, a pharmacist, an artist, a lay analyst, an able seaman, a storer, a musician, a tailor and a plumber. In common they have an interest in scientific and fantastic literature -- and with one voice they send a hearty message of congratulations to their North American cousins lucky enough to be attending the sixth World Science Fiction Convention.

MEMBERS OF THE FUTURIAN SOCIETY

1. Stirling Jacoby;
2. Mrs. L. Molesworth; 160 Beach St, Coogee, Sydney, NSW
3. Eric F. Russell; 274 Edgecliff Rd, Woollahra, Sydney, NSW
4. Graham Stone; 160 Beach St, Coogee, Sydney, NSW
5. Vol Molesworth; 160 Beach St, Coogee, Sydney, NSW
6. (A) Warwick Hockley; 183 Domain Rd, South Yarra S.E.1. Melbourne, Vic.
7. (A) Colin Roden; 27 Zara St, Newcastle, NSW
8. (A) Ralph A. Smith; Flat 2, "Rhodesia" Macleay St, Potts Point, Sydney, NSW
9. (A) S 10021, A/B Haddon, A.W; No. 5 Mess, H.M.A.S. "Warra-munga" C/- G.P.O. Sydney, NSW
10. (A) Stephen Cooper; 9 Malabar Rd, South Coogee, Sydney, NSW
11. (A) Donald H. Tuck; 27 Audley St, North Hobart, Tas.
12. (A) Capt. K.F. Slater; "Riverside" South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs, England
13. William D. Voney; 204 Beach St, Coogee, Sydney, NSW
14. Stan Baillie; 10 Harry Ave, Lidcombe, Sydney, NSW
15. (A) Charles S. Mustchin; Twood St, Coolangatta, Qld.
16. S.L. Larnach; No. 4 Flat, 29 Neymotte St, Randwick, Sydney, NSW
17. Jock McKenna;

18. (A) Bruce H. Sawyer; 79 Alice St, Auburn, NSW
19. (A) Bob Geappon; 2 Stoke St, Now Town, Hobart, Tas.
20. (A) Roy Williams; 69 King St, Rockdale, Sydney, NSW
21. (A) Forrest J. Ackerman; Box 6151 Metro. Station, Los Angeles 55, Cal, U.S.A.
22. (A) David A. MacInnes; Apt. "E", 1619 Eastern Ave, Baltimore 21, Maryland, U.S.A.
23. (A) Moe Diner; 445 Mt. Pleasant Ave, Westmount, Montreal 6, Quebec, Canada
24. (A) Sam W. McCoy; 951 Harrison Ave, London, Ont, Canada
25. (A) Russell J. Hodgkins; 774 Caliburn Drive, Los Angeles 2, Cal. U.S.A.
26. (A) Maurice Powell; 528 Sixty-first St, Oakland 9, Cal, U.S.A.
27. P. Glick (Bluey); C/- H. Brunen, Box 56, The Union, University of Sydney, NSW

THE FUTURIAN SOCIETY LIBRARY

The Futurian Society Library now contains 71 magazines, 28 books, 8 excerpts and over 200 copies of 66 fan publications. Use of the library is open to all members living in the Australasian postal area, charge being 3d. per item per fortnight.

Many thanks to Los Angeles L. Holt and J. Wyatt for donations of magazines made through Maurice Powell, and to Arthur Haddon, who sent us a number of Armed Forces Editions from Japan. Thanks also to the various members who have put items in on loan. Completely unexpected and very welcome, too, were the four magazines just received from James Hince of Texas.

Latest books added to the Library include Professor J. O. Bailey's historical analysis of science fiction, "Pilgrims Through Space and Time," for which 3d. per week will be charged; "Miracles Ahead" by Carlisle and Lathan; "Lost Horizon" by James Hilton; "Tales of Mystery and Imagination" by E. A. Poe; "This is Our World" by Paul B. Sears; "Rockets and Jets" by H. S. Zin; and "The Edge of Running Water" by William Sloane.

New prozines include Amazing Stories Jan, Jul. 1934 and Feb. 1938 and Mar. 1948; Wonder Stories Feb, Jul, Aug. '34 and Feb. 1936; T.W.S. Jan. 1940; A.S.F. Oct, Nov, Dec. 1947 and Jan. 1948; Super Science Stories May 1940; Marvel S. S. Feb. 1939; Weird Tales May 1945, Mar 1948 (25th Anniversary Issue!); Startling Stories Mar 1946; F.F.M. Jun. 1947; Fantasy Book No. 2; Blue Book Dec. 1947.

Among the new fanzines are copies of LE ZOMBIE; SYNAPSE; SPACEWAYS; TYMPANI; the 1939 YEARBOOK OF SCIENCE; WEIRD and FANTASY FICTION; SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES; WILD HAIR; GORGON; OPERATION FANTAST.

Overseas fans please note -- you support the Futurian Society, obtain the Sydney Futurian regularly, and do a ser-

vice to Australian fans generally, by sending prezines to the club library. \$1 worth pays an annual subscription as an associate member; or one current prezine will pay for 6 consecutive issues of THE SYDNEY FUTURIAN.

