

WOMBAT

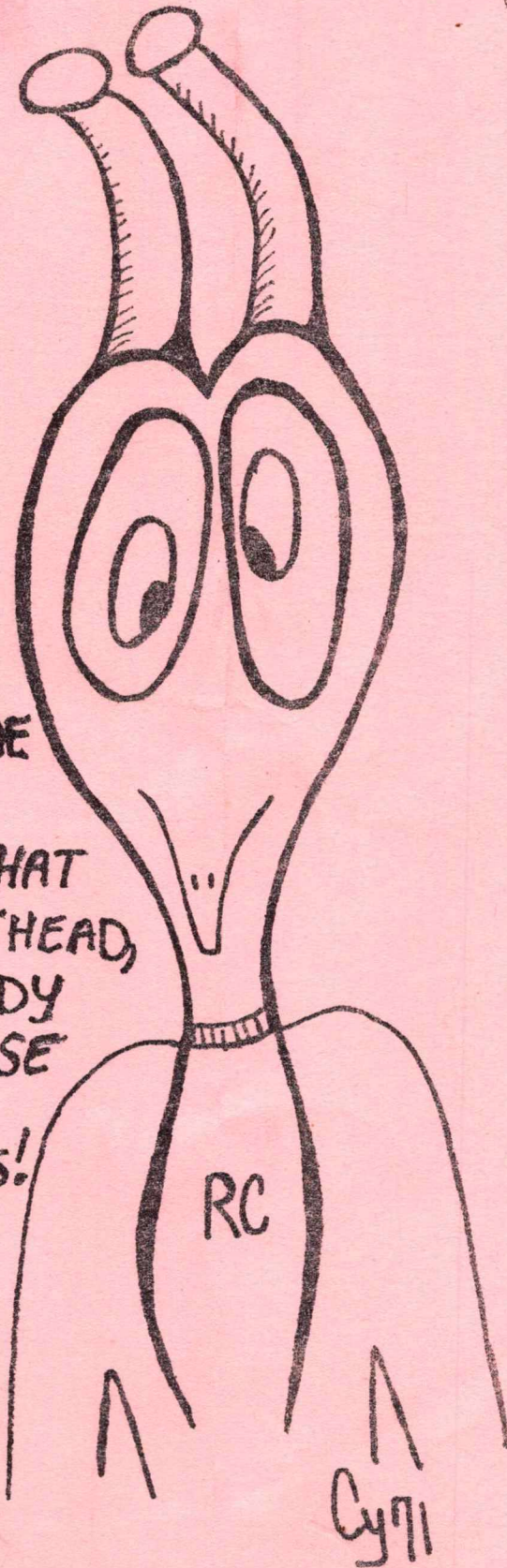
edited by

Shayne McCormack

&

Ron L Clarke.

ISN'T
RON
CLARKE
A HANDSOME
FELLOW?!
LOOK AT THAT
HIGH FOREHEAD,
THE STURDY
CHIN, THOSE
BLACK
BEADY EYES!
COULDN'T
YOU JUST
IMAGINE
HIM IN A
FEDERAL
PRISON?



EDITORIAL.

THE FIRST $\frac{1}{2}$

by Ronl Clarke.

I ATE SHAYNE McCORMACK'S COOKING AND LIVED!

Shayne McCormack started it. She had her genzine, Terran Times, mostly stencilled and she wanted to run it off. She knew I had a duplicator, so she rang me up one day in late September and asked me sweetly if I would. I said yes, bring it on up early that Sunday arvo. I usually worked weekends and this one was no exception.

On the day in question I got home and was setting up the table when Shayne drove up our drive. My sister has a VW too, and there is no mistaking a VW's engine. I went to the back door to greet Shayne and she rang the front doorbell. Cursing under my breath I walked quickly through the house and opened the front door.

Now Shayne is one of those people who appear innocent on first sight. If I described her as fairly short (5'3") and much like one of Norman Lindsay's figures (if they were not tall, that is), with long blonde hair and grey eyes with flecks of auburn, it just might give a rough picture. If I continued that she is a good talker on such subjects as horses, fanzines, classical music, and sf in general and that she likes horse riding, soft drinks, Jack Wodhams, dogs and VWs (though not necessarily in that order) it would give just a little more depth.

She had brought her stencils and corflu, and we set out cutting up the electro-stencils and corfluing them onto her typed stencils. Then, since she had Gestetner stencils and I had a Roneo machine, we had to cut slots in the top of each stencil. By the time this was finished it was about 8 pm and, when my parents left to go visit relatives, Shayne left for home.

We changed our tactics the next time. I packed stencils, paper, corflu and duplicator into the boot of my Cortina and, on the following Saturday, took the lot down to her place (some twenty miles or 45 minutes by car) and ran off about half the issue that evening. My parents left for two weeks vacation on the Friday night and I had been left at home alone.

Shayne wanted to finish running off the issue and, since I was working that Sunday, I asked her to get to my place about three thirty in the afternoon. I figured that would give me enough time to have a shower, get cleaned up and set up the machine. It was a stinking hot day and I had just unlocked the back door on returning home from work when I heard the VW. Wiping the sweat from my face I let Shayne in the front door. She greeted me cheerfully and informed me that she was short a couple of stencils and did I have one or two spare? I had almost completed stencilling The Mentor 21 and had, I thought, about two spare. I dug them out,

went and got my typewriter from my bedroom and went about setting up the duper whilst Shayne typed her material. I finished setting up the equipment and went to the fridge, took two long glasses full of ice-cold lemonade, into which I put two big lumps of ice-cream. I handed Shayne one and sipped mine while watching her finish touchtyping.

Shayne typed out two pages of her own stuff plus the SYNCON 2 questionnaire. We then ran off the remaining Terran Times' pages, finding pretty quickly that, 1) corflu definitely isn't good enough for sticking electro-stencils with large surface areas, and, 2) Gest. stencils leave bloody great marks on paper going through a Roneo machine. I took it better than Shayne, though.

[Shayne: that's debatable!]

At about five that afternoon I mentioned to Shayne that as it was getting rather late, would she like to stay for tea? She said yes, she would like it. I then told her that, ah, since my parents were away, and if she wanted something edible, would she like to cook something? On her enquiring look I told her that the fridge was full of goodies (though uncooked) and there should be something in there. We looked, and there was. Shayne found the chops while I set the table. She called out that all the potatoes had sprouted and I went into the spare bedroom and dug up some newer ones, plus some tomatoes. [Shayne: Ron grows taters & marters in the spare bed room.] Shayne then proceeded to cut the potatoes into chips whilst I got in the way making toast.

Everything considered, it wasn't a bad dinner, [Wadaya mean, it was a banquet!!!] though the chops were a little underdone because Shayne couldn't figure out how to turn the griller flame down and I hadn't a clue either. The icecream for dessert was nice and creamy and the cup of tea which followed put me out of action for a while, though I managed to stagger into the lounge-room before collapsing. [Shayne: He made the tea. Ron: That's what I meant, it was good.]

For some reason Shayne left early that night, taking the uncollated Times with her. I don't know why, but the duplication of that zine took about twice as long as normal for me.

- Ronl Clarke.

[All of the above is either:

a) a pack of lies

or

b) twisting of the facts and/or my arm; ie "Cook dinner OR ELSE see Terran Times go up in a blaze of glory.". Gad! - Shayne.]

Though it may not look like it from the about exchange, no female gets the last word in this zine! - Ronl.

- Support AUSTRALIA in '75! -

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T H E O T H E R $\frac{1}{2}$.

EDITORIAL BY SHAYNE McCORMACK

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The education system of Australia is archaic, about as modern as an 1890 horse-drawn buggy. This is a fact that most people agree on. Why do so many young people fail their School and Higher School Certificate, and why, in the first year of University, do an average 43% flunk out?

To those who are not familiar with the Australian School set up, it is divided into two sections, Primary and Secondary. Primary goes from Kindergarten to 6th Class, Secondary from 1st Form to 6th Form. At present, if a young person wishes to leave school in 4th year, he or she sits for the School Certificate. It's worth virtually nothing, hardly worth the effort and study and nervous headaches and the heartbreak of those who fail. For those with a stronger will power and more guts, they can go on through to 6th Form and sit for the Higher School Certificate, which is worth only a little bit more. If you're lucky, very very lucky and very brilliant, (as well as financially lined) you can matriculate and go to University. Only if you're lucky. A friend of mine, very clever and bright, matriculated but couldn't go to Uni because her passes weren't good enough. There are enough vacancies for only the best.

The Education system of today hasn't basically changed from that of 100 years ago. Children are put in a small room at desks in neat ordered lines in front of a blackboard and a teacher and expected to learn. Right from the beginning of their school life, their intelligence is let lie idle through inefficient methods of teaching.

The most receptive time in a person's life is between the ages of 4 and 7 (approximate figures here). Yet in those years all they are taught is how to finger paint and how to add simple sums. At 6, a child takes one day to learn his school song, a lesson to learn a 4 or 5 verse nursery rhyme. If they are so capable at learning words and music, why not other things?

From my own experience, I have learnt that school was a place of order and obedience and total (or almost so) lack of understanding. Very few teachers understand their pupils, they see them as a bunch of blank pages on which they must put knowledge. The children are not expected to understand the words, just learn them. Even in Art, the most creative of all subjects, half the lesson is spent in remembering who painted what and how and at what time. This is, of course, important, but it is handled in an entirely wrong manner.

Science has advanced tremendously in the last century, and man's ability to grasp facts has come along with it, yet the child is

expected to take in so much and not wonder why. Instead of teaching a child that $1 + 1 = 2$, and that $3 \times 3 = 9$, why not give him a reason, tell him why he learns this, how it can be used, what use it will be in his future life? Surely this can be done as easily as anything else.

Teachers seem to think that if you allow a child some voice, it will become disobedient, disrespectful and naughty. But if you keep a young mind interested, it won't have time to do anything but think. Show it that you respect the fact that it has intelligence, the ability to understand. Respect it, and it will respect in return. There will be individuals too stupid or bad mannered to care, but such individuals should receive individual treatment to suit them. The majority of a class sits bored through a lesson because it is obvious to their young minds that the teachers don't care. So why should they care?

The system is this: in Kindergarten, they are introduced to school discipline, on how to obey orders, on how to be like every other child in its class and its school, quiet, respectful, obedient and good. They are taught simple songs and nursery rhymes, their colour and design sense is awakened by using bright paints and patterns and coloured blocks. They play games and dance and learn to recognise rhythm. That's all well and good, but they don't go far enough. Teach them to count, then teach them why they count, give them reasons for its use, simple homework that their parents or big brothers and sisters can help them with, gradually show them that counting isn't just remembering -it's using.

Second, Third and Fourth Class is much the same, the numbers become a little harder, the words a little bigger, the dances more intricate. But nowhere does the standard of knowledge really increase.

The school system of today tries to make people believe that all children are basically the same. This is obviously untrue. They try and disguise this by saying that bright children go into "A" classes, and not so bright into "B" classes, and a little less bright into "C" classes and so on. You can't divide intelligence up like a cake into large slices, even crumb of the cake is different from every other one. One child might be good with its hands, have the ability to make things, put things together that work. In a case like that, art and maths and science are important, history and english are not. Another child might have a photographic memory for facts and figures; geography and history might be his field. A general education indicates that children are generally the same. You are expected to go through around 10 years of schooling of a highly generalised nature, then in two or three years switch to a speciality and understand it completely. The human mind, especially at that stage of its life, just isn't adaptable enough. That's why so many young people fail at Uni. There are those who aren't clever enough, you may say. Of course there are some who can't cope with the work, but this should be found out at an earlier age, so that they can learn the work they can understand right from the start. Think how many minds have gone to waste over the years because nobody could see them crying out for understanding and help. A child can't explain that maths isn't his thing, that he much prefers art.

There isn't any quick solution for this problem, it is one that must be worked on by many people over a long period of time. Group discussion is very good, as can be seen by Round Table Discussions at a SF convention. What do you prefer, a lecture or sitting round talking about it?

Real education may not become reality for many years, if at all. It's to be hoped it will come about. All it needs is understanding and common sense.

- Shayne McCormack.

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WOMBAT'S GUESSING GAMES.

Last issue the first quote was from Dostoyevsky's The Idiot, the second from Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra. This time, one is from a book, the other from a film.

"If the test of truth lay in a show of hands or a counting of heads, the system of magic might appeal, with far more reason than the Catholic Church, to the proud motto, 'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus', as the sure and certain credential of its own infallibility."

"In Italy for thirty years under the Borges, they had Warfare, Terror, Murder and Bloodshed; but they produced Michael-angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had Brotherly Love. Then five hundred years of Democracy and Peace.

"And what did that produce?"

"The Coo-Goo clock."

? ? ? ? ?

(There is a rumour that the CIA is financing Australia In '75)



WOMBAT

S Y D N E Y.

Sydney, where a rattling electrical tradesman's panel van deposited me on a satin-gold hot autumn day;

Sydney, where I bought raisins and cigarettes for my noontime meal;

Sydney, where I walked the streets with my hiking pack and was stared at, crazy;

Sydney, where the young people grinned, and shook their beards and long hair;

Sydney, where I passed slowly, awed, through the business section of any city;

Sydney, where I gave a cigarette to a man who asked for one, and was thanked;

Sydney, where I sat in a park and pigeons approached my hot and sweaty toes;

Sydney, where I walked down William St., and watched the buses;

Sydney, where the sun thinks it is tropical, and tries;

Sydney, where the sky is bluer than I am;

Sydney, where the traffic eats itself;

Sydney, where I hitchhiked and lost heart;

Sydney, where the people I knew were thousands of miles away;

Sydney, where the frangipani smote me, and I learned the meaning of 'excess';

Sydney, where it rained, and I knew it would;

Sydney, where I walked down Darlinghurst Rd., was solicited, and bought a pie and a glass of orange juice;

Sydney, where they beat me up, and I regretted it;

Sydney, where the Bridge lies down and goes to sleep;

Sydney, where the Harbour waits, and tolerates the floating steel;

Sydney, where I paid five cents to travel on the underground railway, circling through yellow-tiled public urinals;

Sydney, where The Man wants eleven dollar bills, and you only got ten;

Sydney, where I played chess in the Chapel, and smoked other people's cigarettes;

Sydney, where I bought a Melbourne HERALD, and was depressed;

Sydney, where the five cents in the gas meter for the shower ran out, and a dog barked in the back yard;

Sydney, where a man I met was homosexual, and smoked Benson & Hedges;

Sydney, where I went to the library in the Fitzroy Gardens, and it was closed.

