



the wild colonial boy 4 saps 65 october 1963  
special MERVIN BARRETT issue!!!!!!!



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## COVER by

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I am concerned at the lack of sapsishness of this issue. The fact is, as of September 3, I still haven't received the July Mailing. Generally I have tried to hold fire on publishing until I do get the mailing so that even if I don't do comments I at least have an idea of the general trend of thought in the previous mailing. The result was, in April, that half my 'zines arrived in time and half didn't. I plan to attend to this matter immediately, and perhaps next time round I've have plenty of opportunity to get comments and all sorts of things done.

This is a MERVYN BARRETT issue because I want you to seriously consider the possibility of importing Mervyn as a TOIF candidate. I am not trying to imitate NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. I think he would be most satisfactory at a time when candidates seem to be running short, but money is not. I hope Harry Warner doesn't mind me quoting him in this context, but he describes Barrett's Hong Kong article as "exactly the kind of description that I would like to find of my dream city, Vienna." Think on it, friends.

Somehow there doesn't seem to be much Foyster in here. I'm all in favour of this, since this is being produced during school holidays. I apologise for the crude hacking in some places, and confess that I fully intended to use an electrostencil, but unfortunately that money went towards a book by a Mr. Krafft-Ebing. I hope you understand.

"I don't care if I do go blind," said Tom jerkily.

"Thalidonide does absolutely no harm," said Tom disarmingly.

There is really no room in fanzines for the editorial wee.

"Would it damage our relationship if I sucked you off?"

Some of which can be credited to Mervyn Barrett, some to Lawrence Durrell, and some to me. Good Night.

## PSEUDOEDITORIAL

Living, as I do, in a small country town, seems to dilute the fannish blood, though perhaps this change in surroundings is not the real cause of such a waning. The absence of any stimulus, in the form of other like-thinking people, be they fan or not, certainly has some effect on the way in which one thinks. Moving here has changed my way of life considerably, though the total change is due also to increasing age, rather more organized time and all sorts of horrible things. My main activity, reading, is now considerably reduced, both through the pressure of work which must be done eventually and through the influence of the box in the corner, which latter I have feared for some years, having become aware of my own laziness, both physical and mental, and recognizing the ease with which a sedentary and non-productive life creeps over the lazy human. Occasionally in that time I have managed to break out of the lethargy, but it is always for a short time, and usually superficially regretted. It is difficult to read in a cold hotel room, for instance, and much harder to write or type a letter, when the warm sittingroom (with television) is only ten or fifteen steps away.

## ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FAIR

Following upon the reading of a scathing report by the Medical Officer (Dr. E.J.C. Hamp), on the unsavoury conditions obtaining at an aborigines' settlement in the Buln Buln Shire, and a further report in similar vein by the Health Inspector (Mr. W.C. Walker), council is obviously very disturbed.

At last meeting of the council a lengthy debate culminated in a council decision to tell the Aborigines Welfare Board that for health reasons the settlement was to be closed down and that the board would have to find suitable housing for these people outside the town boundaries.

Councillors were shocked at the filthy and appalling conditions under which the aborigines were living as described in the report. They treated full discussion of the situation as an urgent measure.

Cr. Bloye: "I feel very strongly about this. I think anything that is done should be done from the point of giving them better conditions.

"This is a reproach on all of us to shut our eyes to the fact that fellow human beings are allowed to live under such conditions. They are not allowed to do much for themselves and it is the responsibility of this community to do something for them.

"What are we going to do? That is the challenge to all of us."

The President (Cr. R. Henry) : Should we bring it before the proper authorities?"

Cr. Bloye: "Before closing down this settlement we should provide better accommodation."

Cr. G.M. Stoll: "I do not think that this should have to be borne by this council. Where is the £100,000 allocated for aborigines' welfare? Why should this council have to come to light when the Government has £100,000 and is doing nothing about it.

"Before closing this estate where these people are, someone must provide accommodation.

"We are driving them to live in fowl houses. The Government is the responsible body - they have the money, why cannot they do something about it? Why cannot they set up a type of house outside the town?

"The aborigine will tell you himself that he does not want to live in the main street. I think we should press the Government to make this money available to build houses on the outskirts of the town and not built-up areas."

Cr. H.C. Price moved that council notify the Aborigines Welfare Board that conditions at the settlement are not up to medical health standards and if nothing is done within 30 days council will have no option but to close it."

Cr. Stoll: "Why do not the people who own land out there cancel the lease?"

Cr. Price: "What I have heard here today is very urgent. In 60 days we will have warm weather and that could stir up something very bad here. I think we should put the pressure on the Aborigine Welfare Board to do something."

Cr. Bloye: "Could Cr. Price add to his motion that this council considers the matter urgent due to the unsanitary condition?"

Cr. Price: "If we close it within 30 days the board has got to do something."

Cr. Bloye: "I will move an amendment that alternative accommodation must be provided. They are human beings."

Cr. Price: "They would be better on the road."

Voices: "No."

Cr. Bloye: "I am very concerned from the humanitarian point of view, and anything we do should be on behalf of the poor people out there."

"If you turn cattle out they go to the pound - they are fed and looked after. These people are not."

"I think pressure should be brought on to the board to provide alternative accommodation. What they have now is some shelter at least."

Cr. Saunders: "The motion is more strong than the amendment. That is why I am against the amendment."

Both Crs. Stoll and Bertram supported the amendment.

Cr. N.E. Nicholson: "You have only to read the report. We do employ a Health inspector and we should follow him. I think that if any action is to be taken within 30 days something has got to be done."

"If we leave these people there they will die. In some cases you have to be cruel to be kind. I support the motion."

Cr. W.L. Kraft: "There are ratepayers of Drouin who think these people might come into Drouin. It was said that there were three houses that might be made available. The board's easiest way out might be to accept three houses in the town."

"I do not want to see that. We have trouble in the past because a good lady resident has been pressurised by itinerants. I am afraid that if you push this on to the Aborigines' Board and they find these three houses suitable you are going to transfer these conditions into the town itself."



"You cannot stop these people from living under the conditions in which they live.

"We have seen good houses made available outside the town in Orbost. I am going to be against anything that transfers them here. Put in the amendment "Alternative housing outside the town boundaries" and I will agree to it."

Cr. Bloye's amendment became the motion and was carried.

Cr. Nicholson then successfully moved that copies of the Medical Officer's report and the Health Inspector's report be sent to the Aborigines' Welfare Board.

- reprinted from THE GIPPSLAND INDEPENDENT AND EXPRESS July 18, 1963.

Do I make myself perfectly clear?

## MOVIES

Usually referred to as 'the cinema' I suppose. Since last filling in a few lines in this way I've seen a couple-few movies, and also become suddenly aware of the general emptiness of the form. But as Superman says - Down to that speeding car.....

JULES ET JIM appears to have been critically successful, but I found it empty. The playing-off of two friends is not really so exciting, and the film did not seem to have any dignity or "style". Before anyone jumps down my throat, I do not mean that it is indistinguishable in direction from any other film; perhaps class is another unsuccessful word.

EXODUS and SODOM AND GOMORRAH I saw in Sydney. I trust this grouping does not offend Jewish readers. I thought EXODUS relatively well-made (a little mellerdrammer goes a long way) and not at all the screaming appeal that I expected. The plotmangling was necessary to cut time, I suppose, but this always spoils a film for me, this simplification of a novel's movement. The opening of SODOM AND GOMORRAH, with its acres of flesh was certainly eye-opening, and the film, with some wacko blood and guts was interesting enough to stop me going out.

The opening of DR. NO, since we've mentioned the subject, was certainly eyeopening - I was just two seats from the front, a position I now take regularly, not because it's cheaper, but because I honestly believe you get more out of a film in this position. You will have noticed how children always crowd the front of a theatre (or used to before TV) and they're not often wrong. While I suppose I enjoyed the film, it was in spite of myself. Repulsive. Now I know why some people like Bond - he represents much of what they are not but would like to be.

Probably the best double feature ever seen in this fair city was BLACK ORPHEUS/BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (Cocteau). This was the last show at one of our closing theatres (which I remember from way back, 'cos I saw KONTIKI there). This bill was grossly unfair to BLACK ORPHEUS, which was so obviously outclassed by Cocteau's legend. I saw B&TB 5 times in 4 days, spread out over 2 weekends, and only the first time did I bother to go in for BLACK ORPHEUS. I suppose instantaneously I imagined this to be the best of Cocteau's films, but now I feel that on seeing them again, the others would

have a similar effect on me. This was, however, the first occasion on which it seemed to me that each frame of the film stood on its own as an artistic creation. In particular, many of the shots of the father's ride through the jungle seem almost to be copies, so reminiscent they seemed. The music, too, was the most appropriate and fitting I've ever found in a film; the fourth time I went I remember I concentrated almost exclusively on the music. The relationship between Auric and Cocteau obviously makes each of their contributions. The squareness of the audience was most disturbing, particularly in the final scene where Beauty and the Beast fly off to the Beast's Kingdom. Obviously most audiences are incapable of observing Cocteau's injunction "to become like little children".

Raymond Burgnat, in Films and Filming, describes Bardot's fall in A VERY PRIVATE AFFAIR as being the reverse of this. His use was disparaging, but mine is not. Decae's photography being what it is, the film is visually beautiful, and the story, though slight, provides opportunities for excellent frames. It may be enjoyed in the way that an opera with a poor libretto may be enjoyed.

On the other hand, a film like THE MIRACLE WORKER attacks a grand theme and it becomes exceedingly hard to judge the film's worth as a film. We know that even if the film were an artistic failure we would still be deeply moved, and emotion, of course, is the only way of judging a work of art. So I found THE MIRACLE WORKER only a moderate film. SON OF SPARTACUS also tackles a great theme (the basic heroic theme) and comes out of it fair well - the acting is not great but the action is along suitable lines, and there are occasionally very uplifting moments (which, granted, could have been improved) such as Randis' taking of his father's sword. REVOLT OF THE SLAVES, which I saw for the second time in Sydney, is hardly as successful, and LIBERTY VALANCE I found plain disappointing. Lee Harding thinks that my liking for THE ETERNAL RETURN is based solely upon its theme - TRISTAN AND ISOLDE - and since I haven't seen the film for 15 months or so I cannot specifically defend my position, but at present that film must remain as the most moving I have ever seen.