Material for the Library should be sent to Mrs. L. Molesworth; 160 Beach St, Geogee, Sydney, NSW.

(Members -- a new Library catalogue will shortly be issued, probably with the next SYDNEY FUTURIAN.)

CORRESPONDENCE SECTION

With everyone talkin' about the TORCON -- in case you were chalkin' that pun up for yourselves -- we quote, appropriately enough, the letters of two well-known Canadian fans; Moe Diner and C. J. Bowie-Reed, President and Secretary respectively of the Montreal S. F. Society.

"Science fiction certainly seems to be having a post-war boom," Bowie-Reed writes, "Before the war there was a teen-age club in Toronto plus the fanzines LIGHT, CENSORED, and CANADIAN FANDOM. The club and CENSORED folded, LIGHT went irregular, and CANADIAN FANDOM was the sole survivor. In November 1946 Moe Diner and Basil Rattray in Montreal, and myself at Dawson College (30 miles out of town) formed the M.S.F.S. During the summer Toronto organised, and in oct-Nov. Hamilton organised. Plans have been undertaken to revive the Canadian Amateur Fantasy Press, Toronto has produced MACABRE; LIGHT has seen a new issue, and we in Montreal are preparing to put out CENSORED again.

"By the middle of Nov. 1947 we in Montreal had a membership of five, and we decided to start a publicity campaign -- in four newspapers and over station CJAD. Membership is now 27, with five to ten prospective members. We feel that membership should go higher than this, since the English-speaking population of Montreal is about 250,000 (little less than 20% of the total population). As it is,

CORRESPONDENCE -- continued.

two of our present members are of French Canadian origin, although speaking English now, and 1st Vice President Cecil de Brotigny is of French origin -- about 300 years ago.

"One of our newer members, David Jenkins, is from Australia. /That, another one! Seems to me at times that more people leave Australia than stay here.-- G.S./ He still has what we call quite an accent; though that is purely a matter of opinion."

From Associate Member 23, Moe Diner, comes the welcome news of the formation of a national fan body in Canada -- the Canadian Science Fiction Association. "The set-up is that the Association is run by one of the three organised clubs. (Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal) To start with, neither Toronto nor we in Montreal could take the job, so -- Hamilton, smallest and least experienced of the three, is doing it.

"Probably to start with, this year at least, there will be little of consequence done, but we hope to do a few worthwhile things next year." /In which you have our support and congratulations./

"We in Montreal are virtually prostrated by the fact that it is exam. time from now till May at the University (affecting most of our members and almost all of our executives) and also by the fact that we are trying to get out the first issue of CENSORED. We are not exactly hyperactive, right now." /We can sympathise with you there, Moe -- a number of our members are University students, whose stfnal activities are periodically so interrupted./

Arthur Haddon writes from Tokyo: "...As I predicted, and anticipated, comments were mostly centre, in regards my article. I hope the fact wasn't overlooked that I said my views as expressed did not detract from my enthusiasm. Then again, the article was originally written some weeks before I came to Japan.

CORRESPONDENCE--- continued

Bill Vency tells me to forget it. May I ask, 'Forget what, Bill?' Apparently the mistaken idea of his letter is to warn me against finding or being another Messiah. I have no ideas of forming a Purity Guild /Purity in fandom?.. Might be an idea at that -- G.S./ so that I can say, 'We read stf, but our minds are perfect,' nor even do I demand that a fan's private life be investigated in order to keep out social undesirables. /Ah, if it were that easy!-- G.S./ ...All I ask is that his desirability as a fan be investigated. Ignorance of fan matters is no handicap, (if so, where would new fans come in?) but a disregard for our ideals would be. Surely that is plausible and understandable. /If we could define what really are our ideals, yes -- G. S./

"As for Graham, his criticism seems to be based on definitions à la Stone. /Guilty -- G. S./ admittedly, to a degree an escapist reads fiction to transport him from his menial obligations, but isn't he also a man who reads his literature as a pamphlet telling him of the glory to be had. In our case, Utopia would be a world free of class distinction, creed difference, superstition, primitive inhibitions and outmoded social laws, a world where our curiosity would be satisfied...we could enjoy the scientific benefits our hearts crave. If that isn't escaping from a world we were born in too soon, then I don't know what i:

"Evidently Graham is trying to say in a most pedantic manner that to escape from reality by reading stf is to confront oneself with a more frightening formula of nature than ever. If that were so, escapism would not be possible. /Often the more frightening formula confronts in modern stf -- surely the deluge of atomic war stories and other variations on the theme of doom to mankind are not encouraging? -- G.S./

"Apart from bowing my head to Eric and mumbling 'teuché' my defence rests. So /indecipherable Japanese word./"

Arther contributed a prize for the member whose vote in

CORRESPONDENCE -- continued.

the poll on favourite stories most nearly coincided with the result, in the form of a Japanese hand-painting on silk of Lena the Hyæna. Vol. Colosworth won it, having voted for no less than eight of the first ten -- the next nearest vote had only three.