Sydney, where I sang Dylan, and somebody gave me a twenty-cent coin;

Sydney, where I bought an alarm clock in a William St. pawnshop, and it gained time;

Sydney, where I bought a copy of THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE, and lost it;

Sydney, where I fell asleep on the Domain, and listened to the speakers;

Sydney, where I slept in a flophouse, and raved for twenty hours;

Sydney, where I hitchhiked down the Cahill Expressway, and no one saw me;

Sydney, where my watch stopped, and I didn't know;

Sydney, where prostitutes waved their vaginas at me;

Sydney, where Elizabeth Bay is growing older;

Sydney, where Redfern is;

Sydney, where they were tearing down buildings in George Street;

Sydney, where the Opera House is eighteen bleached skulls;

Sydney, where I caught a ferry, and the water might have been green;

Sydney, where Liverpool Street winds down to Kurnell, ages ago;

Sydney, where people die at night;

Sydney, where I smiled at a cop with a .38;

Sydney, where old men fished, and caught dreams;

Sydney, where I looked for Pymont where it was said to be in the smoke.

Sydney, where bookshops had sales and I looked for cigarette butts
in trafficked streets, and found stones;
Sydney, where Park St. grows longer at 2 am;
Sydney, where I discovered Semla, and got drunk, and ate grapes;
Sydney, where I couldn't buy banana-flavoured cigarette papers;
Sydney, where Oxford Street gets lost;
Sydney, where at Taylor Square the public dykes are underground too;
Sydney, where I couldn't hear myself in Whitty's Wine Bar, ran
outside, and got drunk;
Sydney, where I lay down in the gutter, threw up, and died;
Sydney, where I bought gelati, and thought I was human;
Sydney, where the laundromat had a television set in it;
Sydney, where my home had wooden stairs;
Sydney, where the sun sets below the Pacific Highway;
Sydney, where they turned off the Alamain Fountain again;
Sydney, where the Gladesville Bridge is about to curl up;
Sydney, where Victoria Rd. is all concrete;
Sydney, where the Gap is a fanged vagina;
Sydney, where the bush beats back suburbia;
Sydney, where a bus conductor took my money and I rode on top;
Sydney, where the double-decker trains love mini-skirts;
Sydney, where only the Cross is open, and only the doors there;
Sydney, where strip-club spruikers ignored me;
Sydney, where some longhairs sat down in the park and sang, and
I joined them;
Sydney, where I saw Negroes on the streets;
Sydney, where bikies don't come much heavier;
Sydney, where people thought they were living;
Sydney, where I was born.

*

You ask where the action in Sydney is. Above is my answer.

- Gary Woodman.

There is much to do in and around Sydney: swimming, theatre, surfing, skiing, skindiving, driving, riding horses, muffediving, drinking, sunbaking, or just taking in the mystique of Sydney, as Gary has done. For another view of the facet, here is Shayne:

IMPRESSIONS OF A CITY.

by Shayne McCormack



When very young, my nose up against a dirty window watching the world flash by and creep into darkness as the train left Central and journeyed into the underground pathways of a public transport system so often slandered and so often used. The pushing crowds of big people seemingly blind to my existence, climbing up endless stairs into the outside world. Light and noise and the smell of the city so characteristic and hard to forget. Engine noise and people noise and building noise washing over me like some vast invisible wave.

The wave diminished as I grew older, somehow, or my senses grew accustomed to it, and the city sank as I became older and it all became normal... a thing taken for granted. There's so much I'll never know and never see. All the thought and wonder and time and pure animal strength that went into its building and keeps on going on every day. Could it be that a city gains something during its creation besides material being... no, that's whimsy, a city is just a city...

To a small girl, though, it's a mighty big place, far too big to comprehend. It goes on forever and it's filled with wonder. The street lights telling you what to do (...machines rule the world..), the clanging of cash registers and the sound that lubricates the world.. money changing hands. Happiness, fear, concern, hate, envy, sorrow, excitement, love, passion.. all the emotions are created and endured within the confines of any city. But in your city, your home, the place where you are, it's part of your life. From your point of view it can make you hate it or love it, but you can't ignore it.

It's the people in a city that make it come alive.

A very respectable looking old gentleman with a beard and a tall hat standing on Town Hall corner selling the "Kings Cross Whisper"... the flower sellers at Wynyard... the bus drivers (watch them, they bite)... a taxi driver telling you about a woman passenger he once had who told him this story... the curious looking females doing window shopping and other things in the small Kings Cross shopping centre... the five o'clock rush (only the Rushers know how to survive it)... so many other large and small people mixing into a mish mosh of colour and eternal movement in the streets and railways and bee-hive buildings of a modern metropolis.

What do I think of at the word "Sydney"? Conventional things like a grey span of steel, cream shells glowing dully in the sun and sitting on the edge of green-blue water, rich salty

water smells and choking bus fumes (how I hate buses!), shops and more shops, theatres, neon signs, theatres, hotels, restaurants, offices and buildings clawing for the sky. An almost physical feeling of being caged. Except in the middle of the botanical gardens in spring, when the perfume of the gardens blots out the city, or in the Mitchell Library, when the solid walls of books is the sweetest prison of all.

On a clear day, when the sea wind blows the sky clean, and you spend a little cash and go to the top of the Square, you see an unforgettable sight.

Sydney. I love it.

.... Shayne McCormack.

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REPORT ON OUR COLONY

by

John J. Alderson.

Being on a visit to our colonial territory of England, I thought it advisable to let my fellow Australians know how our tiny infantile possession is getting along.

A dull cloud of backward provincialism hangs over even the main settlement, the village of London. The Londoners with the colonial conceit describe it as a city, and being the seat of Government, such as it is, is officially styled a city. The colony now has a Parliament, which may come as a surprise to most Australians who have not heard of its existence. But its democracy is provincial; their voting system is the simple first-past-the-post system. Our democratic preferential voting system is much too complicated for this colony of brawn-before-brain. It has, too, a bitter class-system long since abolished at home, while universal franchise is not yet in operation. The conduct of the House is modelled on our House of Representatives, together with many other things. For instance, their Speaker's Chair is an exact copy of that in our Federal Parliament, and was made of expressly imported Queensland timber. One could wish them to stand more on their own feet and be less slavish imitators.

Through this village of London flows a creek they are pleased to call the River Thames. This was named by New Zealand colonists after the Thames in New Zealand. We would do well to guard against the designs of this grasping Imperialistic Power. This Thames is a thick, muddy, oily evil-smelling stream crossed by low drab bridges, and it has been suggested the name be changed to the Yarra. It is not like the Thames in New Zealand.

The buildings in London are uninspiring and apish copies of an older more beautiful world. Generally of drab grey stone with little pretensions of beauty, they have an air of shoddy meanness. Public convenience is forgotten - for instance there is not a veranda in the whole settlement where the skies pour rain all day in an accurst climate. Houses, rooms, or accomodation is very scarce and rack-rents are charged: they have no Fair-Rents Courts as we have in the mother country. The people are shoddily dressed and ill-fed, there is unemployment and ill-payment. At least fifteen per cent of the people live on the dole. Very few people can afford to own their own houses or cars. For transport then, they must put up with an expensive, dirty, and very slow public transport.

I have spent a lot of space describing London, but this accounts for half of England in population. The outback uncivilized

villages have little to commend them. They are mainly squalid, dirty and backward. The buildings are squat box-like affairs built of stone through lack of better building material. The roofs are generally of drab ugly slates. How one longs for the brightness of our corrugated iron roofs, our coloured tiles and our bright red brick-work. Wood is never used, being too expensive, and of course, too showy. Non-utilitarian things like gardens, private or public, are eschewed, but then again this is but another case of their provincialism.

The colonists boast about the scenery of England, but to me it is one cold wet monotone. Never a splash of brown or gold breaks the unvarying green of the landscape. There is not a decent mountain in the whole country. The trees are only low scrub and are useless for timber. Nor have the trees the slender beautiful grace of the Australian tree. At present no effort is being made to introduce any nobler tree into the landscape. Similarly the paddocks lack wildflowers, only a few pale specimens being seen. Birds are few, very dull in colour, and none have the song of the magpie, the thrush or the lyre-bird.

Much of the country is desert. Bare limestone hills over which icy winds sweep, and which are useless for any purpose unless properly developed. But as the colony through amateurish economics is on the verge of bankruptcy, no development of the outback is likely.

Several outback settlements have been founded. Many of them named after Australian cities. For instance in the deserts of Yorkshire there is a Melbourne. In Kent an Albury. There are several Newcastles, in one humourously enough they have built a tiny copy of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. One could mention Penrith, Preston, Horsham, York - and it must be regretted that the colonists cannot find more original names.

As may be surmised, education is lacking. Shortage of schools and teachers is partly to blame. Many cannot speak Australian properly, and all of them drop their "h"s, while even the most educated speak with a heavy accent. Higher colleges are being opened in Oxford and Cambridge, and already these colonials are boasting of the boat races they are going to have. But two boats competing will be dim entertainment beside the half-dozen on the Yarra. But then the colony has not got a river wide enough for the half dozen teams we commonly have.

With regards to the arts, the colonials have one or two ballad-mongers they are pleased to call poets, but their work is amateurish, obscure and dull, and lacks all the essentials of poetry. Compare this Shakespeare of theirs -

Turn up at the right hand at you next turning
But at the next turning of all, on your left;
marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand,
but turn down directly to the Jew's house.

This provincial production of Shakespeare cannot be compared with

the polished verse of the least of our poets. They only ape the great Australian tradition.

So it is, the separate colony of England lapses deeper into its provincialism, poverty of mind and body, and unable to follow our culture or develop their own.

And that is the unfortunate position of our colony of England today. Undoubtedly we should do something - but what!

- John J. Alderson.

NOREASCON BRIEFS

by Alexandre D. de Bettencourt Jr

Who would like to know or cares what I did at the Con? The introductory meeting started fannishly late on Friday afternoon, with several brief (?) statements by various members of the concommittee - Tony Lewis and others. Mario Bosnyak, Bob Shaw and Harry Warner Jr also said a few words. Seems that Cliff Simak, Guest of Honour, was to have been there, but something was said about his being delayed as his plane was still in the holding pattern at Logan Airport.

Also attended the following the first day: "Talking to Dolphins", a US navy film; "SF Critics and Reviewers", a panel discussion (?); "Implications of Genetic Engineering", a panel; and of course the movies. I skipped the auction to visit the Huckster's Room.

Saturday, started off with the special film program "The Wheel, which had the Flash Gordon serial sandwiched in between a group of old SF films (b & w), thence to the Grand Ballroom for a talk on "Current Problems in the Critical Analysis of SF", followed by a debate "Resolved: There are no Viable Alternative Futures" starring Ben Bova & Lester del Rey (pro) vs Joe Hensley & Bob Silverberg (con); Bova and del Rey were declared the winners (?). Later a panel "The Next Five Years in SF" from the viewpoint of authors. Skipped the 1973 site selection meeting as only Toronto was left with a bid, all others had dropped out. Also skipped the Masquerade for some much needed sleep before the main movie feature started at midnight.

Wandered around looking lost until the Business Meeting started. After the Business Meeting started, discovered I was still lost. Understood the one about mail ballots, voted for it, being as I am stationed overseas, the one to accurately define the rotation zones in the US required a map so voted against it. Voted against the move to make the HUGOs an English language award. Did not vote on the other HUGO related matters. Something called NaSFic was discussed at length and passed, I still have not been able to make sense of that one! Also voted for the ratification of all business conducted at HEICON. Attended the following talks: [cont.p.497

.....BY ANY OTHER NAME - POETRY

THE TWO HEADS

"He was an odd one,"
the old trader said, while the fan
above his head went
round and round and round and the
rain came hissing down
in the jungle outside. "Lost
his family in the
war: Mother, father, sisters,
brothers, aunts and uncles,
wife and kids -- he was the only
survivor. He was
Jewish you see -- so he came
out here to forget.
Quiet he was but dependable
so I gave him a
job at my store and he might
have been here yet but
the German came. How long he
was here I don't know
but he walks in one day while
I was out back -- then
everything went quiet. Not a
sound -- you hear?? Until
my back begins to tremble
and my hands get wet
from fear so I come out and
there they are: the German
and the Jew, looking at each
other and my throat
goes dry and my hair tingles
'cause men don't look
that way at each other, so
I says 'Can I help
you?' and the spell is broken
and the German staggers
and his face is all white. 'Do
you know him?' I ask
and the Jew looks strange and says
'Since '38." Now the old
trader pulled his haversack onto
the table and takes
out his pipe, lights up, blowing
smoke rings into the
fan, and the fan goes round and

round and the rain comes
hissing down in the jungle outside.
"That night he was gone
taking Juan, my guide, with him,
and this I got from
Juan when he came back before
he died he told me:
the Jew went for the German
but he was gone upriver
so they set off in pursuit,
then the Jew said 'Pull
over, Juan' and Juan he was
scared of the jungle and the
Jivaros but most
of all the Jew at night, But
they landed on the
shore and there they found the
German and his guide
and Juan knifes the guide and takes
the German by surprise
but the German says 'You didn't
have to kill him.' and
Juan looks up with his scalp
rising and sees the
Jew looking at him with eyes
that were black and deep
and Deathlike and Juan makes the
sign of the evil
eye and covers his head but
it didn't do him any
good 'cause two weeks later he
was dead of a brain
fever. Then the Jew says 'You
may go, Juan,' and Juan
faints. When he wakes they're both gone
and their trails leads down
to the river. All this Juan
told me when he came
back to die.'"

