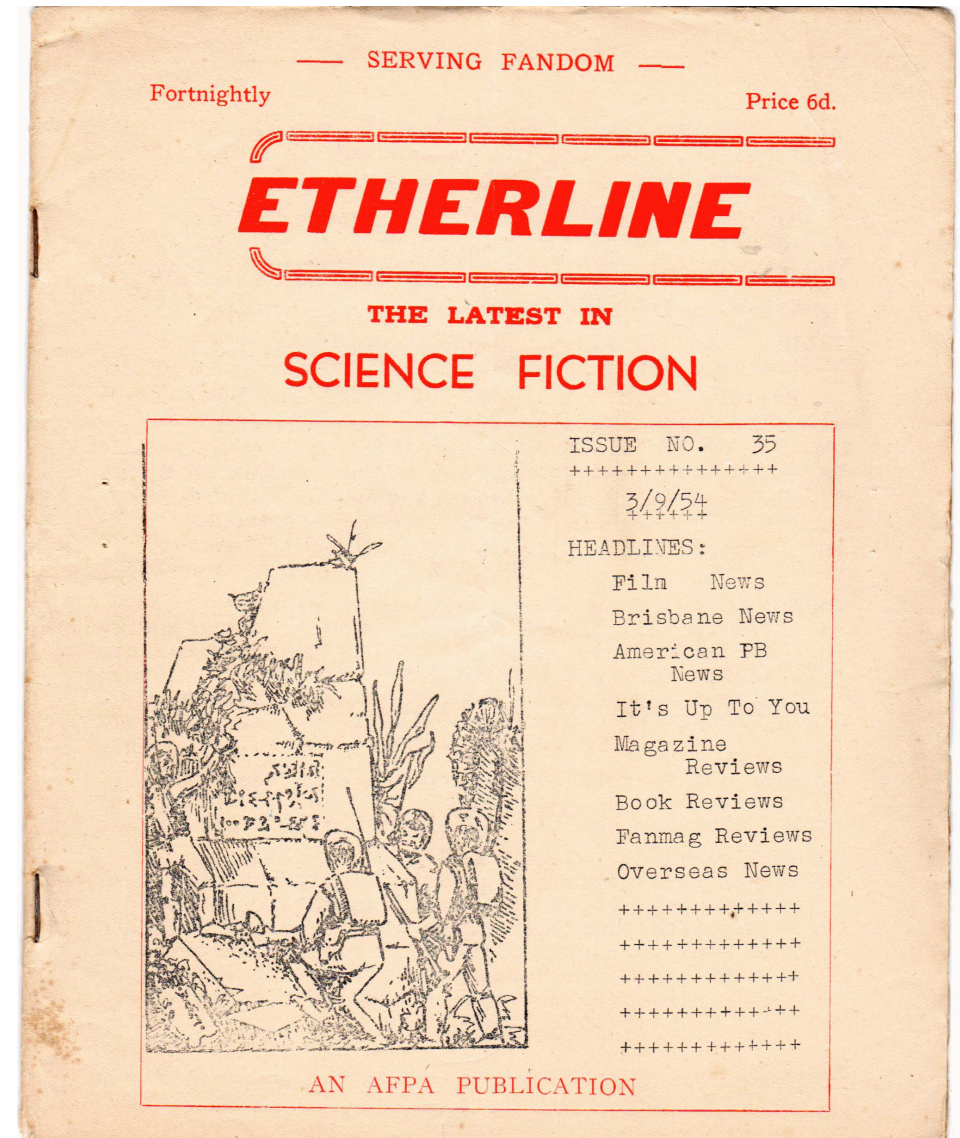


# iOTA 06

May 2017

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*iOTA* is the little efanzone put together by Leigh Edmonds who can be contacted electronically, and in almost no other way, at [hhandc@hemsleypark.com.au](mailto:hhandc@hemsleypark.com.au).

This little efanzone is produced as a progress report on my current project to research and write a history of Australian fandom, focusing on the period between 1956 and 1975. *iOTA* is a research tool and document, containing some of the material and thoughts that will be used in writing the history. It is also a place where I publish bits and pieces of the writing and art of Australia's fannish past to help introduce you to the rich vein of material that previous generations of Australian fans have left us. If you want more details about this history project you'll find them in the first issue of *iOTA*.