It is exceedingly disappointing to find that a widely-recommended film falls flat for one. LA REGLE DU JEU was praised to me from all sides so much so that I paid £1 to see it, more than I've paid for any film, and I wasted that money. Perhaps I fail to appreciate the time at which the film was made, but great works are not really great only in comparison with their contemporaries.

There is a Bergman subcult in fandom, I expect, so perhaps I'll get jumped on for my feelings about SAWDUST AND TINSEL (released out here as THE NAKED NIGHT). No, I won't, for even Bergman cultists will see this cheap thriller as a very early work and therefore not necessarily venerated. Naturally it was much publicised both here and in Sydney, mostly as a great film. Humph. The support was a Peter Finch film about a little Mexican boy - ANTONITO. It was cute.

But I did save one Bergman fan from perdition by taking her to see LA NOTTE. Final comment after seeing same - 'Bergman is shit' or words to that effect. LA NOTTE still makes the same impression on me as it made over



a year ago.

We had a season of operatic films here a while back. PUCCINI, MADAM BUTTERFLY and TOSCA. MADAM BUTTERFLY was criticized because it featured Japanese singing in Italian. I found all of these enjoyable, though frequently neither the sound nor the singers were of the highest class. I found them all to be better than CASA RICORDI, which became boring by its very repetition. Allied to this group was THE ADVENTURE OF THE HUMPBACKED HORSE, an excellent Russian ballet. 'Twas a fantasy of course, but was most beautifully presented; possibly this is the best film I have seen for children.

Now for a few lesser films. FOCCLACCIO 70 I found most pleasing in the De Sica - Loren episode. Most critics slated this section for its simplicity, but for how long has sophistication been the mark of art. I had seen so many stills from Fellini's episode that the actual thing was rather a letdown, and Visconti's episode, though enjoyably and well acted, didn't exactly grab me. And in my search for class, I went and saw a low Italian comedy - THE FOUR FRIARS. This was very slapstick, and since TOTO, PEPPINO AND THE SWEET LIFE was very similar, I have come to a certain conclusion about Italian comedies.

WEST SIDE STORY had a big buildup from John Baxter, so I really expected to see something out of the box, and in a way I did. It's certainly a most colourful film, and the singing etc. are probably as good as one would find in such company, but I couldn't believe in the situation, and found it unpleasant to boot.

JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY was a double feature with WILD STRAWBERRIES. I only went to see JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY. It is so alive that each viewing is a new one. And then you can see Corso, if such be your wish.

THE GUNS OF NAVARONE and THE NAKED AND THE DEAD are large films of mixed merit, and I could only find any sympathy for THE GUNS OF NAVARONE. This is probably because I've read Mailer on selling his book.

THIS CRAZY URGE was a little film that impressed me considerably. The mixing of the two cultures (in a deviant way) was excellently done, the music was most pleasant, and the actors and acting good. I liked and recommend this film for other middle-aged persons.

Most close to home is a film I saw only a few days ago - THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA - the 1962 Herbert Lon version. The phantom lives in a very Boschian scene, and the whole film is designedly anti-horror, a most surprising production for Hammer. I'm going to see it again, though, before I make any reasonable sort of judgement.

## BOOKS

Actually only one book. HOW TO READ ENGLISH POETRY by R.H. BLYTH (from HOKUSEIDO PRESS) is a very well-written piece of work, it seems to me. Blyth is best known for his large 4-volume work on haiku, in which he shows considerable erudition. I dislike poetry popularisation, and Blyth's book definitely does not fit into that category. He concerns himself entirely with rhyme and metre, for well over 200 example-laden pages. This sort of thing is immensely useful, and costs just \$1.75 US. (continued immediately after the letters)

# BARRETT CHRONOS.

>PT. II<

## 2 SHIPS & AN AEROPLANE OR

a drama of travel

The HIMALAYA was my first real ocean-going ship. Previous nautical experiences had been in row-boats, harbour ferries, and there was a dimly remembered trip to the South Island of New Zealand made when I was 6 years old. HIMALAYA isn't the largest thing afloat - a mere 28,000 tons - but she is a jolly good ship and I enjoyed living on her.

At 12:30 pm the last rope connecting us to Australia was released and two tugs began pulling and pushing us to a position that would allow the ship to move under her own power. Behind us, on the wharf, some small boys had gathered streamers that had been thrown to, and by, the departing ones and had made a pile of them that they lept on to, stomach down, with the same enthusiasm that Charlie Brown displays for piles of dead leaves. Sydney Harbour Bridge passed over us, a pick-up hit the surface of a recording and over the ship's loud speakers came the sounds of Waltzing Matilda, which caused me to reflect on how all of Australia's legendary characters of song or story - the favourite ones anyhow - seem to be thugs or hold-up men or similar layabouts. The effect of the music was good though and helped to make something of that awkward time when one is too far from the dock to wave to people but not sufficiently clear of the harbour to appreciate that the journey has truly begun.

I ate lunch in a rather disorganized dining room, and then, after only 15 minutes of intensive searching, re-discovered my cabin. My first visit to what was to be my home for the next 11 days had netted me a bon-voyage telegram and a going away present from Jill. Waiting for me this time were the people who were to be my cabin mates for the voyage - two Australians who were going to Hong Kong for the trip and were coming back three days later - and a notice to the effect that a boat drill was to be



held at 4:30 that afternoon and upon the blowing of the ship's siren all passengers were to present themselves at their allotted portion of deck space. The time came and the siren blew and I grabbed up my jacket and made my way to the little piece of deck that I and some dozen others were to share. My cabin mates declined to attend this important function. One of them was a blase globe-trotter of much ship-board experience who said that it wasn't worth the trouble. The other took his lead from the first and also declined to accompany me. I pondered their cavalier attitude as I joined a stream of humanity that seemed to be flowing in the direction that I wanted to move and concluded that if there should be a real emergency and they got left on board when the boat sank because they didn't know what part to go to then it would all be their own jolly fault.

Around me people were struggling with their life-jackets but I shrewdly just carried mine and waited until I was in the elevator where I asked the obviously-experienced 16 year-old driver the correct way of wearing the thing. He volunteered to tie it onto me and I felt rather superior to the poor lot around me who hadn't the forethought to get advice from a veteran sea-hand. In the time that it took to travel three decks most of the people around me had managed to come to terms with their life-jackets and were giving passable imitations of people correctly jacketed whilst mine was wound onto my body in such a way as to create an effect similar to the body-distorting harness that the elder Lon Chaney had worn to help him create the image of Quasimodo. "I don't know," said the helpful elevator-boy, "it's a different sort to the ones that we get. Perhaps you'd better try and get it on yourself."

I hobbled out onto the tiny deck that was our place to wait for salvation in an emergency and stood shivering in the company of about a dozen similarly underdressed people who, like myself, had ignored the warnings about the need for warm clothing; after all, it had been beautiful when we left Sydney a mere three hours before, I'd seen this sort of thing in the movies and knew that soon some handsome, serious-looking young officer would come along and see that all were correctly attired for bobbing up and down in the ocean. Ten minutes later, after a couple of preliminary splutters, a voice issued from a Tannoy mounted above us somewhere - "Thank you for your attendance at this drill. We would like to take this opportunity to stress the need for passengers to avoid two practices which could have dangerous repercussions. One of these is sitting on the rails of the ship. The other is throwing lighted cigarettes over the rail into the sea. One of these could be blown through an open porthole and cause what is one of the most dreaded happenings on board a ship - fire at sea. Please use the cigarette boxes attached to the ship's rails. Thank you again for your attendance." Feeling somewhat cheated I left the

deck and started down through the passage ways back to my cabin. Several life jacketed people looking for the way out on to the deck looked amazed and grieved when I told them that the drill was over..

Meals were to be in two sittings and I elected to go to the first. I never have cared to wait around for my food. My two cabin mates decided on the second sitting. One of my objections to the second sitting, that the Captain eats then and I had no class pretensions that would make me want to eat at the same time - was disposed of by one of my cabin mates who pointed out that the Captain doesn't eat in the tourist class dining room, anyhow. Nevertheless, I stuck to my original decision and ate first sitting.

It seems rather peculiar to me that I can't remember who my stable mates at meals were. Vague mental impressions of retired civil servants come to mind and there was a guy about my age who looked like he was a refugee from some terribly 'thou shalt not' type of religious order. Our table, as was the case with most of the others, was waited on by an Indian from Goa. These men were all Christians and did not have the religious objections to handling some of the food stuff that Moslems or Hindus would have shown.

The meals and service on the Himalaya - the ship I went to Hong Kong on - were by far superior to those on the Iberia - the ship I came back on - and to my way of thinking this should not have been so. Both ships were operated by The Peninsula and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and the Iberia was the larger of the two, as well as being the flag-ship of the fleet. The Himalaya was by far the happier vessel, though. Crew turnover was very small and one of the seamen who looked after the welfare of the passengers by making sure that they didn't drown in the 12' by 12' pool said, "This is the ship for me and it's no good them trying to shift me. I've nailed my suitcase down to the focsle deck." The coffee on the Himalaya was superior as well and, although it was supposed to be the same make and blend, Iberia coffee was awful. Even before the ship left Hong Kong, I was warned, "don't drink the coffee unless you have a strong stomach."

Important as the meals were, what followed was just as important for me. It didn't seem right to leave without checking the cable news - in particular, to make sure that Anaconda Copper (my favourite stock) was still OK.

I feel a certain amount of affection for the P. & O. Co. though that seems to be based merely on the fact that it was they who were responsible for putting the word "posh" into our language. Back in the days before air conditioning those passengers who were



wealthy enough to pay for whatever could be bought in the way of extra comforts had cabins on the side of the ship that was the farthest from the sun when travelling to India from England, and a cabin on the opposite side of the ship when returning thus using the ship's bulk to shield them as much as possible. Their tickets for this sort of arrangement were marked "Port Outward - Starboard Home" which later was abbreviated to the word "Posh" and became synonymous with the best in comfort and elegance.