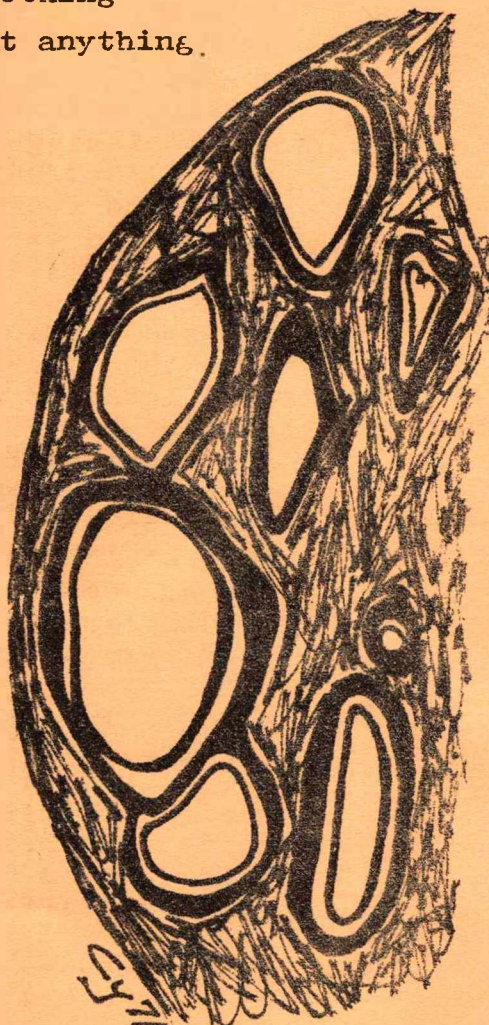
"What happened to them?"
we asked. And the old trader
sits there smiling, smoking
his pipe and playing with the
flap of his haversack.
"Well, not too long ago this
Indian comes to me
and says 'I trade bad medicine.
You take?' and I sees
what he's got and I says 'Sure'
and so here they are:
the German and the Jew." and
from his haversack
he drew two
shrunken heads.

N A D A

Multi-billion fragmented tennis ball
 Bouncing endlessly against the wall
 Of an infinitely terminated tennis-court,
 Each fragment holding the whole together,
 Each fragment reacting the whole to a nothing
 Each wasted atom doing everything except anything.
 While an all-powerful hand
 Bounces the tennis ball.

Each wasted atom contributing
 Nothing,
 to
 Nothing.

. . Nick Shears



"THE NEW OXFORD ENGLISH."

A dictionary.

- 1. Contrepuntal (adjective.)
I read with disapproval one two three
- 2. Pungent (adjective.)
Bits of cortisones -
- 3 Easel (noun.)
I studied psychology -
- 4. Nonesuch (noun.)
Polythene and dust and metal -
- 5. Poem (noun.)

- Alex Robb.

D I A L O G U E (i)

Trees and light
moving in the wind
blackened leaf-edges
float softly by,
curling twisting
in the green background
thoughts rush by

the long white car
sliding past,
like a whale
and you and I
like termites
on its tail

on the edge of my chair
trousers sticking to my thighs
I was balancing
with you beside me,
would you catch me
if I fell,
I wondered

miles of stamps
like Bic pens
only green
but then
chains break so easily

The blue is punctured
like a tyre
and the grass has become
green plastic, long and elastic
like chewing gum,
and the leaves -
black shiny chips of tar
they could never be
anything else.

Leith Morton.

- - - - -

A DESPONDANT SYMPHONY

or: in search of something.

The more I know,
The less I understand...

And I can no more demand
to know the absolute truth
Than to live
a forever-youth;
I cannot demand something not there --
bells cannot ring without air --
Still, we search,
 still, we strive,
all our lives,
For truth; but find
Only vapour trails in time, of fantasy --
myths; make-believe, relative truths --
mirror-reflection-fears -- and
 endless nothingness...

And yet still,
 We gaze intently
 into the glassy depths
 of crystalline balls,

Hoping, thinking, believing
we will see/know all;
We see nothing, though, we do not want to see --
You see not with your eyes, but with your mind,
And both prejudice and fear often make it blind
to effervescent truth...
Yet, even that which manages to filter through
the portholes of your vision unaltered
falters --
It is no more
 than a fastly fading mirage,
of this world...

For nothing is true --
and something a lie...

-- Cy Chauvin.

Perhaps,
somewhere,
there is a hidden garden
where the unicorn romps with the dodo.
(If the dodo could romp).
I wonder what foliage
the garden boasts.
Cycades and cedars?
Or,
perhaps,
grassy plains
where roams the quagga.
Perhaps
the garden is walled
by mountains tall
which reflect the glassy
stares of those
tormented souls on the outside.
If pigs could fly...

Perhaps

.... Edgar H Lepp

Thinking of you,
I slept
and in my dreams you came,
oh, why did I wake...

Leith Morton (see p.32)

BIG BROTHER

(or the magnum opus caper)

for bg, like all else.

I
saw you
Twelve Times
Today:

me,
watching you from afar
as you darted by in taxis
and limousines and buses,
and walked into crowded streets,
and restaurants and funeral parlours,
where I missed you
by inches.

Until,
angry and frustrated and soaked
by the rain, I turned up my coat
collar and
switched Channels.

- Anthony Napoli

C O L O U R S

Green is the colour of grass,
but not of flowers,
the colour of hills,
but not of mountains,
the colour of leaves,
but not of all leaves nor all grass.

Blue is the colour of the sky,
but not all skies.

Red and pink and gold are
the colours of dawns and sunsets.

Black is not a colour:
it is an absence of even the least.

But white is the
blinding brilliance of nothing.

Adrienne Losin.

REGAN'S IRISH STEW EXPRESSO

by

Jack Wodhams.

Is it not the great minds of this world that are always seeking an answer to this question or that? It is so. And is it not the failures that they are having, no matter how hard they might try, till their brains are fair bulging to burst? It is, an' all. And are there not things beyond understanding, enough to baffle the wise Solomon himself? There is. And is it not the ordinary man who betimes trips over his own flat feet and discovers the amazing thing that has been there all the time? Assuredly it is.

Was it not the gramophone that was discovered by accident? And the penicillin? And isn't it the radio waves that have always been in the air, floating about and unknown, invisible, waiting to be harnessed for use? 'Tis a fact. And with all the wondrous discoveries made, who can imagine what might come next, or doubt the power that lies in the unknown, concealed against a day of revelation?

Who can know the strange alchemy of discovery? Take a freak condition, a coincidental combination, and presto! a miracle. Who can pooh-pooh sorcery? Who can be positive that witchcraft is superstitious nonsense? Who can deny the possible efficacy of wizardry, or with justice deride the unseen insidious influence of voodoo?

The chemistry of Mother Nature is fantastic and, though she jealously hides the greater part of her treasures, is it not inevitable that a secret or two should slip through her fingers to amaze the probing eyes of men? It is so, indeed.

Thus it was, by fluke and chance, that Fiona Regan discovered the transportingly fragrant vegetable mixture that was to become well known as Regan's Irish Stew Expresso.

Fiona Regan was the wife of Clancy Regan, and it was himself that was content that it should be so. She was a pleasantly plump young woman of thirty and, with her twinkling eyes and flirtatious manner, she was agreeable company for any man.

She had a liberal nature that disturbed Clancy Regan at times, for he was aware that he had a prize and was the envy of every man in the village. For however delightful her charms

may have been, (her engaging attractiveness discovered wholehearted approval in many an eye), they were secondary and minor in comparison to her one great talent. Fiona Regan could cook.

Cook? No, 'twas not cooking. 'Twas creating masterpieces she was, with every flick of a spoon, with every pinch of this stuff or that. She made food a pleasure to eat, and meals that marked the time in anticipation.

To Fiona Regan cooking was an art, a challenge, a hobby, a love and a fulfilment. To her it was a joy to mix and bland and concoct, and never a morsel was made by her fair hands that did not but excel in consistency and flavour. She made no mistakes, and there was magic in her fingers right enough. Never did a dish taste the same twice, but was always deliciously, impossibly improved.

Never did a man have such contented gastric juices as Clancy Regan. To him life was as near to perfection as it could get without him giving up the ghost entirely and going to Heaven itself. Sure, and I'm thinking that even in Heaven itself the cooking of Fiona Regan would not be equalled.

So it was that Clancy Regan lived well, a rich man, his only suffering an occasional pang conjured by the fear of loss of such a valuable possession.

On this special day, as on all others, a savoury aroma took Clancy Regan by the nose and led him to the kitchen. A pot was simmering gently on the stove, and Fiona Regan was sprinkling more herbs into the brew. Ah, but she was a great one for the herbs. She would roam the countryside looking and searching, and there was not a plant that she could not translate into a sense of taste, with all its palatably subtle blendings.

What a stew it was that day, and who can speak with authority and say what energy the ingredients released by their unique fusion and unity? For it was an uncommon fine stew with carrots and turnips, and cabbage, and potatoes, and tomatoes, and peas, and onions, and beans, and lentils, and barley, and rice, and cornflour, and paprika, and salt, and pepper, and a sultana or two, and a drop of vinegar. Thyme and sage were in the pot, with a sprinkling of oriental spices, and there was norkwort, kewa-kale, and a dried spray of zenthus, too. The pot also contained a short section of arcola twig, and some grated rebaroot, and a crushed lalli nut, and a number of small mosha fruit.

Oh, what a gifted colleen she was! She mixed in some powdered allecora seed, some ground olio husk, and a crumbled red fabarisk leaf as well. And she added a sliver of passion bark, some scented itchifoot petals, some speedwell berries, and a chopped-up stem of travellers joy. Man, I tell you, off that broth, the steam alone would have sustained a starving man for a week.

How can the balmy perfume of this magnificent stew be

described? It was fantastic, exotic, fabulous and blissfully sublime. It made the mouth moisten and overflow, and tempted nostrils could not but succumb and order the emotions to a state of humility, of humble felicitous reverence.

Clancy Regan slipped an arm about his wife's waist. "Sure, and 'tis something extra special that we've having this day, is it?" he said.

She rapped his knuckles lightly with the ladle. "Don't make free with me when I'm cooking, Clancy Regan," she said. "'Tis my husband y'are, and I don't have to stand for it."

Clancy grinned into his wife's dancing eyes. "Is that so, now?" he said. "Ah. With yourself stood there like an angel, and with a smell like enough to make a dead man drool, 'tis in Paradise I'm thinking I am."

He brushed her cheek with his lips, and she smiled as she pushed him away. "Get you to the table, Clancy Regan," she said. "'Tis enough of your shennanagans I have when the light goes out."

Clancy laughed and, without reluctance, seated himself at the table.

Fiona Regan tossed her head. "Paradise he says. Huh! 'Tis a simple man y'are, to be sure, to be so easy satisfied." But she was pleased allright, at the exalted identification.

Clancy Regan toyed with his cutlery. "Paradise it is," he said, "and 'tis not dying I'd be and expecting to find something better."

"'Tis not doing anything you'd be, Clancy Regan, so you'd be expecting nothing at all," she said.

"'Tis happy I am as I am," said Clancy. "'Tis fine I feel, and well I am, and 'tis not meself that would be asking for more."

"Ach, you're a stick-in-the-mud, husband mine, and knowing no better is what y'are."

"Is that so, now?"

"Aye," she said, mocking him gently. "'Tis in this village you've spent your whole life, and 'tis no ways you have of knowing the best that's in the world."

"The best is as maybe," said Clancy indulgently, "but 'tis meself that's not wanting, and meself that's not being ungrateful enough as to be wanting improvement."

Fiona stirred the pot. "Ah, Clancy Regan," she said, "is it no adventure you'd be liking, and the seeing of them foreign places?"

"Well, now, 'tis enough I've seen of them in picture

books, and the being there is not as comfortable as being here, I'm thinking."

She turned and faced him. "Would you not like to go to Paris at all? Or to Rome? Or to Africa, and see all them wild animals and native fellahs?"

Clancy smiled, and shook his head.

"'Tis a lazy man y'are, and that's a fact," said Fiona Regan, turning back to the stove. She laughed. "And would you not be liking to see them hula girls in the South Seas, with their grass skirts, an' all?"

"'Tis yourself that's good enough for me, grass skirt or no," said Clancy.

"Aye," she said. "'Tis no imagination you have at all." She sighed. "Them tropic islands must be beautiful, with the palm trees a-waving, and the golden sand, and the blue sea, and the sun shining always."

"Whisht, woman," said Clancy, "'tis dreaming y'are, and meself that's listening when I should be eating. 'Tis me plate that's empty, and me tongue that's hanging out like a gossoons shirttail."

She scowled at him. "'Tis no romance you have in you, Clancy Regan", she said. She continued stirring. "If 'twas meself that was a man, 'tis not content I'd be to sit at home. 'Tis seeing the world I'd be wanting." She lifted the spoon to her lips and tasted the steaming brew.

"'Tis not a man you have to be these days if 'tis wanting to see the world y'are," said Clancy.

"That's so," she said, nodding her head, "and 'tis meself that's wishing I could go to see one of them wonderful desert islands."

Clancy Regan gazed through the window. Slowly his jaw sagged. He blinked rapidly a few times, then carefully pushed his chair back and got to his feet. "Fiona?" he said. "Fiona?"

The contents of the pot burbled and blubbered, and the ladle angled at the ceiling. The heady bouquet of the vapour permeated the room and, stare as he might, nowhere could Clancy discern the form of his wife. In a twinkling she had completely disappeared.

He walked to the stove. He cast about. "Fiona!" he called. "Fiona!"

Not an answer. Bewildered, he gazed at the pot. "Is it dreaming I am?" he muttered. "Was it off to sleep I went sudden?"

He shook his head. "'Twas a quick doze I must have had, and 'tis herself that'll be about somewhere nearby."

He went from the kitchen to the parlour, from the parlour

to the bedroom, and from the bedroom back into the kitchen. Fiona Regan was not in any of them. He looked in the larder and went out to search the garden. She was not there. The closet door hung open, revealing the lack of an occupant.

"Fiona!" Clancy shouted. "Fiona!"

There was no answer.

