

Out of the Bin



'Space Bin' Artwork by Ditmar

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A Newsletter from MERV BINNS

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Dear Readers,

I more or less finished part two of my Memoirs last month, but Helena has a lot of work formatting it to do and we are sorting out photographs to use. In fifty years we have collected photos of fans and authors at conventions, parties and trips both here and overseas and in my bookshop Space Age Books. I have been having a wonderful nostalgia trip. We put together a page of photos of John Foyster for his 60th birthday and I have been looking for others him that we might have missed, to reproduce and pass on to John's daughter Miranda, who we met a few days before John's memorial. All these photos remind me of what an amazing social phenomena SF fandom really is. Like all the old servicemen at ANZAC time congregating to remember their times together, we do it at conventions or as we are all getting older, alas, funerals. And we have some great times to remember.

FAREWELL TO JOHN

Sadly our latest get-together was for our old friend John Foyster's memorial service. John's funeral was held in Adelaide where he passed away, on the 5th of April 2003, and as was fitting his friends and relatives told of their experiences and life with him. The whole service was written up and copies were distributed at the memorial held in Melbourne on Sunday morning of the 11th of May at the Linden Gallery, Acland Street, St Kilda. This was not far from where he used to live in Shakespeare Grove and in an area we were told John particularly loved. Close to a hundred people attended on the bright sunny morning, many of whom I knew and many I did not who were associates in his academic

career. Many old friends I had not seen for over twenty years and it was in some cases hard to recognise them. His daughter Miranda said that he enjoyed bringing people together, which we were already aware of because of his SF fan activities, fanzines, conventions, the Nova Mob and more. He would have been very pleased to see the diverse gathering at the memorial. As one of his SF fan friends I knew little of his other personas, so it was enlightening to hear some of his academic friends relate their experiences of working with him, his work and many interests. It is quite obvious that John was a very special person. We knew his activity in SF fan things made him known all over the world, but Bruce Gillespie in his tribute to John at the memorial made us aware of just how much he had done for Australian SF fandom. His fanzine publishing and the encouragement of other people to not only publish zines, but run conventions and meetings, put us on the map and enabled us to hold three World SF Convention in Australia. Much will be written about John and his fan activities and much of his fanzine writings will be seen again, but this is not the time or place. I just wish to say that I wish that I had known John better but I do remember with affection the brief times that I spent in his company. In particular at conventions and especially SEACON in 1979 in Brighton England and the 1973 EASTERCON in Melbourne and the musical play *JOE PHAUST* at that convention. We will all miss him very much but his legacy certainly ensures that we will never forget him.

It was wonderful seeing all the old friends at John's memorial service, but I do wish that there had been more time to talk and reminisce with them all. The late Bob Smith's wife Lyn was there and I particularly wanted to talk to her but alas she was gone when I looked for her. I thought that CONVERGENCE was the end of an era for us and that we would not see many old friends who were there again, but I can now add John's memorial gathering to that. However we will get to more conventions and I trust continue our association with SF fandom as long as we live.

CONVENTIONS

In the last OoB I mentioned CONTINUUM which is being held in Melbourne on the 11th to 13th of July at the Cato Conference Centre. For more details info@continuum.org.au. The next one in Perth seems to be CHRONOPOLIS 8th to 12th April 2004. No further details yet. CONFLUX is the 43rd Australian Natcon being held in Canberra April 23-26 2004. Gohs Greg Benford and Sean McMullen. Info@conflux.org.au. CONTOUR is a New Zealand con next year, May 31 to June 3 2004. enquiries@contour.sf.au. THYLACON is the 2005 Natcon being held in Hobart, Tasmania in 2005. No further details yet. TORCON III is the 61st World SF Con in Toronto, Canada over August 28th to September 1, this year, 2003. Details on <http://www.torcon3.on.ca>. The 2005 World con is being held in Glasgow, Scotland, INTERACTION 63rd World SF Convention details from Rose Mitchell mitchell@vicnet.net.au.

Perth seems to have been getting the NATCON a lot over recent years, probably because they have a very active fandom over there at present and not enough people in the civilized part of the country want to run the Natcons. Then again Ant-Fan is still residing over there and being a SMOF he is probably behind it all. I do not really believe that he has completely gaffiated. When Perth does hold the Natcon nobody outside Perth seems to have any chance of winning the fannish DITMARS and they seem to easily win the bids for future Natcons when they want to. Yes I know that people who cannot afford to attend any convention can take out a supporting membership and vote for the DITMARS and in the case of Natcons the future ones, but very few people do this. It seems that if we want more NATCONS in Melbourne or anywhere else other than Perth, we are going to have to mount a big campaign to get lots of people to pay supporting memberships so that they can vote and give everybody a fair go. That is my bitching for this issue!