Social life was a bit different aboard the two ships. The Himalaya was just beginning her cruise when I joined her but the Iberia was two thirds of the way through hers. On the former there was the getting-to-know-people bit which went on for several days and the mutual discoveries of what the ship had to offer. On the Iberia though the friendships had already been formed and Johnny-Come-Latelys had to fit in as best they could with most of the available talent already spoken for. On the Himalaya I sort of picked up with various odd individuals. An American named Lo was a sort of spiritual leader to a group of younger U.S. citizens who had been attending schools in Australia. He was a professor in some college or other, and had some super summer weight Ivy League clothes. And there was a rep of an Australian travel agency, who looked very much like a young Orson Welles. I don't know why it is, but I always seem to be running into Australians who look like Orson Welles. Three girls who shared a cabin together seemed to me to be held together as a social group on the strength of their personal problems. One was an unhappy creature who tried to repress, or not recognize the obvious Lesbian tendencies she had. Another had so much Catholicism run wild in her, that she seemed to live in fear of doing the wrong, or Non-dogma, thing. She advised me most sincerely in a tone that suggested that the matter was most urgent, "Put yourself in the hands of a good priest," This was after I told her that I believed in the idea of reincarnation and wasn't very impressed with the concept of Papal infallibility. A refrigeration engineer whom I drank quite a bit of beer with didn't believe that the Russians had shot down Gary Power's U2. He thought that something must have gone wrong with it to bring it down to the level where the Russians could do something about it. I later found this viewpoint endorsed in an episode of CAPTAIN EASY that I came across in a Manila newspaper.

One of the aforementioned girls had come across from New Zealand the day after me. She had flown on the second flight out from Wellington Airport, and had got VIP treatment along with the other passengers on the flight; champagne, free carrier bags and all that sort of thing. For several years there had been no direct flight from Wellington to Australia; one went from Christchurch in the South Island or from Auckland in the

North. Eventually though, after long years of mucking around and removing houses and altering the coastline so that a runway could be built out into the sea, Wellington Airport was reopened, and then at last a direct service from Wellington to Sydney was announced. It was to begin on the day that I wanted to leave New Zealand, and I tried to get out on the first flight, but this was reserved exclusively for Cabinet ministers, travel agency execs., airline officials, and similar free loaders. I flew out from Whenuapai Airport which is actually an Air Force station but is used as Auckland's airport. Part of the main runway crosses over a little road which is closed when planes are taking off. This was the biggest plane that I'd been on. There was no pure jet service between New Zealand and Australia at that time, and this was a Lockheed Electra turbo-prop job. There had been some trouble with the wings falling these planes at places around the world, and so they had a speed limit set for them. I can't admit to any feeling of apprehension, though. I had a seat on the aisle, and what with there being two guys between me and the window, and the wing being in the way, what I saw wasn't very much.

Roger Horrocks had given me a little duplicated magazine to read, which looked like a fanzine, but wasn't, being full of University type awareness and all that sort of thing, and I had a copy of TIME plus all the blurb sheets that rested in the pocket of the seat in front of me and were all about the glories of flying by TEAL. I made no conversation with the person next to me, and when a steward came around offering little packets of Du Maurier cigarettes, I took one even though I don't smoke. Lunch was served and I don't recall what it was but because it is not memorable, then I can only assume that if it wasn't great, then neither could it have been too bad.

I went to the toilet and sat there thinking, here am I, just like anybody else only an hour or so ago, but now, going to the toilet 30,000 feet up in the air, and at 350 miles per hour. It gave me quite a feeling of superiority. I think the light in that place must have been natural because as I looked at myself in the mirror whilst washing, I realized that never before had I looked so revolting to myself. The character of the light seemed to separate every hair on my head, and show off each little grain of dandruff, and my skin looked blotchy and dreadful. I think maybe the airline does this so that people won't linger in the toilet longer than they have to. I know that I wasn't too interested in spending much time with this apparition.



Thus passed four mainly uneventful hours. Just out from Auckland we had to fasten seat belts for a while when things got a bit bumpy, but that was about the only bit of excitement on the trip. No one held a pistol to the pilot's head, and told him to turn the plane towards Cuba - it was all very routine really.

On board the Himalaya deck sports were organized but I don't remember anyone approaching me and asking me to take part in any of these activities. I don't quite know why this should be, but it seems to happen that people look at me and then immediately dismiss me as a possible contender for games of deck tennis, ping pong, darts, or quoits. I guess that maybe it's my sensitive and fannish face that makes me look as though I'm above that sort of trivia.

Now it's a peculiar thing that I who am probably one of the laziest types to walk this planet should find it difficult to come to terms with life on board a ship. The idea of lying around on deck and getting a sun tan whilst waiting for the man to bring the ice cream around, while all the time the ship slides on through the untroubled waters of the tropics should not be one that gives any cause for un-ease, and yet I found myself to be not quite in tune with this sort of thing, and feeling that I should have a typewriter along in order to do something with the time. Eventually though, this feeling passed and I flung myself wholeheartedly into the beautiful monotony of dozing in a deck chair in the sun, jumping into the pool to cool off, eating and sitting in one of the recreation rooms listening to the deplorable ship's orchestra giving recitals whilst I calmly sipped beer and watched the sun go into its daily tropical disappearing act - going, going, - whoosh - gone.

Now it always seemed to me that when one is doing nothing all day then one isn't likely to be too interested in food. How wrong this is. By comparison with my normal food intake I ate like fury on this trip. At meals I would eat every course and some of my fellow passengers went twice through the menu at each meal - except maybe breakfast. In the afternoon I'd find myself checking my watch to see if it were 3:30 and time to go down to the dining room for afternoon tea. And so it was that my waist-line which had sneakily been enlarging itself over the previous couple of years became even more noticeably developed. Then the dreadful realization of this dawned I spoke firmly to myself and said, "Barrett, this will not do. You must exercise." And this I did. Secretly in my cabin I would go through a routine of press-ups, chinning and toe touching. Little progress was made in this thing but the matter sorted itself out in Hong Kong where heat and humidity of a kind I had never before encountered,

and starvation generally, took its toll of my surplus flesh plus some extra that I could ill afford to lose.

Every day presented a new challenge. There was a boat drill for the crew one morning and passengers had been asked to stay out of their way as much as possible. I went down to my cabin to get something or other and passed several seamen strung out along the length of the passage in my part of the ship. I had picked up whatever it was that I came for, and had opened the cabin door, and was about to step back out into the corridor, when I heard the words, "Here comes the purser," being passed along in a stage whisper from one crew man to the other. I ducked back into my room again, and slammed the door behind me, thinking "Whew, that was close - another minute and he'd have been right on to me. Then gradually, a realization crept over me. "What have you got to be worried about? - you've got no reason to want to avoid the purser. Neither I had. I opened the door again and stepped out into the corridor. I had a haughty, or paying passenger type stare ready to fix him with in case I should pass him, but I never saw anything that even looked like a purser on my way to the deck. Lucky for him.

A few days out from Sydney a "Gala Night" was programmed, to be preceded by a Cocktail Party on one of the indoor sports areas, and presided over by the Captain. As we came in, the hostess announced our names, the Captain shook our hands and mumbled something politely innocuous, and then pushed us into the dance deck, where his officers were floating around being charming. The trick, of course, was to grasp glasses of Gin as they floated by, or to find some waiter who was willing to take one's order. Everyone drank furiously as did I, feeling that if the P & O were good enough to supply all this free booze, then it was up to the passengers to show their appreciation of this act by drinking as much of it as was possible during the allotted time. When dinner time came I mooched off to my meal feeling pleasantly fonged.

In the lounge that evening right after the "Gala Dinner" I met an actor who was making the trip across to America on the possibility that Leo Carrillo might have something for him. He came in wearing a paper hat and looking like a retired headmaster crew a water pistol, or a squirting flower, or some similar deadly toy from his pocket and sprayed me with water. I sat there all unsmiling, and unmoving with a cool liquid running down my face, and he immediately got all apologetic. I brushed aside his apologies, and we started talking. "Are you English?" he asked, and I replied, "No, I'm a New Zealander."

"I knew you weren't Australian," he went on, "your voice is much too good to be an Australian one."



This is a fine beginning to use when talking with some one from New Zealand. New Zealanders love being told that their voices are far superior to those uncouth sounding Australian ones. We talked for quite a while about the theatre in Australasia. All the major productions of Broadway successes that tour New Zealand are first mounted in Australia. He had played in THE PAJAMA GAME as the girl's father, but when the show had been taken across to New Zealand, a different actor had travelled with it in his part. I'd seen the play in New Zealand and thought that the part had been played rather well. This actor agreed, with the reservation that he didn't think that this new chap had brought to the part the understanding that he had given it.

He reminisced about his life in the Theatre. "I've never been a star you know but I've always got good parts, and I've played with some of the theatre's greats." He gave me a list of the names that he had acted with, and although a lot of them were completely unknown to me, one name that he mentioned was that of a figure of international standing who to my way of thinking must be one of the best actors in the world. I asked him about this actor, and waffled on enthusiastically about a one man show that I'd seen him do.

"Oh yes, a great actor. A great actor, and such a wonderfully natural person. When he's in London you'll sometimes see him out at the markets, carrying a shopping kit, and doing all his own shopping just as though he were no one of importance. Never any "side" at all. Of course he's homosexual y u know; well, Bi, anyway.

First sitting at meals gave me the advantage of going to the first sitting at the cinema. There were two screenings on the way up to Hong Kong, and two on the way back. On the Himalaya they were PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES, and THE LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN. So, I saw the last named twice and viewing it on board ship gave me a slight edge on those who saw the film in Australia. None of those who saw it here can remember the words, "Get stuffed," being used, but they were certainly on the sound track of the film I saw. With this film on the Iberia, they showed a couple of old cartoons. One of them was a Tom and Jerry, which I thought had a pretty hip theme and development, and concerned a cat drawn on a blackboard who comes to life as an outline figure. The other was an old Donald Duck cartoon, and in it Donald Duck is trying to get to sleep on one of those beds that fold down from the wall, and of course the thing won't stay down. He has all sorts of mad tussles with it and loses his temper all over the place etc. . In my mind I pictured the way Woody Woodpecker would handle the same situation, and I mentally compared the two performances. I felt that Woody, given the part, would have handled it in a much more hip fashion than

did Donald Duck.