Clancy ran back into the cottage. He frantically began to search every nook and cranny. Under the bed, in the wardrobe, behind the sofa, in the tiny attic, back in the larder, under the table, until finally, in despair, he even opened the door of the capacious oven in order to look inside.

No Fiona Regan.

He heard a movement and turned with a cry, "Fiona?" But it was Michael Murphy standing in the doorway, with his eyebrows up and looking curious.

"Oh," said Clancy, "'tis you, Michael."

"Aye," said Michael Murphy, "'tis me."

"Aye," said Clancy, "'tis you."

"Aye," said Michael Murphy, "and 'tis disappointed y'are, seemingly. Did I hear calling?"

"Aye, that's so," said Clancy. "'Tis not Mrs. Regan you're been seeing at all lately, is it, Michael?"

"What?" said Michael Murphy, backing a step. "'Tis not me you'll be blaming if your wife has gone off."

"Uh?" said Clancy. "Oh. No, no, no. No, she seems to have just gone out, like, and 'tis meself that's not knowing where."

"Oh, aye," said Michael Murphy.

Clancy Regan looked at him sharply. "And what would you be meaning by saying 'tis not with you she's gone off?" he said, suddenly severe. "I'd be hoping and knowing 'tis not with you she'd be going off with."

Michael Murphy remained silent.

Clancy Regan studied him. "Would she now?" he demanded.

"No, no, of course not," Michael Murphy said guilelessly.

Clancy Regan eyed him narrowly. "'Tis sure of it I am," he said.

"Aye," said Michael Murphy, "'tis sure you can be, too."

"Aye," said Clancy, but his gaze held a speculative gleam.

Michael Murphy coughed. "Is it Mrs. Regan herself that's gone missing then?"

"You damned fool, I've just told you, haven't I?"

"Oh, aye," said Michael Murphy diffidently. "'Twas only asking I was."

"Aye. Well 'tis telling you again that she's disappeared."

"Disappeared, is it? Is it not in the house she is at all?"

Clancy Regan was exasperated. "Have I not looked in every crack and crevice in the whole place, and behind every bush in the garden? She's not here, you great fat-headed oaf! 'Tis gone she is, and 'tis meself that never saw the going."

He snapped his fingers. "Wait, though! Maybe 'tis into the village she went to get some small thing. Aye."

"Oh?" said Michael Murphy. "And when would she be going?"

"She's not been gone above twenty minutes," Clancy said.

"Is that so?"

"Aye, 'tis so. And why would you be asking?"

"'Tis meself that's been leaning on me front gate and smoking for the last half-hour, and 'tis nearly being driven mad I was by the smell of this stew here," said Michael Murphy, casually bending over the stove.

"Oh, is it now?" said Clancy Regan, stepping in front of him. "'Tis a short drive, I'm thinking, and what about it, anyway.?"

Michael Murphy looked hurt. "Fio....ah... Mrs. Regan, that is, ah, did not pass me by on the road. And, besides, Corcoran would have closed his shop long since."

"Uh? Oh." Clancy chewed his lip. He glared at Michael Murphy. "You're sure, now?" he said.

"Positive sure," said Michael Murphy. "I'd been standing there a while when I heard you a-calling, and 'tis meself that was thinking to be neighbourly, and come and give you a hand if you were in trouble." His eyes slid back to the simmering pot.

"Aye, 'tis neighbourly you'd be, for sure," said Clancy Regan sourly. "'Tis eating us out of house and home you'd be if you were given half a chance." Then he banged the top of the stove and cried, "But where can she be, man?! Where could she be? Where could she have got herself to?"

Michael Murphy started. He pursed his lips. "Well, now. When did you see her last?"

"By this very stove, she was," said Clancy. "Standing there and talking." He paced away and back. He frowned at Michael Murphy. "Standing there where you are now, you great lump. Standing there and blethering."

"And was she a-stirring of this fine stew?" said Michael Murphy, carelessly taking the ladle in his hand, and striving to control the quiver of his nose and the contraction of his throat.

"Aye, she was so, too," said Clancy, his eyes alight with suspicion.

Michael Murphy stirred. "And did she not taste this fine stew?" he said, artlessly lifting the ladle to his mouth.

"Aye, she did so."

Michael Murphy sipped. His tongue clicked at the heat, but, even so, was eager for more. Absently, he dipped the ladle again.

"And would you be guzzling the lot, you gourmandizing kike?" Clancy snarled.

Michael Murphy was snapped from the throes of ecstasy. He put on an injured expression, but retained a firm hold on the ladle, stirring methodically. "And what was it she was talking about?" he said.

"What? Oh, I don't know," Clancy said. "She was prattling about travel, and going abroad and some-such."

"Is that so?" Michael Murphy tentatively lifted the ladle, caught Clancy Regan's eye, and thoughtfully resumed stirring. "And she disappeared, is it?"

"Aye," Clancy Regan growled. "Have I not told you so enough times already? One minute she was there talking, the next minute she was gone. Vanished, she did. Vanished altogether."

"'Tis a queer thing," said Michael Murphy. "'Tis a queer thing, indeed."

Clancy Regan said, "'Tis a queer thing, right enough, and 'tis worried I am. 'Tis not like Fiona to go without leaving word."

"Aye," said Michael Murphy, "you're right there."

Clancy Regan wheeled on him. "And what would you be knowing about that, Michael Murphy?"

"Nothing, nothing, nothing," said Michael Murphy hastily, "'Tis only wondering I was what she was saying before she.... ah.. went."

"Oh, it is, is it?"

"Er, yes," said Michael Murphy. "She might have said something... ah... something that'd be a clue."

"Qch, all she was saying was some daft nonsense about Africa, and hula girls and suchlike," Clancy said.

"Oh?" said Michael Murphy. "Hula girls, is it? Was it to the South Seas she wanted to go?" His nose twitched.

"Aye, that's it. 'Twas the South Seas," said Clancy. He paused. "Aye. She was saying as how she wished she could go see one of them desert islands." He drummed his fingers on the table top. "That's it. I remember." He gazed into space.

Michael Murphy wondered if he could sneak another cup. "Them desert islands is supposed to be like heaven," he said.

"Aye," said Clancy Regan, rubbing his chin slowly. "Aye. 'Twas wishing she was before she went. And then she was there no more. Then she was there no more, at all."

Michael Murphy sneaked another sup. "'Tis a bit of

travelling I'd not mind doing meself," he said. "To go to wonderful places, and see the amazing things." He sighed. "Grand! 'Tis wishing I'd be meself to be on a beautiful desert island."

The ladle splashed into the stew, and Clancy Regan staggered back aghast. Michael Murphy's voice seemed to hang in the air along with the aroma, but of Michael Murphy himself there was no trace.

Clancy Regan sank limply into a chair. "Is it going mad I am?" he whispered to himself. "He was there. I saw him. Were we not talking together? We were so. He can't just... just..." His hands fluttered helplessly.

He stared around the kitchen. Nobody. "Michael Murphy! Are you there?" he called. Then, "No, no. 'Tis not there y'are. And 'tis not me eyes that is playing tricks. You've gone. I know it."

Carefully he got to his feet and approached the stove. He sniffed, and peered into the stew. Gingerly he took hold of the ladle and paddled it warily through the mixture. "'Tis bewitched y'are, I'm thinking," he muttered. The thought loosened his hold, and he backed away.

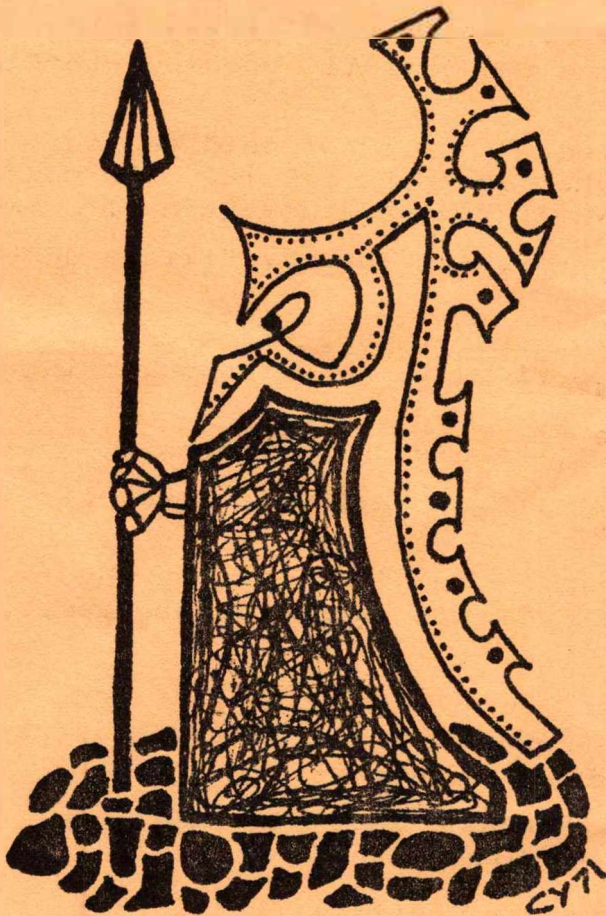
"Bewitched it is, and that's for sure," he breathed. "Bewitched it is, and it and me is in the same room together." He groped behind him for his chair. He sat again. He stared at the steaming pot, his eyes unwavering, as though not to miss a detail if it, too, decided to evaporate.

"'Tis throwing it out I should be," he murmured to himself doubtfully. "'Tis for digging the hole, maybe, and burying it."

He licked his lips, his mind shocked and numb.

The fragrant vapour continued to rise and saturate the room.

Twilight shadows began to caress the cottage. "'Tis doing nothing y'are, Clancy Regan," he said to himself. "And what is it you could be doing? Bejassus, 'tis safe enough I seem to be over here." He hunched. "'Twill boil away altogether, I'm thinking, if 'tis the patience I have."



He sat on in the gathering gloom, his mind vainly darting to comprehend the unknown power that had entered his home.

At last, the strain on his eyes was too much, and he roused himself. "'Tis lighting the lamp I'll have to be if I'm wanting to see what's going on," he thought.

He arose and stealthily found the lamp and lit it. He paused for a while, then picked up the lamp and approached the stove. He held the light aloft. The stew was drying out, and the level had fallen considerably. The bubbles now rose large and sluggish, and plopped, gasping with effort.

"'Tis not long you'll be lasting now, I'm thinking," Clancy Regan said. "And when you're gone, when you're all burned up, there'll be nothing left of you. Aye." He dwelt on this for a moment. "Aye. Nothing left of it." His voice dropped in self-interrogation. "'Tis a good thing that will be, won't it? Aye. So it will. Ah. Will it, though? Aye."

He set the lamp on the window ledge. "'Tis themselves that was took, the pair of them. Did I not see it with me own eyes? I did so. Well, then. 'Tis only one way a man can take himself off so quickly and entirely. 'Tis bewitched it is."

He pondered over the lava-like stew. "And 'tis themselves that was wishing, and themselves that got took. Me Fiona and Michael Murphy both. God rest their souls."

A light draught caused the flame in the lamp to flicker.

"Me poor wife. Me poor wife. And Michael, who came to help. Took. The pair of them took." He grew pensive. "Both of them. Both wishing. Both gone." He pulled his ear. "The pair of them. Wishing."

He put his hands in his pockets and glowered at the saucepan.

"Did they not wish for the same things? They did so. The pair of them. A beautiful desert island it was. And would they be going there, the pair of them? Would it be some scheme they had of going away together? Some trick? Both wanting a desert island?"

Clancy Regan snorted. "Would they now! Could it be themselves that are together this very minute? It could be, indeed, and me, Clancy Regan, thousands of miles away. Oh, right!" He chewed his lip.

Once in his brain, the thoughts linking his wife with Michael Murphy developed and magnified. He thought of possible situations involving the pair of them that were too distasteful to contemplate. And he found himself growing angry.

"'Tis together they'd be, and that's for sure," he said grimly. "Planned it together, I wouldn't be surprised."

He grabbed the ladle and jabbed it at the now-sticky

concoction. He churned the glutinous mass. "'Tis tham that's thinking that a high time they'll be having, it it? Ha!" The stew glopped and surged.

Clancy Regan lifted the ladle to his mouth. The mixture was thick and cloying, and tasted delicious: "Ha!" he said again. "'Tis the greatest cook that ever was she is."

He ate another spoonful, and another. And yet another. "Ha!" he repeated. "Right now. So 'tis wishing I'm going to be, and wishing I am for sure, and the wish that I'm wishing is, that right this minute, I'm wishing I was beside me own dear wife."

There was a cry of pain, a startled oath, and a feminine squeal of fright. Michael Murphy, gasping for breath, struggled to one side, and Clancy settled between the pair of them onto the hot sand.

It seemed that he had arrived in the nick of time.

- Jack Wodhams.

-----oooo000oooo-----

SYNCON SEVENTY - TWO

The Convention will be held over the weekend of 11th to 13th of August, 1972 at the Squire Inn, Bondi Junction, Sydney. Rates are:

Supporting Membership - \$2.
 Attending Membership - \$4.
 Attending Membership after 1st August, 1972 - \$5.
 Conversion from supporting to attending,
 (a) before 1/8/72 - \$2.
 (b) after 1/8/72 - \$3.

Booking for the hotel rooms are now open. Since there is only a limited number of rooms we have obtained till 1st March, make your bookings as soon as possible, but at least before March one. Rooms are:

Single - \$12 per night.
 Twin or Double - \$15 (\$7.50 ea) per night.
 Three in a room - \$18 (\$6 ea) per night.

Since the Con is two nights, the committee would like half the room rate for booking confirmation. Meals are cheap too.

SYNCON 2 will be the best SF Convention put on in Australia. Make sure you don't miss it!

For further info write to: Syncon 2, GPO Box 4593, Sydney 2001.

"I ATE AN
APPLE A DAY -
BUT IT
DIDN'T
WORK..."

DR. CLARKE M.D.
HOURS 8-9, 4-5
NIGHT CALLS
A SPECIALITY.