*iOTA* is more or less available for 'the usual' but two things bring its editor the greatest fannish pleasure. One is great gobs of egoboo and the other is a contributions to the discourse of understanding and writing a history of Australian fandom such as commentary on items published in previous issues of *iOTA*, suggestions of further sources for research or individual contributions on the general topic of this efanzone. If all else fails, issues of *iOTA* are put up on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) fairly soon after I've completed them.

## Thisish's Cover

After our previous issue Jack Herman in Sydney got in touch and offered me a pile of old fanzines, including issues of *Etherline*. Not one to turn down offers of anything free, well, almost, I took Jack up on his generous offer. A few days later a not inconsiderable parcel arrived, and it was as Jack had promised. There were a few interesting Sydney fanzines, one delightful

surprise that I will mention in a later issue, and fifty-seven issues of *Etherline*, all in excellent condition. It would be a pity to waste such a fine gift by not using an issue for the cover of this issue. This means that I've finally been able to get a scanner and fanzines

together in one place so there might be some old illos in this issue. The illo on this cover is by Keith McLelland.



## Editorial - of sorts

### What happened to 'old fandom'?

I'm moved to make some comment on a discussion that recently took place on the 'Fanhistory' page of Facebook about why we don't still have that crunchy kind of fandom we used to have. It began with Steve Davidson's lament that current day fans pay no attention to their heritage and don't recognize the work that previous generations of fans put into making fandom for the present day generation. He began:

You know what bothers me about young fandom?

They seem to have no conception, and seem to give short, if any, shrift to the fact that lots of people sacrificed for Science Fiction to get fandom where it is at today: I see no respect for those efforts, hardly any knowledge of those efforts and certainly little to no deference to the fact that people who have been in Fandom since the 30s (very few right

now) and on through the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s worked hard and built the best they knew how, out of pure love and sense of wonder might actually know a little something about the subject and ought to be accorded a little respect, if ONLY for having stuck with it for decades.

He raises two points; lack of recognition for the achievements of the past and no acknowledgment for all the sacrifice and hard work that fans have put into promoting science fiction.

I can't disagree with the first point, and I've been guilty of it in my time. I recall all the time I spent with Kevin Dillon but never once asked him about his experiences in Sydney fandom in the early 1950s. There were others who I also took for granted at the time and whose knowledge and experience I would now regard as invaluable. Why, I even had Bob Tucker under my roof for several nights and, while we consumed a quantity of Jim Beam, I don't recall acknowledging his vast and lengthy fannish history. But at the time these people were around I was following my own fannish path and had little time for their memories and experiences. I'm certain that most fans of my generation felt the same way.

On the other hand, I can't agree with Steve about sacrifice. Sure, there was lots of hard work, a great deal of it, but sacrifice suggests giving up something else valuable to make way for fandom. Perhaps some now regret the time and energy they put into fandom in earlier years, but at the time they did their fanac freely, because of what it gave them in return. (Egoboo and the fannish sense of community are very addictive drugs.) I don't know about Steve, but I and the other fans I knew, were not active

in fandom because of some long term collective objective, we were in it because of what it gave us in the 'here and now', and any future outcome was an unexpected result. It seems to me that this is no reason to expect thanks for what we did. (I doubt any of us have thanked our parents for having sex, from which we are the byproduct.)

There were many responses to this lament. The first, expressed in several different ways, was 'Well, that's young people for you'. This point of view was expressed most sympathetically by Lee Harding (yes, that Lee Harding, who was producing fanzines in the early 1950s). He wrote, in part:

Young people today have no interest in the PAST, only the PRESENT: they live for NOW, for they may not have a tomorrow. We old timers had it good - no, more than good: we had it GREAT: those were Golden Times. Our world seemed infinite, our possibilities unlimited. So no good complaining about the young of today: their lives may be much shorter than ours. No wonder they often get up the nostrils of people like ourselves. ... Just let the young BE, and cease seeking applause where none exists because none is due. We've had our time - we lived in a Golden Age, Young Lords of our world. Let the young have theirs, while they can.