It was a Sunday afternoon about five or six days out from Sydney when we sighted the whales. Some-one shouted, "Look, there's a whale out there." Actually no whale proper had been sighted, but in the far distance a jet of water could be discerned, rising into the air, and then breaking down very quickly into spray. No one could actually see the critturs that were doing all the squirting, but we knew what they were. They, knowing we would not be putting a boat out to pursue them - whales have got awfully large brains - were enjoying the opportunity to do their stuff close enough to be noticed but well beyond rock throwing distance. Some would-be ichthyologist on board claimed that they weren't whales at all but merely dolphins. Dolphins indeed; we knew a whale when we could almost see one.

Around these latitudes too we passed islands - lots of them. They reminded me very vividly of the islands that were used in the filming of SOUTH PACIFIC. They were mostly rugged, covered by dense bush, and looked very inviting. I expected to see Emile DuBeq come riding on a white horse down the trail to the narrow strip of white sand that fringed one of these islands, and wave to us as we passed. He didn't, but I am convinced that it could only have been because he was busy somewhere else that day.

As the ship neared Hong Kong, talk among the passengers was of an anticipatory nature. Lying on the deck one would pick up fragments of the conversations going on, and it would sound something like this, "mumble mumble Suzy Wong, free of duty . . . Suzy Wong...only 30/- per night including the hotel room. . . new camera and transistor radio...Suzy Wong..." and so on into the long afternoons now growing more humid as the distance shortened between us and the place that was to be the first major port of call for the ship and my home for the next three months.

If the Himalaya had a better feel to it and better food the Iberia made up for its deficiencies to some degree by having slightly better facilities for its passengers. The Tourist class swimming pool was larger and folding beds were provided for those who wanted to sleep out of doors as we passed through the tropics. The beds were things to be held on to once gained and people could be seen pootling off to their cabins carrying their folding bed to prevent anyone else from grabbing it. I sort of got the impression that these beds were not occupied always by only one person at a time. As is always being remarked, "seems to be something about ship board life that does something to a woman..." Fortunately for those of an amorous nature neither ship was too full when I was travelling in them, and trysting places were not too hard to find. One of my cabin



mates on the Iberia got himself covered with grease in a life boat that he happened to find himself in one night, but I don't think there was much serious misadventure really. None that was apparent during the voyage, anyhow.

At breakfast one morning we heard that one of the passengers had died during the night. He was a fairly elderly guy who had been on a tour with his wife. One of the side deck areas had been closed to the passengers, and he had been buried at sea at 8:30 AM. None of us knew him, but it was a gloomy little thought to have with breakfast and took us about a half an hour to get over.

Crossing the equator is not the big thing that it was once. There was a party on the Iberia to celebrate the thing, but it was in the morning, several hours after the actual crossing, which had been made at about 2 AM. On both of the crossings I made I was asleep at the critical moment. It disappointed me a little that at least one of the crossings couldn't have been made in daylight because I have heard that on a clear day one can see a very faint line stretching away into the distance that marks the actual division of the two hemispheres.

One afternoon I stumbled into one of the indoor recreation areas that had been blacked out so that some of the passengers could project 35mm slides of their travels so far. Now this is one of the most dismal things that I can imagine. Somehow, the thought of watching slide after depressing slide of places people have been really gives me the screaming meemies. I avoid these things like the plague, and if I run into people who have cameras and take 35mm photos of everything they see, then I always get in early and tell them how I feel about such things just in case they should ever think of asking me to an evening of viewing. Of course, I make an exception for slides of an erotic and/or pornographic nature. I feel a man has to show some tolerance somewhere along the line.

I shared a table with a married couple who were coming back to Australia from the United States where they had been living. The husband, named Paul, was a die maker or some such thing, and we became ship-board friends. Our table was one of the few to have a European waiter. In our case, an Irishman named Steve Ahearn. Paul one night asked Steve whether it was better serving in the first class dining room or in the tourist class. Paul was thinking in terms of ease of serving and so forth, but Steve whose mind seldom departed from thoughts of the opposite sex, put a different construction on the question. He went on at some length about how much better it was to be in the tourist class dining room because there were always more

unattached girls there to make passes at than there were at the other end of the ship. One of the ship's officers that I spoke with held a similar viewpoint although he didn't go into the detail that Steve did. Keeping in one's own class is a big thing on board ship, but I guess that the search for love cuts across such distinctions.

A couple of times Steve took Paul and me back to the focsle for a drink. For some reason the crew were the only ones on board that had San Miguel beer at their disposal, and as I had formed a passionate love for San Miguel, I made the most of the opportunity to get my hands on some. In the passengers' bars the only beer available seemed to be Carlsburg which I considered kind of watery. On one of the trips back I took a bottle of Scotch back with me to be shared with Steve, Paul and another crew member friend of Steve's. It was about two nights out of Sydney, and some of the passengers had organized a party with a £1 entry fee, which entitled one to all the booze that one could drink. I didn't have that sort of money through having used my last - practically - few shillings for the buying of "Old Spice" for half price. I did have a bottle of Scotch though, having bought one on the way up to Hongkong intending to give it to Art Wilson when I saw him. As I never did get to see Art and somehow never got around to opening it, I took it away with me when I left but determined that it wouldn't enter Australia. At the commencement of our exclusive little party, I found that Steve and I were the only ones that drink the stuff, and so the job of getting rid of it fell to us. Now I am not an impressive sort of drinker, and a half a bottle of Scotch consumed in two hours produced an inevitable result in me. I have a photo I took out on the deck by flashlight and self-timer device on the camera of the four of us, and one of us looks more peculiar, and under the weather than the other three and that one is me.

At about 11:30pm, with the Scotch consumed and the bottle ceremoniously consigned to the Kingdom of King Neptune, I staggered off in search of adventure. My instincts led me to one of the upper enclosed decks that had been appropriated for the £1 per head party. The area was filled with noisy, alcoholic type gaiety, and I wandered through the door. Some-one asked me for a ticket. With the shrewdness and ready wit that has long been a hallmark of my conversation I answered this request with a somewhat out of focus (plug) stare and a "Huh, I don't have any ticket." The man looked at me for about a minute and then said, "You've got to have a ticket. This part of the deck is reserved for those who have tickets." Some other type came over then and sort of manoeuvred me out through the door saying



as he did, "Now look, you've obviously just come from a party with some of the other first class passengers", (I guess it's because of the fact that I'm just naturally inconspicuous that people were always assuming that I was a first class passenger - they hadn't noticed me and so assumed that I came from the other end) "now it wouldn't be right to try and crash this one, would it?" I stood and stared at the man for a few moments - all alcohol fumes and offended dignity, and then said, in the most portentous tone that I could manage, "Sir, were I sober I would contest the legality of this ejection." Feeling that I had made my mark for the evening, and that this brilliant rebuttal wasn't likely to be topped, I decided to retire. The journey to my cabin was a hazardous one due to the efforts of the walls of the passages to confuse me by leaping into my path unexpectedly or disappearing when I reached out to touch them. Once safely home I let my clothes fall off me and then performed the necessary gymnastics required for getting into one of the top bunks. Once there, consciousness left me. The happy epilogue to this evening of mild debauch, was that on the following morning I got up to breakfast more or less as though nothing had happened the night before. . . . If I didn't feel quite as brilliant as I would have liked I nevertheless felt quite reasonable, and I did get there. There weren't a hell of a lot of first sitting passengers who were able to make the same claim.

Between Sydney and Melbourne I was sea sick. So were at least half of the passengers. We left Sydney about lunch time, hit bad weather outside the harbour, and it got worse and worse. In the lounge after lunch (I had had curry - there was always curry, it was in the ship's rules) whilst drinking coffee, I got to thinking, wouldn't it be funny if we had some really rough seas now. Well, we did and it wasn't. Half way through my second cup of coffee I decided that it was time for me to take a stroll on deck. Lots of other people had the same idea. In the lounge people were staring greenly at each other, trying to put on a brave front, and then suddenly hurrying out and heading deck-wards. Everywhere there were miserable people sprawled out on deck chairs looking as though they were waiting for Death's merciful release. I looked out over the rail at a sea that reminded me of movies of the Atlantic at its worst, then said goodbye to my lunch, and staggered off below decks to my cabin. There was to be a dance that night, but I doubt whether anyone attended. I was told the next day that there had been hardly anyone at dinner. It was calmer the next day, but my stomach muscles were twisted, and felt strained, and it was a couple of days before the ache left me.

Now I don't want to finish this on a gloomy note so we'll go back in time a few days to a visit I made to the bridge. About fifty of us crocodiled up through forbidden first class decks and through mysterious ways until we at last reached this most holy of places. Several rooms were filled with odd equipment and there was actually an Able Seaman looking type standing at a ship's wheel steering - just like in the old days. Several junior officers had been told off to answer our mainly dumb and rather obvious questions, and altogether it was jolly interesting to watch these brave souls coping with a mass concentration of dopiness. My chance to ask the question that had been bothering me came when after a lengthy and not too well understood, by us, dissertation on de-gaussing our officer was foolish enough to say, "Now, if you've any other questions about the running of the ship, then please ask then." "Well yes," I said, "I have. Why is it laid down in ships regulations that we have to have curry on the menu every day?"

Mervyn Barrett, 1963.

But Sir -  
You don't  
seem to  
realize - I  
have a deadline  
to make.





Sydney  
At  
to North Sydney  
Faster

BARRETT  
Dixon  
FOYSTER

one - dixon

Yes, i can see right through this foyster bloke; the simple incentive of bribery having failed - "you keep the copyright" - he now adopts Tactic Two - flattery. This he handles with the usual skill and charm - "would you like to write me a couple of pages about your impressions of Sydney - something must have happened while you were there."

And of course he's right something did happen; and his ploy may work, if my curiosity about Tactic Three doesn't get there first.

I may have got a lovely letter today, but everybody knows all about that business, except maybe me and some other Bs. (Yes, i have noticed it, but i have more trouble with D'd myself)

The difficulty is that after Friday Morning Sydney both gradually and abruptly became a part of the business, or perhaps that business caught up with me. (i had a very quick trip up.) And all the incidents are a part of it.