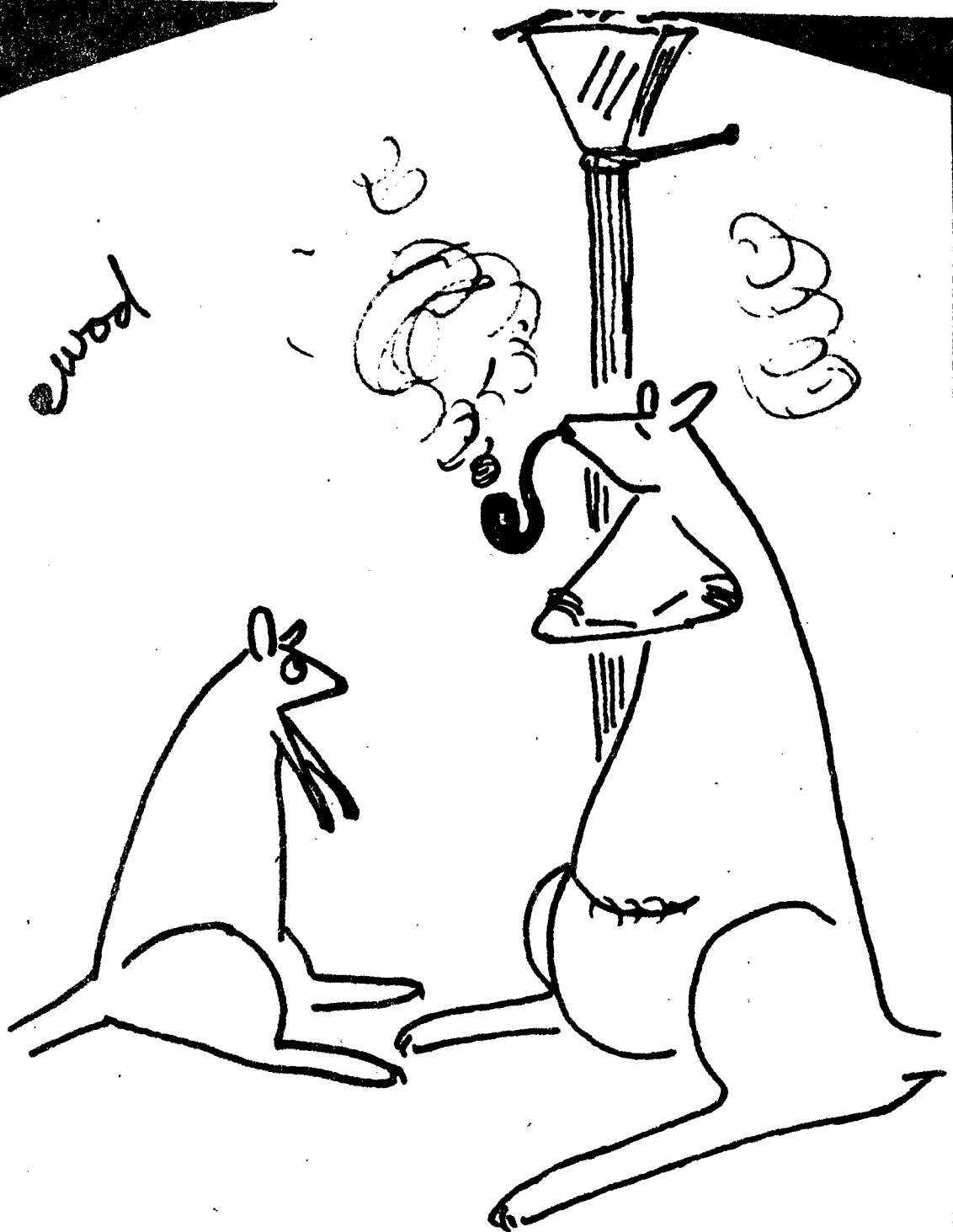


5-11-11

room

5/9/08





A YOUNG WALLABY SPIED, & WAS VERY SURPRISED
TO SEE A SMOKING KANGAROO.

"COR 'STRENGTH, FAIR DINKUM, OLD COBBER," HE CRIED,
"NOW WHAT'S THIS THAT'S GOT INTO YOU?"

THE 'ROO WITH A HUFF, & A BLACK CLOUD OF PUFF,
ADOPTED A NONCHALANT SLOUCH.

"A GOOD PIPE ABIDES AS A PLEASURE 'N BESIDES
IT GIVES ME A USE FOR ME POUCH."

"I WANTED TO MAKE LOVE, NOT
WAR - BUT AFTER
ONE LOOK AT HER..."

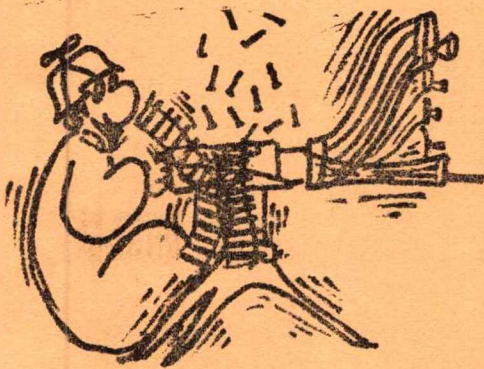
"I SEE YOU'VE BURNT
YOUR BRA, SOUL SISTER..."

"THERE - BUT FOR THE
GRACE OF GOD - GO I..."



ALBERT B. BROWN WITH SPINNING MISSIE

MISSY, BE DESCRIBED AS A PLATTER-
PUSSY?



LoCs

Cy Chauvin
17829 Peters,
Roseville,
Michigan,
USA 48066.

Ah, Wombat; you know, Ron, I still don't know what a Wombat really is -- I mean, what does the animal look like? From the fanzine itself I can only guess that it must be pink and full of nuts! [A perfect description of R.L. Clarke! - Shayne/ (* Actually I had an illo of one, but the mag.

it was in got chucked out before I could cut it out for stenciling. - Ron.*) Hey -- what's this, a blue illo on page 21? Don't tell me you've gone out and bought another Ronco drum or something, so that you now can have a two-colour fanzine...? Like John Banger? Must say that the blue ink looks quite nice... [Thanks; actually I bought a new machine. - Ron.]

Highlight of the issue is David Hough's account of his trip to Laos. Actually, it's the only really meaty item in the whole issue. It really makes me sort of wonder what's it like to actually live in a war-torn country like that (or Biafra, for instance); Dave only visited there, and it certainly seems that he didn't have a very pleasant time there, even if he found the whole trip interesting and something-not-to-be-missed. I suppose a lot of times we must take the (relatively) security of our little cities quite for granted; hell, we do nearly all the time, unless there's a riot (like here in Detroit in 1967), or a curfew or a gang fight ~~or a crowd of st fans around~~. How lucky we are; too bad everyone couldn't get around as nicely as we do. (HA!)

Ah, the poetry. FIVE FULL PAGES OF IT! (Evidently a number of people answered your plea for poetry in TM 19, right?) [Yes. Though for TM 22 I'm short of it again, as well as fiction and illos. - Ron.] I must say, though, that a lot of it is surprisingly good. "Symbiosis" I'm afraid I don't really quite understand, even though I've reread it over three times -- any understanding of it seems to just be "over the next hill", if you know what I mean. Like, you get a glimpse of an object and keep squinting your eyes but never can really make out what the object is. Very well written, though. E.H. Lepp should be proud.

"Relationships" is even better than the other poem, a bit more clearer, and much more neat and compact. A lot of the excess verbiage that was present in the previous poem, for instance, is pared off here. Leith Morton has done a good job... I wonder, has he thought of sending it to the RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY? I think they might accept it. Leith didn't do so hot with the next poem, I'm afraid. Some nice images there, Leith ("pinchwork of veins",

"lace-like spittle of froth"), but the whole thing is just a jumble of words. You have to have some sort of idea, concept, theme, linking this whole thing together; you can't just slop some pretty sounding words together and then call it a "poem". That will never do. "Hush" by Steven Phillips is quite nice, very beautiful, I think -- maybe the basic idea behind it is a little worn, however. And I'm wondering -- did Steve Phillips see that horror show, "Hush, hush, sweet Charlotte", too?

Harold Eggleton seems to have mistakenly approached John Brosnan's article from a serious viewpoint, which of course ruins it entirely. (Not that it really was the funniest thing in the world, either...). I don't think anyone would deny that John didn't deserve all the trouble he blundered into, but it made for a fairly amusing story, didn't it? You need some life, some excitement, maybe even some controversy to get the old sluggish blood moving in the lettercol. And some nice, faanish articles, humorous, funny, even outrageous. It's only the second issue, though, and I suppose these things take time. Work on it! - Cy.

Leith Morton
110 O'Connor St.,
Haberfield 2045.

Please accept my apologies for an error of my own doing which appeared in the last issue of "Wombat". I did not check carefully enough the typed copy of my poem "Nightpiece" and unfortunately the same error which occurred in the typed copy has been reproduced in "Wombat". In the second verse of that poem, the fifth line should read:

"and is bone the symbol of mind"
it should be "mind", not "wind". I think that it is rather a serious misprint for it destroys the basic sense of the second verse.. Again, my humble apologies for sending you the faulty manuscript. It all comes from not paying the typist.

As a recompense may I offer you yet another original poem (though not Science Fantasy, I feel it has some value), adopted from a poem written in the tenth century A.D. by the famous lady poetess Ono no Komachi and collected in the Kokinshu anthology of Japanese poetry (compiled by Imperial order, completed in 905)
/See p.19. - Ed./.-Leith.

Bob Smith
1/64 Elouera Rd.,
Cronulla, 2230.

Don't listen to those who want you to change the name, Buddy! There is nothing wrong with WOMBAT. It's a refreshing change from some of the peculiarities we see as fanzine titles, and its Orstrilian, mate! A bit of identification, that's what I always say... After all, BUNYIP had a fantastic success after it changed its name, and if we can have a BUNYIP in Australian fanzine history we sure as hell can have a WOMBAT. In anycase, it has a slightly crazy ring about it, in keeping with the ideas of the Editor to make it a fanzine; although you gotta keep at it, Ron, as the more sercon Clarke is beginning to creep in.../He can't help it, Bob, his automechanism keeps getting jammed. - Shayne./

[With a co-editor like I've got, something else is going to get jammed.... - Ron.]

Well, after that frightening description of Sydney for the newcomer, it seems only fair that someone should do the same for Melbourne... No doubt I am just not up with current idiomatic grammar, but I didn't get your description of the Customs...? What's "In drag"? [By that term I mean disguise.. which they weren't. Actually the term is not current; it's about 5 yrs out of date... - Ron.] Well, I'll take your word for it that Kings Cross is where the "action" is in Sydney, I being one of those "quiet evening at home" types nowadays; the Cross never did turn me on, though, even in my more active days. However, don't fail to continue with your research on what the Cross Streetwalker gets up to.

Bert Chandler was very funny, of course, and I imagine its a twist on the time travel yarn not previously thought of.

Its most ego-pricking when one can't recognise the "well known books" quoted; why couldn't you have summat simple, like "The place stank" or "Put down that wrench!"...? The character in the photo looks like some one who has just burdened himself with that remarkable publication ETHERLINE II...

"Royaume du Laos" was interesting. Although the "hippies" might have found their "haven of peace" in Vientiane it would appear that the local population is not greatly impressed with them, and the "haven" might turn out to be somewhat drastically temporary, no?

All the poetry was appreciated, except Cy Chauvin's effort. Leith Morton and his powerful descriptive work in particular I liked.

Found "The Blob Story" most entertaining, but hard to relate to the "pulp" story. Pulp movies of the 50's, sure, but what has it all got to do with our lovable ol' pulp magazines. A different kind of pulp, to me, anyway. (I used to know a Pilon once. French-Canadian Regimental Sar' Major, in Tokyo, 1954. Proper bastard, too...).

Regards, Bob.

A. Bertram Chandler
Cell 7, Tara St.,
Woollahra 2025.

Thank you for WOMBAT. I was rather surprised to see the Shakespearian piece appearing so promptly - but, of course, the incorporated wombattery fitted in nicely with the fanzine's title. He does seem to know more about seafaring matters than the average layman. The theory has been advanced that he was at sea during his younger days. If this is the case, the odd behaviour of the Master in the opening scene of THE TEMPEST may have been Shakespeare's way of paying off old scores. I can just imagine indignant shipmasters jumping up from their seats in the Globe Theatre and stomping out, muttering in their beards....

As a matter of interest, the Boatswain, in Shakespeare's time, enjoyed a far higher status than these days. He was the second-in-command, equivalent to a modern Mate or Chief Officer.

Perhaps, while THE TEMPEST was in its gestatory stage, Shakespeare sat in the Mermaid Tavern, buying flagons of sack for some Boatswain just in from a voyage, being earbashed in recompense. Can't you hear it?

"I do all the work. I run the ship. The Old Man's no more than a figurehead..."

Today's Mates do say just that sort of thing. I've been guilty of it myself. It is only when one becomes Master that one learns the Facts of Life. Sincerely, Bert.

Kevin Dillon Found Wombat 1 also so -- The Wedding - one of those better/best Brosnan bits editorial stuff
33 Elswick St., Petersham. fai enuf experimentally. Appearance fine and looks pretty promising if you still it fillin stuff.

Wombat 2 now looks so much more uncasual if still intended to be fillin pubbing. VERY nice looking. Could joke about politics finally showing thru in your colours of red & black, traditional Vc among other connection just to lead up to asking are you forsaking womens Lib? Hmm? I really meant to ask whether people had stopped commenting on female influence (perish the thought, of non-females-).

Sydney pages I enjoyed as I'd just made try at our Town Hall exhibition of new Sydney Development Plan. You may be interested if you've not seen it. Worthwhile for an afternoon or Sat morn, till (August end) of questions just overdue all this long unanswered still - Needed. Author? I wonder are you going to go into detail on local scene? We're thinking about it. - Ron. I thought AB Chandler just pleasant fill in, but less taxing than guessing games. I had to skip. Preferred the location article to the verse by far. Could take more. Details too. Preferred the more critical letters. Smallest criticism I'm tempted to make (not a traditionalist) is that the widowed line ruined my full toration for your fiction atmosphere. Pity. I liked it enuf. Blob I enjoyed much more fully despite fighting grimly through bad bad bad spelling, typing, punctuation or whatever you'd excuse it with. Shame. Since you've gone to such trouble with paper, layout etc, irritating. Map was a good touch. Nice Work. More verse stored away plus lot more fiction for future issues. I'd expand the sydney scene - hoping that someone really can find that special something I lived with in her better years. It would make up for lots. Best, Kevin.