There are examples of the 'up the nostrils' response. 'You know what bothers me about old fandom?' wrote Brad Johnson, 'That they seem to think the younger fans owe them something. We just happen to share a similar interest. The fact that you've had that interest longer doesn't mean a thing.' J D Weber wrote: 'As a "young" fan (26), posts like this are pretty hard to take. I think people my age have a great respect for older fans. I also think that

at a certain point every generation has to go their own way.'

Right on, I say. I'm with Lee on this; 'Just let the young BE, and cease seeking applause where none exists because none is due'. I would like to disagree with Lee that the past was better than the present time and the future, but sometimes I feel as he does that those born in the 1990s and later face a much tougher, unforgiving and limited future than we babyboomers did. But this discussion is for another time and place.

What is interesting and needs some unpacking is the disjunction between the kind of fandom Steve Davidson thinks deserves recognition and the kind of fandom that exists today.

Neil Rest points to one possible difference between what we might conveniently call 'old fandom' and 'new fandom' when he writes: 'Time-binding is one of the things that distinguishes old fandom from new fandom.'

Valma and I had Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin as guests at our place in StKilda for a few nights for Aussiecon in 1975. They had been active in fandom for something like forty years by then and Valma and I for less than ten. We did not relate to them because we respected them as relics of fandom past, but because they were still active in fandom. That is, the fandom that they had helped to create still existed in a similar form so that they and we could relate to each other. We had much in common, not because we had read the same stf but because we were all stf fans together and had a shared understanding about the ways of the world, fannish and mundane. Certainly, they told us stories about fandom in the past which created a stronger bond between us and we took them down along the Mornington Peninsula to Rosebud for lunch, which we called RosebudCon. We did this because of that shared

understanding and the stories about fandom past we heard from them. I'm also reminded of our DUFF trip in 1974 when we stayed with FM and Elinore Busby in Seattle and they told us stories about the Nameless and gave us photos of Robert Heinlein and Ella Parker. This was only possible because there was a preexisting bond between us through our understanding of the nature of fandom which made us receptive to the folk traditions of the culture.

When I turn up to a day of the coming national convention I do not expect to sit in the bar (they have a bar there, don't they?) and talk to young fans about the glorious fannish past. For one thing, my memory is not what it used to be and also there is no reason for them to want to listen to me telling stories about Mervyn Binns, Paul Stevens, John Bangsund or even Lee Harding. They are only names which have little or no connection to current day fandom.

This is because the nature of fandom has changed radically in the past twenty or so years. The discussion on Facebook offers up several options as to why this has taken place.

Perhaps the most popular explanation for the disjuncture between 'old fandom' and 'new fandom' is the advent of media fandom. Joseph Zitt wrote: 'To many of them, the idea of an SF fandom before Star Wars, when the genre was focused on words on paper rather than TV, movies, and costumes, is close to inconceivable.' Becky Heydemann extends this idea into a more cultural aspect: 'I think that some of the differences are because reading is an internal activity, and watching movies and tv are external ones. As a reader you might identify with the interior nature of a character, as watchers, fans try to recreate the image



that moved them.'

I don't think, however, that the advent of stf on television or the silver screen has changed the creative or receptive nature of many readers and viewers. When the fans of media stf discovered the potential of fanzines and conventions they took to them with gusto so there are a great many media fanzines in the university library collections and Stephen Herrin of the Monash University Rare Books collection tells me that he has just taken delivery of twenty boxes of old Star Trek fanzines.

There is no doubting the creativity of this new generation of fans either. Jacqueline Lichtenberg (who I'm including here for reasons that will evade most readers, as well as being relevant) writes, in part: 'Remember, our new fen come from the ambient society and don't understand Fandom as a strange country with its own language, customs, and common knowledge. Currently fans of my own Sime~Gen Series are creating brand new material - and that is involving more younger people as well as enchanting those who read the novels a while ago, now gathering on the Sime~Gen Group here on Facebook'.

This is good and to be encouraged, but still I have a sense of disquiet about it. I sometimes feel that the kind of creativity inspired by this, or by working within the constraints of a tv show format - such as slash fiction - is a more limited form of creativity. It's like guided play rather the free wheeling running around in the playground inventing our own games and rules of 'old fandom'.