The JOHN FOYSTER Memorial
At the Linden Gallery, Acland Street, St Kilda,
On Sunday 11th May 2003

(Photos by Helena Binns except where otherwise indicated)



John Foyster's widow YVONNE ROUSSEAU at the Linden Gallery with authors Peter Nicholls and Lee Harding



JOHN BANGSUND and MERV BINNS

The speakers at John's memorial were introduced by Race Mathews, who also gave his own moving tribute to John.



RACE MATHEWS



BERNARD RECHTER



John Foyster's daughter MIRANDA

The listed speakers at the memorial, and their topics, were:

- JOHN SCHUTZ:** John as a student
- BERNARD RECHTER:** John as a work colleague
- BRUCE GILLESPIE:** John as a science fiction fan
- JULIAN FRAILLON:** John as a teacher
- MIRANDA FOYSTER:** John as a family man

Author **PETER NICHOLLS** also felt moved to speak, and did so, most eloquently.

Sadly Julian somehow got lost in the shuffle and didn't get to have his say. This wasn't deliberate, or anybody's fault; it was just one of those things that happen.



JOHN SCHUTZ



BRUCE GILLESPIE



PETER NICHOLLS



Helena Binns with MIRANDA FOYSTER and Miranda's mother ELIZABETH DARLING

Photo by Merv Binns



Dick Jenssen, Bill Wright, Tanya Kemp, Peter Kemp, Miranda Foyster (with Merv lurking in the background behind Bill)



John Foyster's sister MYFANWY



Group watching Miranda's slide show of John in his many manifestations



LEE HARDING, JENNY BRYCE, DAMIEN BRODERICK



LYN SMITH, PERRY MIDDLEMISS, LEIGH EDMONDS

Lyn (whose husband the late Bob Smith was well known to early MSFC members) came from NSW to be at John's memorial.

LETTERS RECEIVED

First up, I just wish to thank the people who have written and commented on our previous issues of OoB and congratulated Helena and me on our 5th wedding anniversary. **MICHAEL WAITE**: No, Michael I am not familiar with the Larnach booklet on Australian SF, but Van Ikin Perth, Western Australia edited a book some years back with examples of many of the early Australian works, including *The Germ Growers*. If I remember correctly it was called *Glass Reptile Breakout* and I will see if I can find one for you. **GRAHAM STONE**: Would you have a copy of that Van Ikin collection, Graham? Sorry to hear that Dave Cohen died. I met him at the Sydney con I attended in '54 and we ran adverts for his bookshop in *ETHERLINE*. Sorry to hear that you have not been too well. Glad to hear Kevin Dillon is still around. Ask him to write to me if you see him, please. Can't help with Nick Soltseff's *Woomera*, but somebody else reading this may be able to help. I have no idea what happened to Marsh McLennan's collection. I spoke to him once or twice when I was working at McGills, but I never ever noted his address, I am afraid. Ted Popple I think it was, who I guess is well gone now also, told me that Marsh had died. Sorry I missed you on your Melbourne visit last year. **DAMIEN BRODERICK**: I had not heard before that you have been living in San Antonio, Texas in the US. Nice to see you at John's memorial and I do hope you can make it to a film night with your partner Barbara soon. Yes, I did get your e-mail. Peter McNamara is the only editor/publisher who has paid me for anything I have written, and that was for my columns in his magazine *APHELION*. He did a great job along with Paul Collins and such as Norstrilia Press, in firing up SF writing in Australia and it is very sad to know that he is suffering the same illness John Foyster had. Alan Bray was another South Australian resident who I think suffered the same fate. I do not know what inference you can draw from that. **NOEL KERR**: Noel chastises me for being

negative in my personal references in my zines. Okay, I will try and be a bit more positive in future but I just report things as they are. Helena and I have our ongoing financial problems but we are very lucky in other ways, not the least being that we have each other. Your other suggestions are noted, Noel. **IAN McCLELLAN:** Ian was a good friend back in the 1950s who helped me build my first hi-fi and LP record player, which gave me lots of enjoyment over the years. He moved up to Sydney in the mid 50s. He wrote to me after getting my address from Graham Stone, wanting copies of ANALOG for June and July 2002 and January 2003. Can anyone help? Contact me and I will give you his address.

MOVIES & TV

Although I did like the comic strips in the newspaper years ago and I enjoyed reading *Film Fun Knockout* and the like, my interest in comic books was limited to *Buck Rogers*, *Silver Star*, *Legion of Space* any other pure SF I could find. In the Space Age years I got hooked on *Conan*, but most of the Marvel and DC stuff was not my thing. So *X-MEN* for instance, or *Spider Man* were just items we were selling. However when movies such as *Batman* made the scene, as a movie fan I saw and enjoyed. I recently saw *Spider Man* and that was good, but I do not really understand why it was



so very popular. The first *X-Men* with all its spectacular SFX was enjoyable, but I cannot say that for the second one, despite the spectacular SFX. The story was wishy-washy and silly and confusing and made little impact on us both. Helena in fact detested it. I was looking forward to it but I was very disappointed. Even Patrick Stewart and Hugh Jackman could not save it. Reports are, though, that it is doing well at the box office.