E..B. Lindsay The landing on the first page (of W 2) was rather slow, but the action warmed up towards
6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776 the end. You realise however that Wombat fandom will expect you to finish what you started.

Capt. Chandler has the wrong idea about 'the bard'. What happened in fact, is that the late John W. Campbell, inventor of the first working literary time machine, sent a copy of Don Stuart's "Forbidden Planet", back in time to Elixabethan England where the bard read it and pinched the plot. Realising that a fantasy of this type would not sell, he moved the locale to an island rather than

another planet, relying on the fact that his version appeared before the time of the original, to avoid any idea that one story was based on the other.

I liked the David Hough article, something contemporary and a bit unusual. Cy Chauvin managed a very interesting piece, without going on for pages and pages, as is often done. "The Blob Story". Really, to use a terrible movie for basis, and then in fake 'new wave'. It is too easy to criticise "new wave" stories on this basis. I dislike "new wave" but not all of it is 'bad'.

I hate your guessing games, because I don't know any of the answers. So here is one for you. Who said:

"The man who first abused his fellows with swear-words instead of bashing their brains out with a club should be counted among those who laid the foundations of civilisation". [Eric Lindsay?? - Shayne.]

You are of course aware that coloured paper such as you use pollutes the environment, and this will become a great menace if you go through with your pink, blue and primrose plan. I mean, you have no idea what the dyes in coloured paper do to septic tanks, and with the implied end use of Wombat no doubt the beach off Bondi will be multicoloured before long. [I am not in the habit of stuffing Wombat into septic tanks... are you? - Shayne. Anyway, the paper's a little "hard" to be put to that use... - Ron.]
Go back to the symbolic and ecological purity of white paper, before it is too late.
Regards, Eric.

Dave Hulvey
Rt. 1, Box 198,
Harrisonburg,
Va. 22801
USA.

Pineapple Parrot = Wombat? Or does it... hmmmmmm. Sydney sounds like the kind of place to do one's fanac in, but I wouldn't want to be solicited there. It represents the Mysterious Down Under. Aha! The rap is the best in the ish, and ends on the right note of suspense. Yes, a bit like in the old Saturday Evening Post serials where Mundanes thrilled to Dan Champion as he fought to the death with a sexually aroused bearded dog, only to be saved by crawling into a tiny cave near the bottom of the last page. And then . . .

Mark settled back against the icy walls of the tiny chamber. The mad growls of a dying bearded dog caused a renewed trembling to race the length of his spine. He forced his broken, bleeding body to move onward, deeper into the forbidding darkness. Suddenly the hiss of a steampowered dildo panicked him. A horde of sex-starved rattlesnakes descended upon him. He cried in horror, "Stay put for the exciting conclusion to this epic adventure in the next issue of SATURDAY EVENING POST. Only a dime at your local stand. Look for the unexpected ending of this novel -- I WAS A TYPING TEACHER FOR PAT NIXON."

Chandler is very humorous in his THE BARD IN AUSTRALIA. I can't help but believe this is an improvement over the perpetual Ferdinand Feghoot. David Hough's travelog is interesting. It gives a view of the War not seen often in this country. It's either

Christ or Communism/The Liberal Betrayal or A Student Handbook to VietCong Flag Design. In other words, most writers have a political axe to grind, a party line to parrot. Happily, David displays none.

Cy Chauvin's poem was good. It cut all needless verbiage to reach the best medium to communicate his message to the reader. The use of opposites was clever, and helped to make the statement more significant through contrast. It was short enough to express an idea clearly, and do the job of several pages of prose. Cy has learned to communicate well. On page sixteen Leith Morton plays with words in their place ment, but anyone over 65 IQ could've thought of that. His effort had little else to recommend it.

Kerry parodies the New Wave poorly. He must believe in the New Wave before he can write a parody of their work. I find humans the funniest when they take themselves the most serious. Sex is a good example. Of course, you found my THOUGHT WHILE TOKIN' THE TOAD a greyish piece of writing, and it was meant, in part, as a parody of New Worlds type writing or non-writing. Orwell . . .

I wonder if you will continue FRAGMENTS. I liked it somewhat, but will anyone else? [Fragments is a series of mood pieces. At the moment David Grigg has another of them, though not in the 'space' series. I haven't been in the 'serious' writing mood lately, though... - Ron.] - Dave.

John Foyster
c/- 6 Clowes St.,
South Yarra,
Vic. 3141.

WOMBAT wriggled itself my way, arriving this very day, and indeed I only began to read it an hour ago. Maybe that explains why I haven't read it as carefully as I might. Nevertheless, I can make some comments.

The obvious one has already been made with regard to the first issue: many of your LoCers in this issue indicate that they really like this sort of stuff as compared with MENTOR-material. You know me well enough, I think, to know that I share that prejudice. The article by David Hough, for example, is probably worth more to me than the last four or five issues of THE MENTOR. (But the stuff with words scattered all over the page has much the same effect on me, whether in WOMBAT or THE MENTOR.)

The 'fan below' is Leigh Edmonds, [Right. - Ron.] and I'm afraid that I don't read the same well-known books as Ron L. Clarke. (Dillon! I published some of his stuff once. Ah, the dear days of the past; though this piece is shorter.) Best, John.

John Brosnan
Flat 1,
62 Elsham Rd.,
Kensington,
London W 14,
UK.

First of all, a few words to Mr. Eggleton. Yes, I agree. One piece of writing is hardly enough to base a character analysis on. Yes, I am one of the nicest of people and yes, I was trying to be funny. If I only succeeded in irritating you then one of us must be doing something wrong. I, of course, prefer to think that you didn't approach the piece in the way it should have been approached.

SPEECHES. Oh really! Being able to write doesn't automatically mean that one is a good speaker. Or vice versa.

PRESENTS. Crap.

CLIVE & CHARLES. They went for the booze.

THE TRIP TO GOSPORT. That's Chris all over.

ARRIVAL. It was, so I'm told.

THE DRESS SUIT. Of course I supplied measurements, but I deliberately gave the wrong ones so I could wallow in self pity.

THE CEREMONY. Oh, I don't know.

BRIDESMAID. She was! She was!

THAT DRUNK DRIVE. Sigh. I wasn't condoning drunk driving, I was describing a particular drunken drive. At the time it was an exhilarating experience but it also scared me shitless. I assure you I wasn't suggesting that everyone should swig down a bottle of cheap claret and go off for a spin. As you said, Mr Eggleton, one piece of writing is hardly enough to base a character analysis on but you certainly managed to draw some interesting conclusions about my character despite this. So I don't mind saying that the impression I received of you from your one piece of writing wasn't favourable either.

The most annoying thing about Mr Eggleton's letter is that it fails to criticise my writing, which is what concerns me the most, but instead criticises the events I described and my attitude to them. Now I couldn't care less about what Mr Eggleton thinks of me or about what happened but I do care about what he thinks of how I wrote the piece. This is the only type of criticism that interests me and there was a definite lack of it in Mr Eggleton's letter, apart from a mention of lucid writing.

An example of the type of comment that is useful to any aspiring writer comes from Van Ikin's letter. Until he pointed out that there is no variation in the length of my sentences I had no idea of this shortcoming (he's right, of course.). -John B.

Mike O'Brien

158 Liverpool St.,
Hobart, 7000.
Tas.

Working through WOMBAT, I enjoyed your brief and serialised piece on Sydney...

Bert Chandler's piece was absurdly beautiful, my only complaint is that it's too short!

I don't have an idea about the books, but the photo looks like that well known Melbourne fan.... er, what was his name now? Edmond Lee? Dee Leighmoor? Deleigh Mound? Midley Delonds?

The travel piece is moderately interesting, which was better than I expected. The poetry didn't catch me in a poetry reading mood, but I'll come back later when I feel more like it. The BLOB story was fairly effective, though I had the feeling it was a bit overdone in places. But then one might say that of much parody.

- Mike.

Edgar H. Lepp
1 Essex St.,
Nth. Blackburn,
Vic. 3130

WOMBAT 2 is better than N.1 - there's more variety in N.2. That Laotian article was quite educating and interesting. Until I read it I had thought that travel in that region would be impossible

for any civilian, French-Canadian or otherwise. Can you get similar reports about the writer's travels through Cambodia and Thailand?

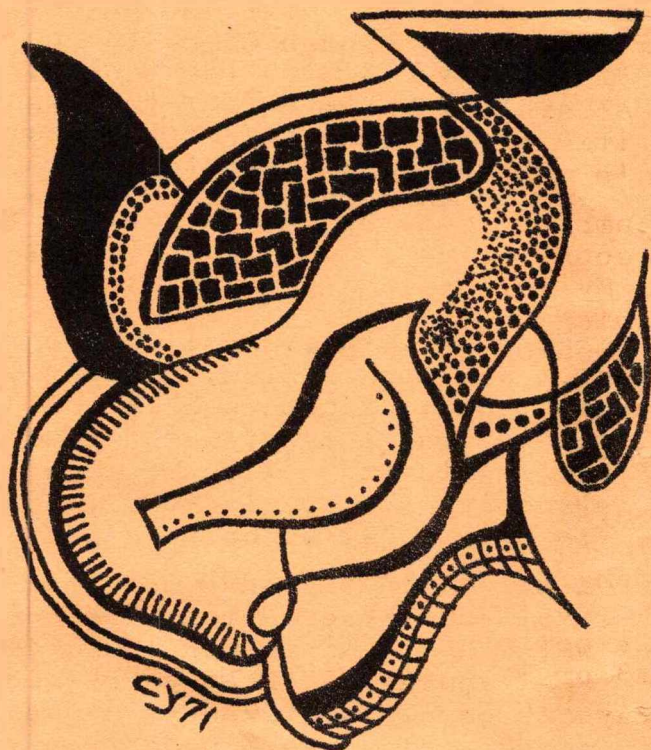
Those 'well-known books' are not known to me. You should've culled the quotes from the title page. And you probably deliberately dispelled every fan's name in TM 20.

Chandler's piece has tempted me to read THE TEMPEST. I hope Sir Reg writes his memoirs soon. I've seen M31 No.1 mentioned a few times in TM and WOMBAT. My impression is that this emanated from the R.L. Clarke Publishing House. Is this correct and was there ever a No.2? Was it a Mentor-thing or WOMBAT-type thing? Yes, I put out M31. There was an aborted second issue put out in ANZAPA after I left for England; but I don't count that in. M31 is what you would get if you crossed TM and WOMBAT - ie the best of both. Who knows... I may continue the series if ever TM and WOMBAT get too much for me. - Ron. Do continue the Fragments. What was the response like to WOMBAT No.1? All the people who located are mentioned in No.2.- Ron. Due to the fact that it's only available for loc, trade, or contribution I think you should have had a good response, perhaps better than the usual TM response which you outlined in about TM 18 or 19. The red paper looks as if it has been dipped in someone's blood. - Edgar.

John J. Alderson Must state that I thoroughly enjoyed WOMBAT 2, Havelock, particularly the piece by Bert Chandler. Though Vic. 3465. in this respect I must take him to task. Either he has been misled, thoroughly mistaken or is concealing the truth from the opposition, in which latter case I hope I am not putting my foot in it. The temporal transfer of Shakespeare to the 1975 Worldcon in Australia could not have been arranged by the justly celebrated Duns Scotus, who was not as Bert suggests, a "well known magician.". Duns Scotus, or to give him his full name, Johannes Duns Scotus was a medieval schoolman born about 1265 and died at the age of 43. His writings struck at the roots of Aristotelico-Christian philosophy, teaching that theology rests on faith and is not speculative but practical, an act of will. "Will is the mover in the whole kingdom of mind, and all things are subject to it." Virtually all modern theology rests on this doctrine, and so incidentally does a great deal of speculative writing often called Sf. Recommend his works to A. Bertram Chandler for his perusal.

No, obviously the man concerned was the "wondrous Michael Scott" who had an indirect influence on Sir Walter Scott, and who was a magician of renown.

All this talk about Elizabethan times gave me the clue to the identity of the fan in WOMBAT 1. I admire the subtleness of your clue, Ron, do indeed. You have probably heard a man off-handedly introduce his wife as, "And this is my spare part," or perhaps you have had the misfortune to have heard some miserable crawler say, "And this is my better half." The idea that a man's wife is part of him is one of our loftiest ideals. It follows that Henry VIII with his six wives would have to use the plural,



truly he was a man of "many parts". Yes, that fan is no other than Henry VIII. It is so like Henry's portrait after Holbein the Younger that I wonder where you got it. Perhaps it was an hitherto unpublished study for the artist's great painting. But thanks for bringing to our attention this great lover of wine, women and Sf in the past. Yours, John J.

Paul Anderson WOMBAT is an
21 Mulga Rd., interesting
Hawthorndene, little zine
S.A. 5051. but fairly
 hard to comm-
ent on. The Woodman item was
excellent and a good follow
up to his "The Phone Rang"
in TM 14. He appears to like
these eerie supernatural

things and has a talent for building up the suspense while tackling older themes. I trust that you can persuade him to be a regular contributor of fiction to the pages of The Mentor, although the balance of fiction is a little too high for my tastes at the moment. Anyway, to return to Wombat, I assume that the smart comment on the peace symbol was either made by somebody who did not care unduly about the implications of the wisecrack or that he was a war lover as in Hersey's novel of the same name. "Let us die to make men free" is also a little extreme as General Patton said the idea is to get someone else to die for their idea while you and your idea live on. In any case what does the statement mean - free of what, free of war? That was what the 1st WW war fought over, but it did not have any real lasting effect. [There are now available envelope stickers of the 'chicken' motif. The quote, of course, is from the poem, "The Battle-Hymn of the Republic", by Julia Ward Howe, of which the full line is : "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,"... and anyone who takes anything seriously all the time has my sympathy. - Ron.] In any case it is rapidly getting to the stage that the only difference between the sides is that the bullets are made in different countries. Certainly the methods of interrogation are remarkably similar. As you may gather from the above I am very definitely anti war in any form and consider violence the last resort of an immature mind. [The last resort is surrender. - Ron.] I was lucky enough not to have had to register for NS but I hope that if I had been a little younger I would have had the courage not to, or at least to have claimed a conscientious objection from serving.