It also occurs to me that the arrival of media fandom changed the emphasis in fandom from being a collaborative effort to being one of a product to be consumed. The result is, as Avedon Carol writes:

It's a different mentality. Younger fans have grown up in an environment where commercial fandom is the norm, and a convention is a "show" rather than, y'know, a convention. People are attendees, but not members. They don't see it the same way.

Tara Wayne adds a dimension to this:

Most modern fans many just be in for the fun, to start with, and likely regard it all as the same sort of fun -- steampunk, burning man, science fiction, fantasy, superheroes, vampires, wicca or SCA ... what's the difference? You can "live" as many as you want ... it's all "fun"?

And fun to be consumed, not created and added to for most current fans. Ruby Kapture writes:

I think that for most kids, Fandom is a commercial process run by companies somewhere for the purpose of revenue. Kind of like other yearly raves and festivals. I venture that most of them, when approached by the idea that history has value, head for somewhere they can buy something that correlates directly to their own generation's relatable experience. They may nod in deference to the greats of old, but not surprisingly, their connection is to the here and now.

There are, I think, three things that have led to a significant change in the nature of fandom.

First is the changed status of science fiction in the community. Until, perhaps, the advent of Star Trek and Star Wars, science fiction was in the ghetto. Times have changed and now science fiction has become mainstream. Once it took courage, or defiance, to let ordinary folks know that you read stf

but these days it is hardly a matter of conversation because everyone knows what sf is and most everybody will admit to reading and watching it. In *Etherline* 33, published probably in 1953, there is a report of George Pal (remember him) saying that ‘eventually science fiction will take the place of westerns as the “old reliables” at the box office’. There’s one prediction that has come to pass, when was the last time you went to the movies to watch a western. The last one I can remember seeing was *Cowboys & Aliens*.

Next is the nature of fandom itself. In earlier times there was one fandom with several subsets - in Australia one of those was comic fandom although it probably had a separate identity in larger communities. There was also subsets including devotees of Lovecraft and Burroughs, but they all found a receptive home in stf fandom. Nowadays there are numerous ‘fandoms’, as Adam Reuter writes:

I would argue that because of the internet, it is now very simple and straightforward to identify, locate, and meet up with any specific fandom. That probably does lead to less herd pressure as the fans already know there are others of them out there. That also probably leads to more fan specialization as each fannish group might have a natural tendency to stay within their group and not get a more liberal arts type fannish background.

Adam here raises the final significant agent of change, the evolution of technological systems. This is the area in which I most like to play with my historians hat on so I won’t bore you with the details here. Suffice it to say that fandom came into existence using a technological system known as the ‘postal

service’ and fandom’s processes and rhythms were created by the ways and time periods over which the mail was delivered. The advent of cheaper and more efficient travel after World War 2 made it possible to organize more conventions because fans could get to them, but despite the telephone and tape recorder, fanzines and personal correspondence remained the dominant modes of communication until an evolution in the way that fans communicated came with the arrival of the www in the late 1990s. That, and platforms like Facebook, changed the entire way in which fans communicated and opened the doors to more dispersed and therefore less intense communication. At the same time the declining service and increasing cost of using the postal service tended to force fans even more towards the www.

As Marshall McLuhan and his colleagues would have explained, the medium that a person uses to express an idea also shapes the way in which that idea is expressed so that the difference between cutting a stencil and running it off on a duplicator is going to result in a different kind of message and way in which it is received to the creation and response to a post on Facebook. Thus, the nature of fandom is changed.

Summing up, the emergence of the visual media as the main way in which stf is these days consumed, the economic pressures that have created a consumption based culture, the fracturing of fannish culture into a myriad of fragments and the emergence of new technologies of communication. All these have combined to create a new environment in which fandom has become fandoms and has taken on different properties. Only if those changes were to be reversed could the conditions conducive to the emergence of an ‘old fandom’ also recur.

That is not likely to happen, but Moshe Feder gives it a historical context by reminding us why many fans became involved in 'old fandom':

It's sad but true that in the old days, the sense of being part of a persecuted minority tended to make neos eager to learn about our history and traditions. Now that our genre is normalized and globally popular, that impetus is gone, except for the few who are naturally history-minded.

What it comes down to, is that in the old days finding fandom was like coming home after a life in exile. Today, going to your first con is only a little more special than attending the automobile show or joining the bowling team. They're fun, stimulating experiences based on shared interests, but they can be taken for granted.