For example, in the George, my first Zen Sanic tried to give the girl understanding - enlightenment, if you know the language. Here she was quite harmlessly sitting down on one chair with her legs on another, and naturally enough knees in between. So he - rather well dressed by the way, at least relatively - makes a series of mystic passes in the air about a yard in front of her, looking after each one to see if she has attained enlightenment, and when she doesn't moving closer to the floor and peanut shells. She mystified asks the people at the next table when he gives up and fades to wherever we go, they say Zen Buddhist, and i now fascinated try to explain. Next time i'll eat my cigarette and spit the butt at his feet.

Or the man in the Wynyard bus who at about four o'clock pm is very taken by her face hair smile etc (who later stuck his head out the window next to one of those goldenwool matrons - SHE rapidly moved forward one seat and across - he hadn't combed his hair and besides he smelt of BEER) and smiled and stared; just long enough for me to be able to bounce up and say "Sorry mate she doesn't" to his immediate disgust and, rather later, amusement, her delight (CHEE) and my secret gratification.

Or the beer she drank on Sunday Night, poured on me, and chased down the lily-white socur with uncounted yards of city water almost indecently soon.

Or the dipper full of green pot (?).

Or the fiveman pecking order for the gass new bass.

Or simple a colgate goodnight or a sleepy revolt.

But i must be able to dissociate myself, otherwise i'll never be able to go back again afterwards. The city itself?

More of us, and so more to enjoy what there was to enjoy. Music - try to be at El Rocco on tuesday night for Don Burrows and Judy Bailey. Ray Price - i cant get used to the idea of being able to drink while i listen to jazz, but i dont suppose it really matters with trad. Otherwise (i was only at el r. on saturday night so can afford to generalize ) the scene was not good. Jazz Cellar has closed or moved or been promoted to a higher plane or sphere or summit.

And the folks are more varied; youre more likely to be able to find someone you can talk to (even if they dont say anything its fun listening) and almost anywhere too, even in public pisswalls - have you noticed in this lovely city that everybody carefully avoids looking, at the Balwyn theatre they even have huge pipe divisions between the parking spots?

The layout of the city; old mainly, crowded, unplanned and fun, but i suspect you would soon get annoyed and then maybe grow to love.

Buses i dont like, the trains do have square wheels and carriages to match. Ferries make too much noise to too littlr effect. Planes i remember as being OK but then theyre cosmostatic. (id like to see TAA name one the Charles Addams.) Lots of theatres and cinemas but i think smaller proportion - is it possible - of ok shows.

Thought of making a case for the place being stunted by its geography - mountains (!) - and this limiting the citizens who have to find their outlet (since no sunday driving simply for pleasure) on a less physical or rather more personal level.

i hope not everybody gets drunk that often.

DidyouhearaboutthenightcartmanwhowenttoKatoombaforhistwoweekleave,arrivingearlyinthemorning?Assoonasheshittheplatformhetookthreedeeppbraethsofthehealthful lairandofcoursefainted.Tookthreecanstobringhimround.

i actually entered the city proper - from Liverpool - by train. This would have been at about 5.30pm and between greasy fish and chips, the Daily Sun, and lack of sleep i was not displaying optimum performance. And darkening too, so i only registered flashes of the scene; backyards and a bit higher up robin boyds original Ugliness, but made worthwhile by one glorious wellkept green and concrete walk and loverparkbenched Park. And this was more or less typical of the whole city or rather of all my impressions - drabness and squalor completely saved by the occasional or rare flash of neatness, love, communication and/or joy.

17 people were hopped on pot.



At least one on beer.

Next question?

two - BARRETT

#### A TIME BEFORE MOTION

Spencer Street Railway Station. It's a hard cold almost frosty night. Tomorrow is Good Friday and we're off to Sydney for Easter. Jill and I stand waiting on the platform surrounded by our luggage. She has a suitcase and a rug and I have a canvas travelling bag filled with clothing and stuff, an air bed, and my Good Health Forever Bag filled with camera and ancillary equipment and maybe a book or two. The train is a "special" and is due to leave at 10pm. "Special" is railways parlance for old. This train is an extra one to carry all those people who want to go to Sydney but weren't wise enough to book six months in advance a seat on a less primitive conveyance. A voice from a loud-speaker advises us that the arrival of the train is imminent and that carriage 'D' will be the one next to the baggage car at the end of the train. Carriage 'D', that's us. I brief Jill on the necessity for being first in so that we can make sure that we get prime luggage rack space. We move to where we think the train will stop and it does. The carriage door is right in front of us - but locked. Where is the man with the special tool? He's nowhere in sight; but - Barrett to the rescue. I insert the blade of my pocket knife into the hole in the door and wiggle it around, the tumblers click and the promised land is no longer denied us. A cheer goes up and I am the hero of the carriage. We are swept in a wave along the corridor of the carriage and there is our compartment: seats 16 to 23 inclusive. First in we arrange our luggage on the racks and stand there looking smug while the other six occupants fight their way in. Six? - suddenly there are eight and two of them, quite desirable young wenches both, are demanding our seats. I stand up cloaked in righteousness and grandly display my reservation slip to these poor befuddled females who have got into the wrong carriage. "There" I proclaim, "Car 'D', Seats 21 and 22."

"But this is carriage 'B' the females exclaim in chorus. Around us, the other passengers, until now mute witnesses of this drama, nod in confirmation of the girls' statement. I deflate. We drag our baggage off the racks and suddenly it seems we are encumbered with twice the amount of movable property that we came in with. The corridor is crowded - it's impossible to get out the way we came in. The narrowness of the passage makes it barely possible for people of slim to medium build to flatten past each other - but not with arms extended over suitcases. The solution - out through a window. John Foyster suddenly materialises on the platform outside and we make frantic faces at each other. We force open a corridor window - no small task in itself - pass out our belongings a piece at a time, then follow it ourselves, via the same exit. A walk along the platform from where carriage 'D' should be to where it actually is, another struggle, but this time to get in, and we are at last in the right compartment. We jam our baggage into the pitifully inadequate space left

by our luggage-rack-hogging fellow passengers and I find myself idly wondering why all my journeys seem to start in such confused fashion.

#### BREAKFAST BREAK

After a night of fitful sleep in positions ranging from bolt-uprightness to advanced Yoga I look forward to the regenerative effects of a good breakfast. Nothing far out or fancy, you understand; orange juice and bacon and eggs, with maybe some toast and hot black coffee. Our train has no dining car and breakfast will be available at Goulbourn station refreshment rooms. Alas for my dreams, no meals are being served at table. Dreary-looking sandwiches are available, uninspired-looking fruitcake and Railway Station Tea. We settle for the fruitcake and tea and a packet of biscuits which we consume, seated on the wooden pedestrian bridge that spans the tracks, in the 9am sunshine. Then, into the bar. It's Good Friday morning and the bar is open. Neither Jill nor myself feel very much like drinking but the opportunity to sin must be grasped whenever it presents itself. I drink Scotch and water and Jill a Gin Line and soda. She drinks it without the benefit of ice because they haven't any. The train whistle screeches, the carriages give a warning lurch and 400 one-time human beings, fearful of being left languishing in a limbo of moldering fruitcake, fight their way back on board for a further three and a half hours of high speed boredom.

#### GRIEF ENCOUNTER

It is nearly 5 pm on Saturday and Jill and I are walking through the centre of the city looking for the Royal George. Neither of us are too sure so I decide to ask someone.

"Excuse me" I say to the first likely looking bod that I can intercept, "can you tell me how to get to King Street?" His reply is, of course, "I'm sorry, but I'm a stranger here." I don't know why this is but if there is one thing sure in this life it is that the first person one picks on to ask directions of in a strange city won't be able to give them to one. The next person I try isn't too sure but he says, "Hang on, I'll check it for you," and he pulls out a large map of the city from his pocket and starts unfolding it. I don't know why it is but if there is anything in this world that un-nerves me it's when someone that I've asked directions of hauls out a streetmap. It sort of gives me the creeps and I want to run away screaming. "No, look, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. I'll find it." But I'm trapped. I must stand and watch while the map blows up all over his face as he tries to read it. He emerges from it after what seems like hours - "I don't know, it doesn't seem to be here." I don't know quite what to say. And then, on the opposite sidewalk, I see Ian Dixon and a girl striding purposefully up the street. He can only be going to the Royal George. We shout "Thank you all the same" to our would-be guide and leave him staring morosely into the map that has betrayed him.

#### THE WAY OF "THE CROSS"

Warned by Jeff about the quality and price of the food, Ron and Marie have



taken advantage of the fifteen minutes or so before the next show is due to start to go out and take in nourishment. We sit at a table beside the stage, Jill and Jeff sipping their coffee, me gulping mine - I'm that sort of coffee drinker - and we talk about Sydney, music generally, New Zealand - because Jeff too is a New Zealander - and the music scene in Melbourne. Jeff tells us how bugged he is starting to get by the rather limited musical environment of a strip-tease show. To my way of thinking there should be compensations inherent in such employment. Could it be that the root of his frustrations lies in the fact that due to the somewhat cramped conditions prevailing on the bandstand it has been necessary to place the piano so that the pianist is facing away from the performers? I wonder.....

A few steps from the narrow street wherein this place is located are the main thoroughfares of Kings Cross. Thousands of people are walking around in the hope that something will happen. They are window-shopping, pausing outside night clubs to look at the pictures of the generally unknown performers - the main night spots are downtown mostly - and now and then they stop to have a drink (coke or coffee or milk shake because by now the pubs are closed). Kings Cross is the junction of William and Victoria Streets and Bayswater and Darlinghurst Roads, and an indeterminate area surrounding which is given over to retail selling, entertainment, eating and drinking. It is determinedly cosmopolitan, naively bohemian, and has an air of optimistic phoniness. People go there to see life, and because they go there in such numbers, their presence provides that quality for which they are searching.

So that's where we are, Kings Cross, and we are in an establishment owned by Abe Saffron. I am told that he owns quite a bit of property around the area - private hotels and such - but I don't think it would be unfair to say that, generally speaking, he could be described as a purveyor of girls. Girls for short time use in the cribs just off Palmer Street or girls to be looked at as in the place - THE STACCATO.