The Wombat's Guessing Games were all too mystifying to me but no doubt we will be told eventually the correct answers.

The 'God is dead' quote was reasonably logical but I am curious as to why those that say God is dead assume that that is the end of it! Surely if God is dead then he existed in the first place before he died and then it is a logical assumption from that to theorise that while he may have died there is no reason to assume that Satan is dead also. Where one exists or has existed it is reasonable to assume that an opposite or an opposing force also exists.

- Paul.

Christine McGowan Thinks: owe someone a letter.. Aha! Owe Ron
40 Williams Rd., Clarke a letter. Wombat 2 I like. I sent
Blackburn, 3130. no loc on Wombat 1 because although it was
entertaining reading and I enjoyed the poem
about sitting on the roof, there really didn't seem to be much
that I could say that was even destructive (my usual style), let
alone constructive. However, all that is about to be remedied.

I presume your propaganda piece about Sydney is aimed at the overseas market. All the same, your observations are interesting - I would not quarrel with them, and indeed could add to them only I see you plan to do that yourself. It's years since I saw much of Sydney proper. Stayed a couple of times at a motel in Rushcutters Bay, which is conveniently close to King's Cross, but nowadays I have this auntie in Avalon, which has been described by a cousin of mine as "Miles from bloody anywhere," and I can't use public transport, and auntie hates driving in city traffic and anyway I'm rather fond of Avalon (there's a splendid French cake shop, among other things).... [It's near Palm Beach... - Ron.]

"Where the bunyips, there yip I" has gone into my treasury of memorable lines. All that about Shakespeare puts me in mind of a couplet on the back door in the Ladies' on the first of the Monash main library, but modesty forbids that I should repeat it. Don't suppose I can tell you to look for yourself when in Melbourne either, now that I come to thinking about it... [I hate these people who hint strongly about something, then don't tell you about it... - Ron.]

"Royaume du Laos" was fascinating, even more than accounts of a certain celebrated bus trip that I have read. Do you think that David Hough could be persuaded to colour it up a bit and submit it to Readers' Digest or somesuch, and donate a generous portion of the proceeds to Australia in 75?

Your poetry was, well... poetry. I like fan poetry only slightly more than I like fan fiction, and for much the same reasons. As with so many things, you don't realise just how skilful the masters really are, how deceptively easy they make it look, until you see it unsuccessfully attempted. I'm not knocking out of hand - I have been known to write poetry myself. But the technical skills come hard. Heino Lepp's effort (does he prefer Edgar or Heino or E.H.?) was a magnificent try, but it foundered in the first instance on the rocks of acansion. Cy Chauvin's piece I thought rather heavy handed, perhaps because I can't agree with his views. Still, a really effective statement of the sort he is trying to make should leave even an opponent with the feeling that

it represents a valid point of view. To take a rather distant example of what I mean, "The First Churchills" didn't change my view that James II was wrong, but it did awaken me to the possibility that he might not have been the blind intemperate bigot that the Wigs painted him and which is the received image to this day. [Ah, she mentioned "The First Churchills"... here I go... its hard to make any firm decision on the Stuarts : they are represented as heros one time and black villains another. I've seen Charles II portrayed as a licentious fool, a clever politician and a lying traitor. Its hard to know what to believe. Personally, I think they were ordinary men facing extraordinary situations in the only way they knew how. James I was a man scared before birth and probably all the way to his death, but still managing to keep a kingdom together. Charles I was never meant to be King, but when he became one he stuck to his beliefs, wrong though they mostly were, with a stubbornness that was to be admired. Charles II... well, he was a devil, but ya gotta luv him. Oh, I do get carried away... but the Stuarts are my favourite kings. - Shayne.]

To return to the subject, with "Abort the Being!" I could not escape the thought that, if I may put it this way, Cy Chauvin was anthropomorphising fetuses. I suppose this is where he and I come to the parting of the ways; I have never liked the anthropomorphising even of dogs, common though it seems to be.

I liked "Hush" best of all. Delicious shivers running up and down my spine!

"The Blob" struck me a very clever - witty even. I could ramble on further, but I must away to "The Mikado". (Yes, I'm a Gilbert and Sullivan freak...). - Christine.

Van Ikin The best things in Wombat No.2 were the poems 4 McDonald Cres., and your own contribution... I mentioned the Strathfield 2135. poems, but I've got to talk about "The Blob Story" second. On the first reading I felt the story was confused, and set out in a "kinky" manner for no good reason. But on a second reading I realised there were some extremely clever little snatches of satire (especially the paragraph leading up to "F*R*I*G*I*D*I*T*Y*"), & so I came to like it. Not as good as your Fragment, though, mainly because there was more dignity to your piece. (Though the "lack of dignity" was probably meant to be a part of "The Blob Story").

Cy Chauvin's "Abort The Being" would have been better with a less lurid title, and if the poem had ended with the line "his life is flushed away". If Chauvin had done these two things, the poem would have been a very tight & powerful piece of objectivity - especially if the lines gloating over the thoughts of grave and tomb had been removed. As it was printed, the poem begins with a powerful image, but the force of this is allowed to dissipate because the sentimental fauning (or mourning?) over the child's lost, unregretted dreams explains the poet's feelings in poor, trite terms. Poetry should be concise & suggestive (like the first four lines of the poem), not stale & pleading like the rest of it.

Of the two poems by Leith Morton, "Relationships" was by far the best, though both were excellent. I'm not much of a poetry critic (when I manage to enjoy poetry, I can't tell why) but I think "Relationships" hit home so well because of the sustained atmosphere & the clear movement from stanza to stanza. (By the second statement I mean simply that I was able to follow what was going on, whereas in "Nightpiece" I got a bit lost at first.) I think the "air as taut as a bowstring" image was a bit trite - & inappropriate (though I guess an allusion to Cupid may have been intended). Sometimes I think the arrangement of words in the lines wasn't quite up to the mark. Take the line:

"hot rich air fries
the pods black"

to my way of thinking,

the word "fries" should have been in the second line, so each line presented a unit of thought (whereas at present "the pods black" means nothing without the preceding run-on line). Similarly, I think in

"awaiting the sweet
deepness of breeze",

the "deepness" should have been in the line before. I can't detect rhythm in poems, so I realise my ideas could ruin a careful metrical plan, but I do think the arrangement of the words is a possible fault in the poem.

I'm sorry, but I'm not greatly enthusiastic about the "Royaume du Laos" & the "Sydney - Where the Action Is" features. I realise that the latter is in accordance with the aims of Wombat, so I'll do nothing more than state that it's not to my taste, but the other thing - ! Firstly, if Laos is as free of French influence as I think it is, then I think it's an insult for Mr Hough to use French in his title. And secondly - well, I don't know... After I'd read the thing, I felt like saying "So what?". For me, that's a pretty serious criticism. - Van.

Archie & Beryl Mercer
21 Trenethick Parc.,
Helston,
Cornwall.

Actually my favourite wombat is Diprotodon, but one doesn't see many of those around nowadays because they're extinct. So it behoves one to make do with this pink thing, for which, therefore, many thanks.

The brief write-up of Sydney was of interest, and would have been more so had the brevity been curtailed in favour of somewhat fuller treatment. Was particularly interested to see that Aussie taxi-drivers don't expect tips. Only in marsupial territory can such phenomena be! (On the other hand, if Harold Eggleton is to be believed, it would appear that Aussie tipsy-drivers don't expect tacks, either.)

I started a bit of wombat-poetry the other night:

"Noah had a wombat;
He kept it in the Ark.
It thought it was a dingo,
And taught itself to bark."

However, if your Chandler-contributor is to be believed,

that is not a patch on what the world should have been presented with. Calibangeroos, anybody? Too, it explains why the Bard chooses to call one of his characters after a modern telecommunicative device.

It surprises me that an allegedly French-Canadian student should sport such a name as "David Hough". I would have expected a French-Canadian student to have a more French-Canadianly sounding name, such as, perhaps, Pierre Geronimeau. Possibly he means he's a student of, rather than from, French Canada. I found his piece to be of considerable interest, anyway - albeit again too brief. Why couldn't Brosnan have been turned loose over the same route?

The second half of the wombat, poetry and pseud-new-wave writing mainly, lacks the interest of the first half unfortunately. The lettercol, like the articles, is too short.-B & Archie.

Harry Warner, Jr.,
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Hagerstown,
Maryland 21740
USA.

I have been failing so miserably in my attempt to get locs written on piling up Australian fanzines that I'm trying a different approach. Write locs on them as they arrive and get around to the backlog if time permits. I'm pretty sure that I have one or more other fanzines from you somewhere in the twin towers of unlocod fanzines that hold my desk firmly anchored to the floor and if I live long enough and don't have another disabling operation soon and stave off senility for a while I'll try to write later about them.

Meanwhile, to the second Wombat which I enjoyed greatly even though I've been noticing something alarming in the most recent Australian and New South Walesian fanzines. (People keep telling me that certain areas which I think of as Australian are mortally insulted to be lumped under that designation and I can never remember which geographical sections I should be careful about so I've been taking the attitude that if the address lacks the word Sydney, a disclaimer is needed.) Anyway, they're starting to look less like fanzines from down under, more like American fanzines. I know that fandom is following Coca-Cola and Bob Hope in the Americanization of the entire universe but I'd hoped that it would be staved off in my lifetime. Wombat is delightfully easy to read but the perfect typography and good illustrations and so forth make me wonder if it's a counterfeit created by some American fan who is in a hoaxing mood. Mmmff. On the other hand, Americans have this weird system of spelling... like color, honor.. etc., which stands out like a sore thumb. - Ron.]

Since I flew all the way to Boston this month, and it's a question whether the rest of fandom or I felt the greater surprise about that. It's conceivable that I might get as far as Sydney some day. The head of a local tourist agency said the other day that he looks for Hagerstown-London plane fares to be down to around \$210 for economy class off season round trips by next year, because of the approaching price war, and by 1975, it might be possible to reach Sydney for little more than the cost of membership and banquet ticket at a worldcon. So I appreciated the

description of what happens when you get there, was a bit baffled by the reference to R & R servicemen since the initials up here are normally given to rock & roll music, and I wondered if the worst drivers in the world aren't always found in the city you've spent most of your time in. [R & R stands for "Rest and Recreation", and I should have mentioned that they were US servicemen. And the "R&R" has been given another meaning by some of the people in the Cross. - Ron.]

The Bard in Australia was sheer delight. I can't remember many fanzine contributions by Bertram Chandler, and I hope this signifies a complete resolution on his part to wipe out such impressions in fan's minds.

Of course, Royaume du Laos struck me with a different kind of force from the impression given by the Sydney travelogue. I can't imagine myself, even if I were David Hough's age again, with the courage to go travelling in this direction. Nor can I quite realize that there really are people living under those conditions in what I still think of as Indo-China because of early stamp collection engrams. You see, the bureaucrats in Washington and the far leftists in demonstrations and the girls who don't want to risk the demand for social workers to lessen now that they've taken the right courses in college to get jobs in the welfare bureau keep emphasizing over the television and in the newspapers and throughout the magazines how totally hopeless is the situation for the low income people in this nation. I freely admit that there's too great a gulf between the rich and the poor up here and I know in theory that there are areas of the world where the average person lives in a way that makes American poverty seem the epitome of affluence, but it takes a fresh-eyed observer like David to describe what it's really like if a person was stupid enough to be born in Asia instead of in North America or Europe.

Something happened several years ago to my poetry appreciation faculties. As a result I haven't been able to read poetry with much enjoyment since, although just recently I've experienced some symptoms of recuperation. So I don't think it's safe to give reactions just now to the poetry section in Wombat, except to say that I preferred Relationships to the other items and felt that Leith Morton in both his contributions demonstrated remarkable ability to find fresh new combinations of words to express things that are common to us all.

I hope someone up here will ask you for permission to reprint The Blob Story in a large-circulation American fanzine. Maybe it would destroy once and for all this ridiculous Old Wave-New Wave conflict on paper. It's hard to imagine combatants on either side continuing to feel angry and sincere about their cause after reading such an amusing item. I wish it were as easy to film a cheap horror movie in the style of the symbolist or expressionist filmmakers as it is to destroy pretensions in literary form via a fanzine.

I'm not sure that I understand just what happened in Fragments: whether the machine is separate somewhere or personified in the man or the woman. But I liked it anyway. It's such a relief to find a one and one-half page story in a fanzine that

does not end with a stupendous pun which turns out to be the sole reason why the preceding paragrapsh were written. - Harry Warner, Jr.

Nick J. Shears Wombat 2 : Rather boring editorial, I'm afraid.
52 Garden Way., And what is 'As Australian as Aeroplane Jelly'?
Northcliff 4, And what is AJ, anyway? /Kings Cross is. And AJ
Johannesburg, is a brand of dessert jelly; the singing ad for
South Africa. which has been on radio for as long as I can
remember; it's one of the mainstays of the Austral-
ian Way of Life. - Ron.7. The Chandler piece was quite enjoyable,
but I guess it would have been more so had I been able to under-
stand all the Australianisms.

I recognise the first quote, but not the second. Can't place either of them. "Royaume..." was quite interesting, but nothing more. Sounded rather like a school essay. Symbiosis and Abort the Being were both good, Nightpiece I didn't understand, and Relationships was brilliant. Nothing less. Pity the cliched phrase 'taught as a bowstring' was included. Something like 'taught as love-strained nerves' would have been a bit better.

The Blob Story was superb, but once again something spoiled it - this time the line about a classic redone. It was like including an explanation with a poem - detracting. Why not something along the lines of The Return of the Son of the Blood of The Blob - Rewritten? The LoCs are all comment on the previous issue's contents (as is this one!) and leave no openings for me to comment on them. "Fragments: Plus One" was very good, but slightly over-written, but by all means, please continue the series. - Nick.