To conclude we return to the original questioner, Steve Davidson, who adds to Moshe's comment and partly answers his own initial lament:

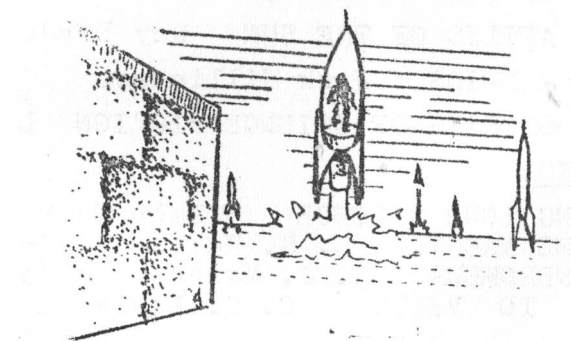
... fandom of the era Moshe refers to (and earlier) was a shared cultural experience; virtually everyone seeking fandom arrived after being outcast or not fitting with mundane society. They were looking for a different culture that resonated with the things that made them NOT fit into mundane culture. Fandom was the replacement "real" life.

Now, most fans are simply doing a fun/interesting thing...but they are not seeking out a different culture.

So, we may conclude by saying that 'old fandom' was a cultural way of life - FIAWOL as one might say - and 'new fandom' is a bit of fun, just a goddam hobby.

A final thought on this and, perhaps, the reason why I prefer 'old fandom' to 'new fandom'. The discussion which I have taken as the starting point for this editorial of sorts appeared like a flash on Facebook, like a conversation in a convention bar or room party. Everyone had a little to say, but nobody gave it much thought. Even sadder, in a few hours the whole discussion had disappeared and will be forgotten. In addition, most of the comments were little more than noise, a few lines shot off as much to participate as to add anything of substance. There's no blame in this, it is how Facebook is set up to run. Like just about everything on the interweb it gives instant gratification but little long term satisfaction.

On the other hand, had Steve written a short article or letter of comment to a focal point fanzine this discussion might have run on for months and, because the format of that kind of fandom allowed time for thought and reflection, the comments in following letters of comment and possibly other articles too might have been more substantial and worthwhile. The result might have been that we understood ourselves better as fans than we now do, and surely that would have been a worthwhile thing.



Dick Jenssen, *Etherline* 28, April 1954

## 1941 - The Second Sydney Conference

Well before the first convention was held in Australia Sydney fans held a series of 'conferences'. In most cases they were held to try to resolve the personality clashes that had developed in the small group of fans that congregated around the Futurian Society of Sydney, and to find some path into the future for them. Overall, these were not successful and the resolutions reached at the conclusion of the first conference in December 1940 needed repair within a few months. Here is what the editors of the *Futurian Observer*, Ronald Levy and Bert Castellari, expected to happen at the second conference.

Next Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, will be held the Sydney Conference - The Second One. This has been organized by the remnants of the Futurian Society of Sydney from the remnants of the Sydcon idea and from what we hear it will be the next best thing to a Convention.

Those desiring to attend are requested to let Eric F Russell know as soon as possible, so that arrangements for the hiring of a room can be completed. What will go on there is described as the discussion of all problems confronting fandom.

The reason for the first Sydney Conference was somewhat similar, and indeed successful, so we can hope that the Second Conference will have as much success.

It is expected that there will be a little less of the tenseness of the atmosphere of the First Conference and a great deal less formality. Not that there was such a great deal of formality at the First Conference, but it was nevertheless there.

The most likely point of discussion is the Futurian Association of Australia. It is expected that the fan club and fan mag situation will be discussed.

This magazine looks forward to a possibility of a discussion of our actual relationship with British and American fandom

(Futurian Observer 33, 6 April 1941)

As usual in fandom (and the rest of the world) things did not go as expected. Here is the report of the conference as written up in *Futurian Observer* 34 of 20<sup>th</sup> April 1941.

SYDNEY BUNFIGHT GREAT SUCCESS!!