We saw Francois Truffaut's *DAY FOR NIGHT*, which if I had seen previously I had forgotten, on DVD at Race Mathews'. However I believe that I saw a "making of" doco on TV years ago and it was in my mind that it was a must-see movie sometime and it was. The movie is about the making of a movie, from a French perspective naturally. But we enjoyed this film which was highly acclaimed by moviemakers, critics and movie-lovers. It was sad that the director, who so loved movie making and directed *Fahrenheit 451*, played the scientist in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* at director Spielberg's invitation and was revered throughout the movie making world, not just in his own country, was yet another victim of a brain tumor. Right: Jaqueline Bissett & Francois Truffaut in *Day For Night*



Two of my favourite movies of all time are *FRANKENSTEIN* and *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, so when I heard that a movie had been made about the director of these classics, James Whale, I had to see *GODS AND MONSTERS*, which turned up on Channel 2 this month. Whale was played by Ian "Gandalf" McKellen, in this tragic tale of the last days of another victim of the Hollywood studio system. Whale's gardener who became his friend, played by Brendan Fraser whom we would have expected to see in more comic roles, was also excellent. Having become a rather embittered recluse after the failure of a movie, butchered by studio executives, Whale is lovingly cared for by his housekeeper played by Lynn Redgrave.



Left: Ian McKellen in *GODS AND MONSTERS*, with Karloff and Lanchester look-alikes

But the homosexual Whale, suffering from the delusional after-effects of a stroke, is attracted to the straight gardener, which leads to a tragic end. A wonderful performance by McKellen, for which he was deservedly nominated for an Academy Award. There is a gem of a scene where he attends a garden party put on by producer George Cukor accompanied by his gardener friend and is introduced to a visiting Princess Margaret. He is also joined briefly at the party by another two Brits, the stars of his famous movies, Boris Karloff and Elsa Lanchester, played by actors who gave quite remarkable though brief performances. A sad movie, yes but a fine example of the movie industry taking a cynical look at itself.



MARTIN LANDAU in his Academy Award winning role (Best Supporting Actor) as the late Bela ('Dracula') Lugosi, with Johnny Depp starring as eccentric movie-maker ED WOOD

In contrast to the last movie, we watched another one based on real Hollywood people, *ED WOOD* starring Johnny Depp as the eccentric moviemaker and Martin Landau as the ill and aging Bela Lugosi. If you have never heard of Ed Wood, you may have heard of his movie that is regarded as one of the worst movies ever made, SF or otherwise, *Plan Nine From Outer Space*. Depp is a good actor and carried off the role well enough, but Landau was great as Bela Lugosi. It was sad to see the tragic end of Lugosi and although in the movie Wood endeavored to assist him, perhaps it would have been better if they had never met. A humorous movie a lot of the time and you have to laugh while cringing at the efforts of Wood to make his incredibly bad movies, while at the same time seeing the tragedy of it all, specially when he becomes involved with Lugosi.

I have always enjoyed movies about Hollywood and the making of movies, such as *Sunset Boulevard*, and despite being made aware of the seamier side of tinsel town I still love the movies themselves. I was very pleased that I was able to visit Hollywood during my overseas convention trips, stopping at the hotel, The Hollywood Roosevelt, where the first Academy Awards were presented, seeing a movie at Grauman's theatre just across the street where all the stars' handprints and such are recorded in the concrete pavement, doing the Universal Studio Tour, visiting Forry Ackerman's home (the 'Ackermansion') and SF "museum" and enjoying meals with Robert Bloch. What more could a dyed-in-the-wool movie fan wish for? Helena incidentally also visited Forry and Wendy, staying with them during a trip in 1981, and met Martin Landau and Barbara Bain at Forry's 65th birthday party.

We are still catching up with all the episodes of Star Trek in its various forms on the cable TV and good old channel 9 has just ended a *Voyager* season with the usual, a stupid and unnecessary cliff-hanger. They have finally commenced the last season of *Deep Space Nine*, over a year since the end of the last season with its cliff-hanger episode of Jadzia Dax's demise. In between watching TV I have managed to do a few more garden jobs and earn a little more cash and continue working on future issues of the Memoirs. (Though getting laid low with the "dreaded lurgi" the last couple of weeks has cramped my style a bit with both of those enterprises.) We are getting there. 'Bye for now!