At a couple of minutes before 11 pm Jeff excuses himself and walks around the stage and up onto the little bandstand where he is joined by the other three members of the band. Music is sorted out and the musicians take their places. A voice from a concealed speaker welcomes us to THE STACCATO, the band starts the theme from PETER GUNN going and through the curtained doorway to the right of the bandstand steps a tall brunette. She is carrying an old-fashioned candlestick a la Wee Willie Winkie and is wearing a voluminous blue negligee. The unseen emcee introduces her as "... our first dancer, Miss Tracy Lee - the only stripper in Australia who uses a candle." She keeps moving for most of her number and only pauses to remove parts of her costume. Each piece of her wardrobe, as it is removed, is flung down through the curtain to the just off-stage dressing room even though it might have been unhitched at some other part of the stage and while I dare say that this is a practical thing and keeps the floor of the stage uncluttered it does tend to rob the act of a certain suggestion of spontaneity. She bows off after about five minutes wearing the local, legal minimum - a G string and pasties.

"Enter now, Simone," making her final appearance here tonight before leaving for the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas." Some similar fiction is told about most of the girls as they come on. The routines are all pretty similar too, with about the only noticeable difference being that some of the girls chose to be in motion for most of the time while others like to work on one part of the stage for most of their act.

"And now," says the unseen emcee, "all the way from Jamaica - Miss Opal Stone." She is darkskinned and of a leaner build than the two previous girls, with large, though kind of saggy, breasts. The band plays "Let's Twist Again" and she does a wild, mad, strip/twist routine and looks as though she really enjoys doing it. Her somewhat amused, sexy, look really gets across to me. I'm very impressed. Ron and Marie return from their eating and I'm really sorry that Ron missed this one. He understands what I'm getting at when I tell him about her.

Between girls I look about me at the room and the other customers. The decor is coffeeshop mishmash with theatrical pretensions. The stage on which the girls dance is about 6" above the tabletops and runs about two-thirds of the room length. There are two rows of tables on our side of the room but only one on the opposite side and a bench seat running along the wall. Also along this wall is a mirror and the strippers use it to keep a check on their act. Several tables are unoccupied and the audience is mostly male. Those women present are terribly well escorted lest anyone should think that this is anything more than just another night out on the town to them.

The performance continues. Annette, Sherry, Karen... Eight girls in all. All of them tall and most of them wellfleshed and curvy. Some perform their routines in rather perfunctory fashion and others put more energy and enthusiasm into their stripping. All of them give the impression of being more than capable dancers.

For some reason - an almost fatal fascination I have for strippers? - several of the girls chose a position on the stage right in front of me to go into a highspot of their disrobing. One of them spends about three minutes on her knees in front of me moving her breasts around about 18" away from my eyes, then slowly, rising to her feet, she takes a nylon scarf that she has been wearing and places it behind her thighs so that it hangs down behind her, and then, by rubbing her thighs together she works the scarf forward through her legs so that it now hangs down in front of her to her knees. I wear my sympathetically-interested and objective look and allow my gaze to wander from the area between her thighs and her navel (noticing that the cloth stretched across here looks interestingly damp), up to her breasts and back again. Occasionally, because I am something of a pervert I suppose, I look at her face. It's pretty and she has nice eyes. Stripper Number 8 bows off and the houselights go up. End of performance. We walk out into the street and towards the car. Ron and I are comparing preferences and dislikes in female anatomy....

LATER, DOWNTOWN

Danita Jo just walks on, starts to sing, and I am gone. Everything is done



at medium to fast tempos and though later I think it would have been nice to hear her sing a ballad this is just nit-picking. She is wearing a long, white close-fitting gown and her figure is full to the point of plumpness. She looks good. Her accompaniment is the trio she carries augmented by the house band. By swinging a crafty half-price deal Ron and Marie and Jill and I are in watching the 1.30 am show. Andre's is a fairly large place, low-ceilinged and well-decorated and carpeted. It has a nice feel to it for a club and good service. It is almost full to capacity this night which I consider kind of amazing considering that strictly speaking, the Easter holiday has finished and we are well into working day Tuesday.

Andre's had had a lot of success with English singer Shirley Bassey some months before and so some mentally-poverty-stricken flack has billed Danita Jo in the advertisements as "America's answer to Shirley Bassey". This has obviously preyed on the mind of one of the women present who had more than likely caught Shirley Bassey's appearance at Andre's. She is of indeterminate age, wearing a black (flattering for the more mature figure) evening gown and during a lull between numbers she claws her way to a standing position and in raucous slurred tones addresses herself to the performer on stage. "You're supposed to be America's Shirley Bassey so let me hear you sing 'As Long As He Needs Me'." Danita Jo is obviously terribly bugged but she answers politely and with very little anger getting through in her voice - "I'm sorry but I don't know that song. I've heard it and it's a very pretty song but I don't know it well enough to sing it for you." The head waiter hurries over to the noisy one and says something to her (I would like to think he is saying, "Interrupt the show again like that baby, and I'll kick your teeth in.") and she sits down. The show continues and for a while I feel really bad about the incident. I don't know why really. I guess that anyone who's an entertainer in night clubs has come up against this sort of thing often enough but I always feel embarrassed when it happens in my presence. I feel outraged as well too, that anyone can be so uncool and insulting. Danita Jo sings on communicating to this person a fantastic joyful feeling. In a weird way it's almost a spiritual experience. When she finally ends he set I sit there feeling sort of high, and limp, at the same time. We have been drinking beer and claret while we watch her and although my perceptions may have changed a bit because of this I don't think it makes much difference to me in the kick that I get from Danita Jo. Her bass player sits and talks with us for a while. I enthuse about the performance I have just seen but he has his reservations on it. He doesn't think it is as good as some other performances they've given. All I can say to that is, "Golly."

On the way out we pass the singer's manager/husband. I collar him and enthuse for about a minute on the subject of Danita Jo's singing. The mixture of claret and beer has made me at once both inarticulate and loquacious. What I say probably doesn't make much sense to him but I mean all the complementary things I want to say, though.

As we walk up the stairs to the street Ron asks me, "Do you think she's sexy?"

"Well, yes," I say, "but not in the obvious sensual sort of way. To me she

she is sexy is a kind of fantastically warm, honest feminine way .... I don't know...." I am lost in the wonder of Danita Jo.

#### ALTITUDE AND AFTERMATH

At 6.30am, a full two hours after I have retired, I am shaken into a state bearing some resemblance to wakefulness. At 8.30am a TAA Viscount rises from Mascot aerodrome into a clear Autumn sky and, after careful scrutinising of certain known instruments, its pilot heads his craft in the direction of South and Melbourne. On it, securely strapped into position is a precious cargo. Namely, me. The trip is a smooth one and I enjoy it. I read the Sydney morning papers, some SF, doze a little, drink some coffee and look out the window.

Melbourne is enjoying a fine day and as the airways bus brings me closer to the city the wrongness of having to work straight after hopping off a plane like this becomes more and more apparent.

A great part of me is still back in Sydney. Work is sheer Hell and as the lack of sleep over the long weekend makes itself felt I am wishing that somebody would come along and fire me so that I could go home to bed.

But nobody does.....

#### three - FOYSTER

Originally Lee-Harding was going with us, but in the end he just couldn't make it. In a sense I was glad because this increased my chances of having somewhere to sleep. I now planned to doss at John Baxter's, but there was still the problem of finding just where he lived. One can hardly sleep in a Post Office Box. This was all in the future as Tony Sander gave me a lift to the station from the Melbourne SF Club - I attend roughly once in three months and can't afford to miss an opportunity. I groped my way to my seat and began to search for Mervyn and Jill who should have been in the next compartment, but weren't. On the one hand I wasn't worried, because Mervyn is rarely early for any engagement, but on the other, if he didn't show then I might have a little trouble finding a place to stay until I found Baxter's. When the time for the train to leave came I became a little upset and, going to search, found him in a far compartment and carriage. A few quick moves and they were in the right carriage.

The journey was a rapid one, and only a few memories remain, like the train pulling in to Albury at 2am and all the passengers walking a mile and finding the cafe closed. Like the coffins on Goulbourn station that were still there when I passed through again a couple of days later. Like passing through Bowral, former home of JBaxter.

When we did arrive, the first concern was to find Ron Polson, this was readily done, and with him were Ben Goffman and wife. I'd met most of these friends of Mervyn's in Melbourne at one time or another, so we were not complete strangers. All getting into one car was a little difficult. After beachifying ourselves in the afternoon, it became necessary to really go into the business of finding JBaxter.



## ON THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME SWINE

This is Mervyn Barrett's title, not mine. He got wise and quit writing rather than tackle the subject. Now I knew where John USED to live as I'd been there a couple of times before. I also knew that his new place was within a couple of miles of the old one. But this was about all. I suspected that no one in Sydney knew. But I rang, or tried to ring, Bob Smith anyhow. Hewas out. Next step was to go down to the former habitation. And there Mervyn and I found a singularly uninformative landlady. At this point it became pretty obvious that I was going to have to kip at Polson's and with the Goffmans staying there as well it was going to be a little crowded. This being settled, Mervyn, Jill and I went out to Mike Baldwin's. Mike just remembered us and we spent the evening talking rather unfannish matters. Micheal was still the simple unspoiled youth I'd met two years before. It was while out that way that a final solution to the sleeping problem was devised. I recalled a fellow named Steve Lord who knew John fairly well two years before, and if he hadn't moved or still knew John then I had a chance. But that was for the morning.

When we did eventually get up it was a nice sunny day, as they say. Mervyn and I choofed off in the general direction of Lord's. He was home and indeed said, on being asked, " sure, he lives right across the street." Then he took us across the street to the Baxter home which was an upstairs flat. We knocked. No response. Etc. for about ten minutes. Then we went out and threw newspapers at the window. Eventually one lodged on the ledge. That bum Baxter. Steve suggested breakfast, so we piled in his wagon and headed for North Sydney. There was one place open. We fiddled round there and then headed back for Baxterland, by now a little anxious. Up the stairs knock knock knock. No reaction. Down to the front again. Much discourtesy to the Baxter parents with a little of it spilling in John's direction. Then a teddy-bear figure walked around the corner of the house. "I thought I heard voices", he said. We missed each other on the stair. John foolishly agreed to put up with me. This settled it was back to Polson's to plan the day - at about 11.30 am. 'Twas to be movies in the afternoon and then probably out to an hotel to observe Polson in action. At this point our desires crossed and I wound up at SAWDUST AND TINSEL while Mervyn and Jill went to WEST SIDE STORY. "Meet you at the George afterwards" we said to each other. Coming out of S&T I suggested going to the George, but Roz didn't like the idea. It seemed she'd had a disagreement with one of the Georgian types. OK, makes for Foyster to the George.