Jerry Kaufman Thanks for the Wombat. I found this issue much
417 W 118th St., more interesting than the one I saw previously.
Apt. 63, Most interesting piece was the account of David
NYC 10027 Hough's dangerous trip to Laos, probably one of
USA. the few places on earth able to make New York
seem tame. If you wonder at that, see Bob Toomey's
history of muggings in recent Potlatches.

I once saw a documentary about Sydney, with a crew-cut businessman telling his flying companion about the wonderful things there are to do there. He seemed to have loved the zoo, and the scene showing the great night life was of a plain young woman (in a very nice dress) orgasmically rocking to some pseudo-folk song.

The fan on page five is Brad:Balfour, five years from now. How did you misspell that? The first book reads like PG Wodehouse. The second, well, I don't understand that last sentence. Must be Buckminster Fuller.

The poetry is very poetic. I thought the first was most interesting, possibly because the writer didn't seem to be in the same style all the time, starting very rhythmally, and even rhyming, then it was sometimes almost a colloquial speech pattern then a dramatic speech pattern. The Blob Story was odd but appealing.

All nostalgia is appealing, especially when it combines the nostalgia of thorough crap with the nostalgia for an intellectual circle. (Wouldn't you have liked to have been around the Inkspots or the Algonquin Circle? Or the New Wave offices?)

Continue with the Fragments; they are far enough above the level of most amateur fiction to be worth developing. And my only comment on the lettercol is by indirection: I would like to see more John Brosnan material. yours... Jerry.

Roger Waddington 4 Commercial St., Norton, Malton, Yorkshire, UK. Turning to Wombat I thought at first, I must admit that I thought it was a plug for the Australia in '75 movement; but the scales fell from my eyes (nictitating membranes, you understand..!) The Guessing Games had me guessing; after reading an anthology in which the entries were untitled and listed by author in an index at the back and having to give up half the way through and start cheating, I'm grateful that you didn't give me the opportunity! The Laos report was utterly fascinating, and if it wasn't included out of your preference alone, I'd say it represented a breakthrough in fannish involment; but then a lot of fanzines tend to surprise by breaking out into pieces like this; it's one of the charms of fandom, I find!

The poetry too is surprisingly good (no, I don't mean it in quite that way!), especially the piece by Leith Morton and Cy, both here and in TM; but then again, that's one of the prerogatives of fandom. best wishes, Roger.

Sam Long 49 Park Close Oxford OX2 'NP England. ...WOMBAT 2, an appropriate name, I must admit, for a fanzine coming from 'Big Earls Court'... you've heard E.C. referred to as 'Little Australia' haven't you?... Wombats are fairly popular over this side of the world, and I find them charming little beasties, so don't take it amiss when you read Q5 and find that I support guerrilla movements trying to overthrow wombat and aardvark fandom. The animals I like, but unfortunately they've become symbols of a repressive, reactionary type of fandom that is a menace to trufen everywhere. I have no doubt that these poor animals are being exploited against their will, so it is my aim to free them from their evil masters..etc.

On to WOMBAT. I liked the Chandler article about the author of 'Pommie-o and Juliet'. I will admit to having to look up 'bunyip', for, though I'm up on my mythical animals, I hadn't run across bunyip... I say, would any of you antipodean characters like to write a descriptive article on the Bunyip for Q6's Longivian Bestiary? Hmm? Re the first footnote on that article, I work in a weather central, and when Lord Moyala (as he now is) quit as Premier of Northern Ireland, we were tempted to offer him a job as chief chart-checker in charge of checking charts, on the basis of the old metecrological rime "How many charts could (Major) Chichester-Clark check if Chichester-Clark could check charts..." (Actually it wasn't rime, but

alliteration, but what difference does it make? Well...

Wombat

Guessing Games sound interesting. It seems that I've read both quotations somewhere, but I can't say where; the second sounds like Nietzsche, but I may be wrong, and the first has a vaguely Kafka-like touch to it. Like the cat that ate the cheese and stood outside the mouse-hole, I wait for the answers with bated breath.

David Hough's 'Royaume du Laos' was an excellent little article, most enjoyable. Since I haven't been to Southeast Asia, I don't have any anecdotes of my own to add. I feel, tho, as if David could have ended it a little better... his story just peters out. In fact, the last page, but just the last page, reads rather like one of the poorer National Geographic travelogs. Bible salesmen in Vientiane?! What will they think of next. What we need over there is a few more Gideons and fewer Gideon bibles.

Sorry,

Ron, the poetry was awful. 'Symbiosis' was the best of the lot, but even it was poorly put together. I haven't seen good serious poetry in a fanzine ever -- tho good comic verse does appear from time to time.

'The Blob' -- ah, I see, a pulp story a la 'Nouvelle Vague'.. now I understand. Yeah, not bad. The 'Fragments: +1', tho.. .. awful. I did like the anecdotes on the last page. I wonder, is it Imperial vs USA usage to spell 'Femmfan' rather than 'Femfan'? Like, you know, 'gramme' and 'gram' or 'colour' and 'color'...-Sam.

JOSN George Laking,
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Base Naval de Rota,
Rota (Cadiz)
ESPANA.

As you may/may not know, the Spanish roads here are a real atrocity. Up in the mountains near Gibraltar, you have narrow roads -- about $1\frac{1}{2}$ American car widths wide - cut into the sheer sides of the mountains. On one side you have a cliff rising straight up and on the other side..! Empty space! Where they have road signs with "Z"-shaped arrows showing curves ahead, the roads run exactly like the arrow -- in 180 degree switchbacks down the mountains. And the Spanish drivers..! At any rate, a friend of mine, his wife and I went out last weekend to find the "Cuevas de la Figuras" -- the Caves of the Figures, noted for their prehistoric cave paintings -- located near Median-Sidonia. What an adventure that was! While we were bumping and grinding down this one dirt track, steering clear of the boulders jutting up from the roadbed and avoiding the enormous chuckholes, we said: "Well it could get worse. The road could be two dirt ruts with a grassy hump down the center." Would you believe..? We went down the road a couple of hundred yards, turned a bend and - sure enough! - the road turned into two dirt ruts with a grassy hump down the center. "Well", we said, "it could get worse. At least the road hasn't been washed out by the rainy season!" So we go down the road a bit, enter a little gully and - wouldn't you know it? - there we found a six inch deep stream flowing across what the Spanish laughingly call a "bridge"! So we said: "Well, it could get worse! At least we haven't been caught in a stampede of cattle or goats or sheep!"

So we go down the road, turn another bend and - you guessed it! - there was a herd of the biggest, meanest-looking steers coming right at us! After that, we shut up..! When we finally got our directions straightened out, we found we were on the wrong side of the valley and about two kilometers north of the Cuevas. Getting back on the right track, we were stopped again... this time by three deep ditches dug - like tank traps - across the road by the Spanish road construction gangs. Since even my little VW can't leap a deep ditch in a single bound, we gave up: the caves just weren't worth it. Maybe next year..!

You carry some very unusual and "different" kinds of material - especially in WOMBAT - which sets your fanzines apart from the usual "clamoring throng". If these are just the mere "samples" you send upon inquiry, then I must have more, more! MORE! (Is WOMBAT/MENTOR addictive?) Especially enjoyable was the article Royaume du Laos by David Hough and your artilce, Sydney; both articles seemed - to me - to capture some of the "flavour" of what is happening out there in the Pacific Region. Also enjoyable - but for different reasons - was the Reality F column by Miss Suttie. It is both surprising and refreshing to find such a capable intellect in a woman these days. Are you contunuing to publish more of this young woman's comments? [Not necessarily Sheila's.. however, watch future issues of TM... - Ron.] Admittedly, these comments are terribly dated, but I feel I must commend you for your editorial ability. You have a flair for the unusual and I want to see more. [I hope you will, George, I hope you will. - Ron.] - George Laking.

Gray Boak
6 Hawks Rd.,
Kingston upon
Thames
Surry; UK.

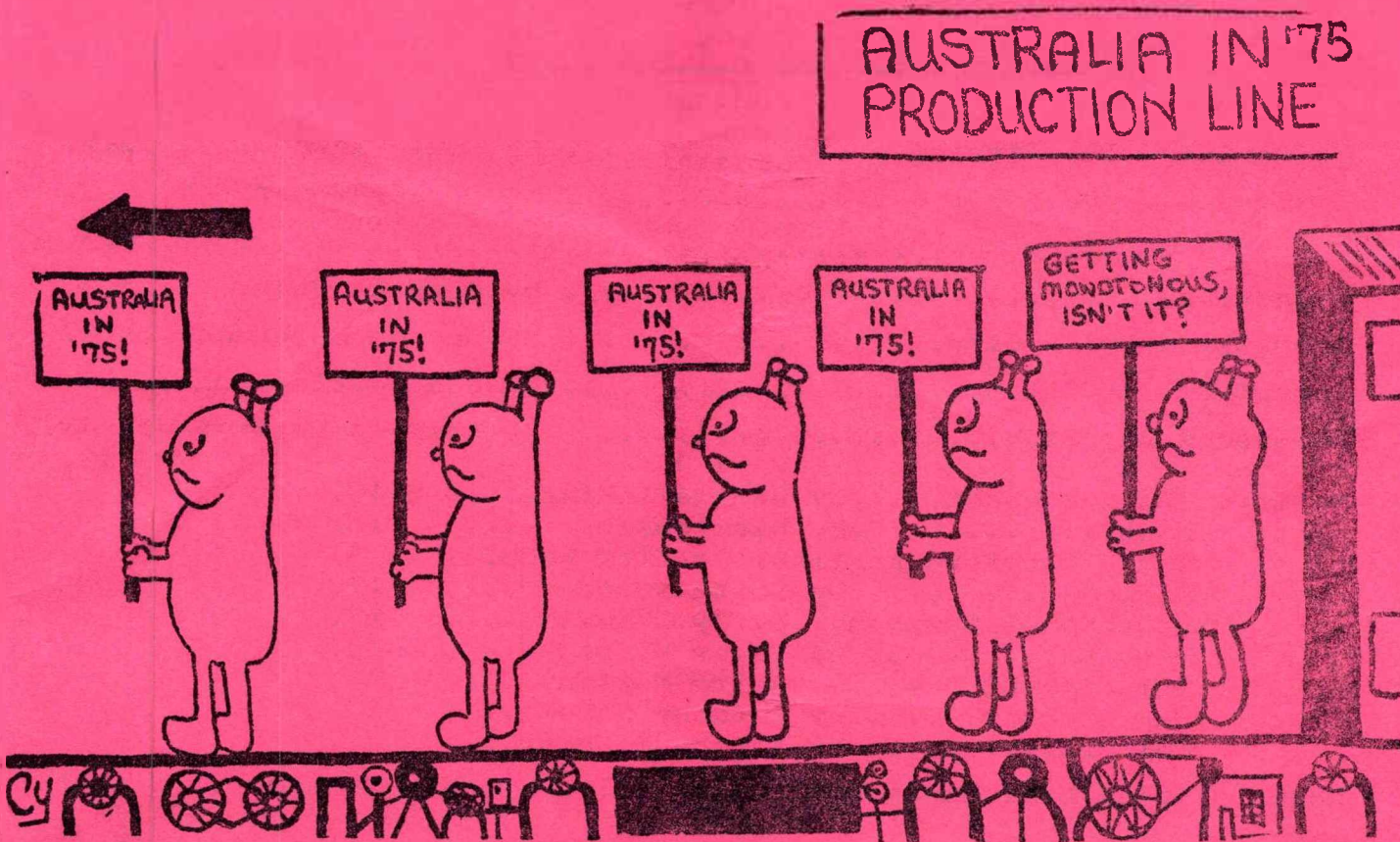
I enjoyed WOMBAT 2, particularry A.B. Chandler and David Hough (though he wasn't very descriptive about the way of life there.) I read the poetry, partly to see whether Australian fan-poets are any better than British ones. It seems not. Steven Phillips was by far the best, but line 12 ruined the mood - and why "mint on their beaks"? Is that some common Australian occurence? (Seriously - I'm not being sarcastic, but it didn't fit in the imagery: I was wondering if it was some well-known inference that I, on the other side of the world, was missing.) - Gray Boak.

I also heard from The Library of NSW, the Oxley Memorial Library of Queensland asking for sample copies of WOMBAT, a letter/card from the Uni Library of Qld thanking me for WOMBAT and saying that it was now "preserved for posterity", though what posterity will want with it Hell knows. I also got a reply from the Fisher Library (Uni Sydney) answering a query of mine as to how one copy-rights a pub. such as MENTOR: "Under Copyright law in New South Wales the onus in put on the publisher to present to the Library of New South Wales, the N.S.W. Parliamentary Library and the Library of the University of Sydney one copy of all items which he publishes. In the case of monographs, second and further editions must be delivered to the above libraries as well as the original editions. Each issue of a journal should be sent in the same manner."

I also heard from Phyrene Bacon, who had lots of interesting things to say; from Adrienne Losin in Victoria, and from Alex de Bettencourt Jr. Ned Brooks wrote that after reading John Brosnan's wedding report, if he was invited to a wedding, he would now find an excuse to stay home.... or a con to go to.

Various fanzines were also received. Please note that the address given below is the editorial address, and please, if you wish to trade for WOMBAT, send two copies of your zine - one for Shayne and one for me. You will most likaly be getting both my zine The Mentor and Shayne's Terran Times after that, anyway.

After all that typing it'll be good to get some "rest" and we hope to see a lot of Australian fans at the Adelaide Con over the New Year. - Ron & Shayne.



Noreascon Report - cont. from page 13.

"Weather Modification", "The Robot's Place in Society", "Technology for a Liveable Earth", and "The Uses of the Future".

Skipped the Banquet but did show up for the Hugo Presentations. Stayed afterwards for the movies until dawn (9 am is dawn?).

Monday I only caught the talk on "Artificial Intelligence" and found myself in a room full of college students and professors.