A short note from Nember 4, Graham Brice Stone: "I've had a look at the SHANGRI - L'AFFAIRES and ILD HAIR the Library just got in, and I'd like to say here and now that they represent just about the lowest ebb in amateur journalistic ethics I've ever seen -- and I've seen plenty in my seven years in fandom. I never thought I'd see such unprincipled and obscene abuse in print; I hope the fans over there will take steps to see there's no more of it. To me, for all its crudities and defects, fandom is a society within a society -- a culture founded on self-respect, square dealing, and fellowship, within a culture based on -- well, other principles.

"In the complete freedom of perfectly voluntary association, we can be ourselves, instead of harnessing our minds to a team. There's nothing on Earth like it, even in the world-wide network of the general bibliophiles. It has always been essentially decent -- open to the point of brutal frankness, with opponents on any question fairly, if vehemently, debating their point in the open, and remaining personal friends whatever names they called each other in print. Our culture has survived the New Fandom-Futurian split, the political disputes, the patriots-versus-pacifists affairs, the Cosmic Circle, the Pro-Scientific Movement, and so on without coming down to the level of the gutter or of modern society, without forgetting the understanding and hope that set us apart from the non-fan. Do we have to go to pieces so completely over this silly Shaver business? Surely not. The individuals who have perpetrated this now outrage against fan integrity don't belong in our midst -- in fact, I would say that they are not fit to live in any civilised society."

AUSTRALIAN FANTASY BOOKS

From time to time books of interest to a fantast, and less often strictly science fiction works, have been published in Australia. To list them all would be a formidable task, although S.L.Larnach has a fairly complete list which we may make available soon. The list given here is merely one of items printed during and since the war.

"Out of the Silence" by Earl Cox. This is perhaps better known overseas than any other Australian stf book -- unless you count the books of Australian-born J.M. Walsh, Sir Julius Vogel, etc. This tale of a survivor of a long past civilisation, living in suspended animation through the ages, originally published in the 'twenties, was reprinted for the fifth or sixth time early in the war; A new edition has now been done, although for some unexplained reason it has not been on general sale in Sydney yet. Price 10/6, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne.

"The Missing Angel" by Earl Cox. Published late last year and still to be had at 10/6, this book is similar to the new "Out of the Silence" but on better paper, though a slimmer volume. It is a humorous fantasy, almost UNKNOWN style, and quite good. Also from R.&M.

"Tomorrow and Tomorrow" by M. Barnard Eldershaw. A sociological story of the present and future. Viewpoint is partly early 20th century, mainly four hundred years hence. At 12/6 it's a well produced book, well worth it if you like social theorising. From Georgian House, Melbourne.

"Through Space to the Planets" and sequel "Rangers of the Universe" by Winifred Law. Two juvenile books -- very juvenile indeed. Wouldn't recommend these except to a 100% campy plotist specialising in stf juvenilia. Prices vary from 4/6 to 5/6 -- both I think have been reprinted from the same plates once or twice.

These are all the bound books I know of since 1939; there were, however, some paper-covered items, listed overleaf.

THE "CURRAWONG" BOOKS

"The Living Dead", "Subterranean City" "Other Worlds", "King of the Underseas", by J.W. Heming. Also "Time Marches Off" by Heming under the pseudonym of Paul de Wroder.
 "Ape of God", and "Monster at Large" by Vol Molesworth.
 "Lords of Serpent Land", "Prisoners of Serpent Land", and "Warriors of Serpent Land" by Alan Connell.

--These are 64-page pocket-sized booklets -- price varied from 6d to 9d. All well out of print now. 13

Similar publications from other publishers included:--
 "Stratosphere Patrol", "Spaceward Ho!" and "The Three Rocket- eers" by Vol Molesworth; "Formula for Power" by Leon Batt.
 "Welfblood" by Vol Molesworth.

In better format -- bound in cardboard covers in the manner of the Penguin Books, with jackets: "The Hecus Rect" invisibility story by L.B. Foster; and "Voyage to Venus" by Don Healey.

These local efforts ranged from excellent to frightful, and fell far short of filling the gap left by the absence of imported stuff. Some fans here have copies still, so anyone overseas interested should write to enquire about them.

Apart from these, some Penguin editions were printed in Australia -- practically identical with English ones, but stapled instead of stitched. No comprehensive list can be given at present.

Vol Molesworth, who regularly edits THE SYDNEY FUTURIAN, is in hospital at present, we are sorry to say. He was tentatively scheduled for an operation in a few weeks' time, but has been admitted earlier than planned, and arrangements are somewhat awry. We offer our best wishes for speedy recovery, in which we are sure all fans will share -- let's hope he is back home before you ever there read of his misfortune.

This issue is published in the unfortunate absence of Vol Molesworth, official editor, by Graham Stone. Editorial address is 160 Beach St, Coogee, Sydney, NSW, Australia. Price to non-members of the Futurian Society, 3d. a copy. To Americans, exchange arrangements announced elsewhere.