Much more crowded than on two year before journey - makes for back room sees Jill or was it Mervyn? - sees same painting on wall, a lit le more dilapidated, certainly no more complete - sees Ian Dixon with doll named Helen - sees mediocre guitar-player avec large crowd - sees lonely beatnik-watcher in corner- downstairs to scrape up the one who wasn't upstairs. Up and out. Unscrape because Mervyn thinks Roz should come down. Up and Off, grab same, down, up and out again - tea, not wanted but had. Mervyn and Jill off to Polson's and hotel. Roz and I off to LA NOTTE - miserable - happy

birthday Max. toujours. talk and sleep.

Next morning, I think, John suggested that we go to visit the Maltby's, recent friends of his and Harding and much admired. This is OK by me as I have no objections to occasionally meeting intelligent people. It turns out that they live just up the road from Ron's place. Both Brian and Veronica are sculptors (pardon) and their workshop is most beautiful. John has quite a lot to say to Brian, but I find myself in such complete agreement with Brian's viewpoint that I have little to say. Later when I saw the library, I could have mistaken it for mine own. Consider this a reminder to contact them again.

I think we then went back to Baxter's to decide whether or not to go to Ron's party that night. We probably played records and other exhilarating things.

We did go to the party, which was a gas. Ian Dixon and friend were there. A couple of the trio with Danita Jo seem to have been there. As Ian Dixon has indicated, there were 5 bassists, to which were added, in various ways, three pianists, three drummers, and at least two saxophonists. John described it as the best jazz he'd heard live. Too much. I liked it but only partly. Farewell to Ian and Mervyn and that. and we're off. As John can tell you, even if someone weighs only 7 stone, it's no fun carrying them uphill. Eventually we drop Roz off and return to the Baxter home. John and I were more or less nodding off when he asked if I would like to go for a wk. As things were I agreed.

First we headed north, and when we'd gone a few miles the scenery began to pall; so we headed back, looking for somewhere to eat. When we'd crossed the bridge it was around 5 and we were getting a little tired, so a taxi was called for and it was up to the cross for most expensive coffee and hamburger, or, in my case, Pepsi and hamburger - but you know about Pepsi and me. At six we caught a cab back to John's and he went to bed (I hope) and I went and caught my train back to Melbourne. I don't think I got a great deal of sleep. Just as we were starting, the beatnikwatcher from the George got in and sat more or less opposite me. He got out a selection of SF. I retched for my gun.

The journey was enlivened by one of those twirps who makes the subject of his conversation the people around him. I listened to his stuff occasionally and disgustedly. But when he started telling the young lady next to him about the dirty magazine I was reading (called ESQUIRE, by the way) I looked up. I was bigger than he.

Back to school the next day.

Sydney is a most remarkable place, and this journey inspired in me a longer stay, which I managed in May. We are all fascinated by Sydney. Ian Dixon has just returned from another visit and Mervyn Barret is going up in October. If anything exciting happens.....

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PART ONE - IAN DIXON, university student and all that.

PART TWO - MERVYN BARRETT, fan and perhaps other things as well.

PART THREE - ME.



# ● LETTERS ○ ○ ○

JOHN M. BAXTER

WILD COLONIAL BOY 3 turned up, as promised (threatened?) in your letter. Gracias. Good to see those Bennie covers fulfilling their destiny, even at this late date. What has happened to the other (better) ones Chris did for TtP? I have a couple of proofs, so I assume full runs were done, but to my knowledge they have never been used on a 'zine. If I thought I could get a reply out of Chris, I'd write and ask about them.

Jesus H. Christ! What on earth moved you to reprint Chandler's poem? I can still remember reading it in a crummy one-shot (called CROSS-SECTION, I think) that Graham Stone put out on the occasion of the last Sydney convention. Even over the chasm of the years, I wince at the memory of it. If ever a piece deserved the sleep of the forgotten it's this one. Why not run some decent reprints, if you're so set on doing this sort of thing? You must have quite a few old fuz that contain items worth immortalisation. If not, I'll be glad to supply you with a few.

You are not the first to get the polite brush-off from the public library. Every faneditor goes through it at some time or other. Did I ever tell you about the time that a copy of Bunyip was smuggled into the monthly Appraisal Committee Meeting at the Sydney Public Library? My cousin was in charge of amateur pubs. like Bunyip at the time and, in a fit of dubious humour, she put that particular crudpub in among the vellum-bound ten guinea colonial journals and the monographs on abo- customs. Remind me to tell you about it sometime. Also about the occasion on which the University of New England requested a copy, apparently under the impression that it was a spare-time publication edited by J.P. Baxter, Chancellor of the University of NSW.

I resent very much that comment about me being "so serious it hurts" and so on. I'm sercon-inclined, of course - that's obvious. But you make me out to be such a humourless bastard that I confess myself somewhat put out. What are you basing this judgement on? My writing? If so I think you're being overly tough. The plain fact of the matter is that Australians are almost forced to write sercon stuff to be published in the top-quality fuz. By nature, they don't have the background or experience necessary to compete with American humourists like Burbee, Carr and the rest of them. I think I went into this somewhere before - the sharper American sense of humour, brought on by early social competition and so on? You may remember it? On reflection, it's obvious that Australians have neither the fire of the Americans or the considered wit of the English, but rather an unsalable combination of both. This very effectively cuts them out of the running so far as comedy is concerned and so they have to fall back of serious stuff.

This may astonish you, old cock, but I started out as a humour (if not humorous) writer. My first published fanac was an excruciating piece of fanacianish nonsense in Bruce Burn's paraFANalia, which I followed up with a series of letters not much less laboured. Bruce thought they were fine - or that's what he said. Early QUANTUMS and BUNYIPs were well-laced with humour,

either mine or written by Mike Baldwin (remember GOD IN THE MARIJUANA PATCH?) and, on one occasion, a piece written by me in BUNYIP was commended by Ron Bennett as being worthy of reprinting in some anthology of the best fan writing. Around No. 2 or 3, I think it was. And have you read my O'PAZINE SOUFFLE? I won't say it is a fountainhead of fannish sparkle but it's far from "serious" on most occasions. So come on, pal - be fair. I'm no Burbee but occasionally I laugh.

Continuing in this vein, at great risk of appearing more egotistical than usual (which would be hard), I'd like to go into the matter of Redd Boggs remark about my "light-heartedness". (I don't recall it in precisely those words, but I don't have time to check just now) Remember Reid was comparing me with other Aussiefans of the past rather than the present crop. Certainly people like Merv Barrett and yourself wouldn't have come into the reckoning because you produce so little stuff for the general market. I'm sure he thinks of Merv as a New Zealander (I do, I know), and your stuff is mostly for SAPS, of which he is not a member, so..... the result is that I am compared with fans and ex-fans like Don Tuck, Graham Stone, Vol Holesworth, Merv Binns, Ian Crozier, Lee Harding and Dave Cohen. Against that lot, I'm Danny Kaye on roller skates!

AGAPE is sick'sicksicksicksicksicksick

Read either the Calderbook or Meridian edition of Robbe-Grillet's LAST YEAR IN MARIENBAD and you will be in as good a position to comment on it as anybody who has seen the film.

LA NOTTE arrived up here last month, and I for one found it highly enjoyable. A bit obvious, perhaps - I much preferred L'AVVENTURA - but nevertheless most entertaining. One thing that annoys me about the general uncritical comments on LA NOTTE (and Antonioni's work in general) is the way most people concentrate on content and ignore style. For all his symbolism Antonioni is still a supreme stylist who puts Fellini and Resnais in the shade for technique and artistic approach. I have seldom seen a film of more intense visual beauty than LA NOTTE, yet less than one reviewer in ten mentions this aspect of the film when commenting.

Have you seen Resnais' NUIT ET BROUVILLARD? I'd like to, but as far as I can find out, it was never released out here and there is no likelihood of the current revival making it this far. Did catch his L&W study of Van Gogh, however - patchy but fresh. I think Kenneth Clark learned something from Resnais' approach and used a similar style in the recent TV series FIVE REVOLUTIONARY PAINTERS. If you ever have a chance to see that series, do so - it's immensely stimulating.

Speaking of symbolism, try too to see Kazan's SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS. It Jeanne Moreau's walk in the first part of LA NOTTE look like Shirley Temple ON THE GOOD SHIP LOLLYPOP. The football game especially - the symbolism is as



subtle and understated as a knee in the balls.

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Thanks, John, for the most humorous letter I've published all year. Bert Chandler's poem was printed in an expurgated form in CROSSSECTION as you mention. I asked Bert to recreate the original, which he most obligingly did. \*\* I remember GOD IN THE MARIJUANA PATCH very well, and so does Mike Baldwin. Graham Stone is not the only fannish censor in Sydney, it seems, though I have not seen Baldwin's original. Have I told you about seeing the genuine stencils of EXTANT 4? Must be one of the slowest publications in Australian fandom. Mike has the contents page dated 1957-1958 at the top, then 1960 or possibly 1961 at the bottom. He's run off about 12 pages, 150 copies, one side only. There are another 20 or so stencils to be run off, but I fear the expense will be too much for any ordinary fan - I don't mean to insult Michael in any way. \*\* NIGHT AND FOG was on the list for the 1962 Melbourne Film Festival, but didn't show at any of the programs.

ian dixon

note for foyster ; name of ~~http://http~~ talent on this end of the writer is ian dixon not Ian Dixon. He is in low case, and so will be ever and ever when till sells first Shakespearean sonnet for 212.75 = dash- \$A Always forget to say what:THINKS" twohundredandtwelveollarsseventyfive australian". Reason: humble talent feels that can lay no claim to capitals even Melbourne or Melbourne. Besides more arty, 'ficial.

We certainly are working hard aren't we, 3 issues in only 6(?) m.

note for foyster

re: agape

written at white heat (lit.) when languishing in my lonely bed playing host to flu virus - good company, jeh, nice to know somebody cares - blowing tops off of 100° (f) thermometer (sorry Thermometri) So direct all outraged comments to address (home) somewhere below (think)

seems that in having trouble stringing things together, but that's the big trouble about having iq greater than or equal to 100 -no comment- one thinks faster than two can write.

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ps wet is a foam.

A foam is a fan with his mouth wide open - usually just wide enough to admit one foot. Note To The Reader: this was typed on the back of three sticky-taped-together sheets of anticapitalpunishment propaganda. It had an Unprintable Introduction.

page thirtytwo

NERVYN BARRETT

Dear John,

Last week I read your fanzine. I was casting around for something to read in the bath and I thought of your fanzine. Fanzines are good to read in the bath because they are usually not too heavy and it doesn't matter if they get wet. I mean it's usually not much of a loss. Anyhow, I read your fanzine in the bath and I thought it was quite good, but then, after all, any fanzine that has my name in it 3 times can't be all bad. I don't know what to make of the Chandler thing. I'm sure that it must have some significance that escapes me. It couldn't have been written as an entertaining-type thing - no one will ever accept anything on that level these days, particularly in fanzines. It must be a parody of something.

Ian Dixon's AGAPE reminds me that I ran into this young person on Friday night out at "The Swinging Lantern" in South Yarra. Ron Polson was in town for an IMT and so we went out there. They have a very passionate waitress out there and Ian Dixon was there.

I've been thinking seriously about pubbing.....

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Thank you for reading my fanzine in your bath. This is an honour which few people may appreciate. Has not some famous man stated that it is in his bath, or whilst taking one at the very least, that he has his most inspired ideas? That you should use WCB as a means of cerebral stimulus is thus not lightly to be taken. The thought that you might have used it as a plug is disturbing, but not very. I think WCB3 had your name in it 9 times. Try counting in this one.

NERVYN BARRETT FOR TOFF AND OTHERER SUCH TWADDLE.....

HARRY WARNER Jr.

I read The Wild Colonial Boy's January issue under ideal fanzine reading conditions. First a nice girl served me breakfast in bed, then I settled myself by a 20-foot picture window, gazed speculatively at the snow covering the ground outside and the poor people who unlike me had to trudge through it, put on a dressing gown but didn't need to dress more formally and proceeded to go through your fanzine at a leisurely pace, confident that there would be no interruption from the telephone and no need to think about work for weeks. The only thing that distracted me was a teen-age girl coming in and rubbing my back.

Unfortunately, this idyllic situation didn't continue indefinitely, because my busted bones healed up and I left the convalescent home where I enjoyed real luxury thanks to two kinds of insurance that permitted me to splurge. (The place used to be the corporation offices of a large airplane factory. Individual controls over the complete air conditioning in each room, someone to water your flowers twice daily, voice communication with the nurse from the bathroom as well as from the bedside, high fidelity music piped throughout the building, and it even publishes its own fanzine!) I got home one day in late February, returned to work full time two days later, and have



been attempting to catch up ever since on the backlog that was spawned by six weeks of inability to handle most fannish and mundane matters. On a previous incapacitation, I discovered that the only way to catch up eventually consists of handling new stuff as fast as it arises and attending to the backlog in what time remains. If I do it fairly, taking the oldest matters first, the new stuff inevitably exceeds in quantity the old stuff that is being disposed of.

But let's forget about me for the time being, an injunction that most of my acquaintances try to practise, and see what can be done about getting the endlessly delayed comments made on this SAPS publication. I remember that the story by Martin James called up in me a mixed assortment of reactions that morning. I was dissatisfied with what seemed to be obscurity and difficulties created by the author for no good reason by those abrupt transitions. But I was quite impressed by his first-rate handling of detail. It sounds as if he had been long familiar with the emotions and ideas and scenes that he writes about. Most prozine stf. these days gives the reader a suspicion that the author has just looked up such details in a book or asked for a few from a friend. I eventually had the sequence straightened out by the final pages and liked the conclusion. But no writer should ever name a character Melisande in a story that is intended seriously.

The frankness in Bertram Chandler's little article was pleasant. So often the prozine writer leaves the impression, without making the actual statements, that his stories sell within 36 hours of submission, appear two months later, and never needs complete rewriting or imprisonment in the pasteboard box that is sacred to unsaleable scripts.

You can probably sense the combination of frustration and interest that came to me as I read this first part of The Barrett Chronicles in a complete inability to go more than 20 feet in any direction without all sorts of help. (Goodness I forgot on the other page the most important luxury of all, one that I didn't utilise but was glad to have in reserve: hydraulic machinery for people who were too lazy or too weak to get in and out of bed under their own power.) This is exactly the kind of description that I would like to find of my dream city, Vienna, and nothing of the sort is in print in sufficient detail to suit me. Most persons are happy with pictures of far-off places, but I greatly prefer this type of prose to photographs or sketches: the pictures seem somehow lifeless, no matter how well done, in contrast with descriptive writing in which the author's personality is contained. I started once to write such an article about Hagerstown, then got turned aside by other little things like a decision to write a history of fandom. Maybe this example will prod me into carrying out my own intentions once the history is out of the way, two or three centuries from now.

The brief movie notes remind me of the fact that I've finally run across a film which I am afraid to see for fear I'll be too frightened. It's the Hitchcock production, THE BIRDS. Just in the past two or three years I've discovered that birds awaken something primitive in me, for which fear is a euphemism. One got into the house somehow and flew into my face at 2 am as I was working at my desk and like to give me a heart attack, another got trapped

somehow in the walls of the house and flopped around for 48 hours in the most unnerving manner. I have never felt the least emotion or excitement at any horror movie but I don't think I'll risk this one, and for the first time I think I understand that some people really do get worked up over these movies if they are affected by a corpse or blood or deformity as I am by birds close up.

Your mailing comments meant something to me because I've received perhaps one-third of the publications you talk about. Hobgoblin is one that doesn't come to me, so I'm not sure about your spelling statement, but must point out that either whiskey or whisky is acceptable spelling in the United States. Your remarks about the cardfile parallel some I directed to the younger generation of fans a while back. I don't mind inclusion in such a file because I'm in too deep with dubious fans to be free from the danger of embarrassing questions if given circumstances should occur. But every fan should make the decision for himself, and I suspect that a teenager just contacting the field should take a deep breath and realise that a year or two in fandom may ruin his chances for ever getting a government job that requires full security clearance or could prejudice his fate if the extreme reactionaries should ever come to complete power. If he wants to go to West Point or fly a spaceship, he'd better gaffate before he really gets going in fandom.

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"Martin James" sticks by Melisande, but in his rewritten version claims that Newton Einstein Priestly has dropped his middle name. At three pennies a time I suppose it is a fair saving. More Barrett Chronicles somewhere here. Lawrence Durrell, in his travel - or at any rate, semi-autobiographical and descriptive - works, on Corfu, Rhodes and Crete, is exceedingly capable of making places live. This also is apparent in the Quartet and in WHITE EAGLES OVER SERBIA. The Birds we do not yet have. \*\* I'm glad someone of your stature agrees with me ( though I is more accurate to say that I agree with you) on the subject of farleyfile jazz. It's just fine for the well-established fan (in a mundane sense) to parade his nonconformity, but not so desirable for the younger person - particularly in a moderately totalitarian state. \*\* I hope you stay well this time. The sick, sick, sick Harry Warner who has been the pattern for the last few years must go.

A BERTRAM CHANDLER

Thanks for the copies of WCB with KDS and TRTR.

In re the latter, you will be amused to learn that I just can't get away from the Rim Worlds, mainly due to pressure from my Agent. I'm thinking quite seriously of having a Rim Runners' house flag made - the golden-winged wheel (bat's wings, of course) on a black ground, same to be flown from our flagstaff when I'm home. A blazer badge and a necktie might be an idea, too.

Anyhow, coming up shortly in Amazing will be THE WINDS OF IF - the Rim Worlds, the antimatter system, alternative time tracks and dirty great globes of Freud. (It was really intended for ACE, and they said that they liked it but it was too sexy for their readers...)



And ACE are bringing out the expanded ( and improved ) version of THE OUTSIDERS ( first published in ASF as a novelette some years ago) and on the reverse side a collection of Rim World stories.

Oh, well, the forthcoming Monarch and Avalon novels will make a change. The first one is a piece of here-and-now SF - THE HAMELIN PLAGUE - and the second, GLORY SHORE (but the title may be changed) was written eight years ago. The locale is Venus, and thanks to the Americans' Venus probe, it's not a very valid Venus. It would have bugged the plot to change the locale, however, so this put me - after all, I am a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society - in a somewhat embarrassing position. I wriggled out of it ( I hope) with my dedication:

For the dear, dead Venus who existed only in the fertile imaginations of the science fictioners...

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I'm afraid that it seems likely that the attitude of ACE towards sex in SF novels is due to the actions of a fan....

.....

EDITORIAL (continued from page eight).

In addition, anyone who writes:

See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament,  
One drop would save my soul, half a drop ah, my Christ!

The first line is trochaic, as if gasping; the second line has six feet, and has a trochee, three iambs, a dactyl and a foot of one stress. To write like this without allowing us to forget the basic, determined, divine, unrhymed pentameter makes us feel for Marlowe an admiration hardly to be given to Shakespeare, except perhaps in KING LEAR."

is surely on the side of the angels.

It is a most wonderful and useful book for anyone wanting to seriously approach poetry. (The introduction to Edith Sitwell's Collected Poems is also most useful, as is Graves' Common Asphodel)

I was pleased to again read Mailer's comments on the talent in the room. I read the first series in BIG TABLE and again in ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF. It seems fairly obvious to me that one of the ills of the literary world in this day, is the unwillingness of the practitioners to get up on their hind legs and state plainly that such-and-such is crap. That Mailer does so, despite his particular ways, both unliked and unlikely, is a credit to a man who does not really need to take any notice of anyone else. He has been one the greater writers since 1948 or thereabouts and there is considerable difference in the attention we must pay to his views, and to the views of even the better critics. Vive Mailer!

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