Wonderful Waste of Time

Last issue *Obs* drew the attention of its readers to the fact that Sydney would hold a second Conference in place of a Sydney Convention (the latter being a furphy from the start!) *Obs* stated that at the Conference there would be discussion of problems of Australian fandom (or rather, so said EFR in a postcard dispatched to fans). It was also expected that the Futurian Association of Australia would come under notice as well as all appertaining to fan clubs and mags. The personal hopes of the editors of this mag were that there would be time for the discussion of relationships with British and American fandom.

Briefly, the whole affair flopped. And in its place was held the most glorious science-fiction bunfight which ever rivaled the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society's best beach party! We do not intend to report fully what went on, but suffice to say that though attendance was reasonably large,



accomplishments amounted to one or two only.

Let's look at the attendance, the accomplishments not being worth immediate attention. Sydney fans present were Eric F Russell, Edward H Russell, Ronald B Levy, David R Evans, Charles La Coste, William D Veney, Colin Roden, Graham Stone, Vol Molesworth, Alan Cordner and Bruce Sawyer. There were, we think, others, whom we can't remember at the moment. No, Bert Castellari didn't attend, lucky guy. From Newcastle was R Cudden. Bert Castellari made representations through a two page epistle read by Ronald B Levy and jumped on by most of those present, finally disregarded. More on it further down.

For some time all present were under the belief that Warwick Hockley would be in attendance due to a telegram sent to Eric Russell signed 'Hockley' stating that he had arrived in Sydney and would be at the conference. Accusations were made as to who really sent it and the editors take time and space to absolutely deny it, 'cos more accusations have been leveled in this direction than any other. We have more use for our money than to waste it on telegrams to - task, nearly a dirty crack!

For a while there was a lot of fan mag distribution. Eric Russell issued a conference pamphlet of four pages which he had the nerve to call a booklet. All right Eric, we know you didn't really mean it. But just the same Sydney fans are not as lazy as you think. We refer to that little gem on the back page viz: 'We've Got To Work To Make The World Of Tomorrow - It Just Won't Happen' but never, never, never do that again. Mean to say old top, even though some of us don't work, that's

not the case for every fan.

After the magazine mess-around everybody settled down to talk, and talk they did! For a while it was fan affairs, but eventually drifting onto anything which interested them, being anything but fan affairs. The arrival of refreshments finished off all serious (Ha, ha!) discussions. The accomplishment was the changing of the name Futurian Association of Australia to Australian Futurian Association, the motion being forwarded by Mr Cudden. It was also decided that all fans should be invited to register in the Association along with their mags - a decision reached some months ago when the Association was first proposed. Something also went on about a pro mag library, but we have great doubts as to the success of any such venture in this city.

Castellari's representations spoke of the real reasons for the collapse of the Sydcon, but as no one was prepared to admit it (the Sydcon) was a flop or could disprove some of the statements effectively it was 'disregarded' and 'allowed to pass' as wasting the time of the meeting. Say who wasted time? The representation was supported however by two people openly, and one who preferred not to comment until after. Robert Cudden made numerous motions which were shelved one by one. Mr Cudden made more motions than everyone else on the floor of the gathering.

Possibly the greatest joke was someone-or-other's proposal to discuss the possibility of a Melbenton being held! Some people have a remarkable sense of humor. Still, it keeps up the morale of the people in times of war, excessive taxes

and the cutting of this and that to aid the war effort!

Photos were taken, mostly by Eric Russell and Ted Russell. Some also by Vol Molesworth. On the Sunday night William D Veney, Vol Molesworth, the Russell Bros, and Colin Roden all crowded into one tiny telephone box and called Bert Cas, who was working at a switchboard at the time. The latter complains that his ears have never been the same since. However:

BFC: 'How did the Convention go? What was accomplished?'

VM: 'Nothing! But we had a swell time.'

Boy, that convention pamphlet certainly gave impressions! Quote: '... action must be taken!' unquote. It will be - for damages to room which was hired we should think! The fact that Mr Cudden's motions were shelved as fast as they were proposed shows that things were somewhat like an old FSS meeting. Mr Cudden has now seen Sydney fans in action - what do you think of them, friend? Write and let us know.

A perfect illustration of American interest in and knowledge (more than anything else) of the convention (note: no confence) lies in that only Forrie Ackerman sent any contributions and only Tucker mentioned it in his magazine! As far as the Sydcon goes it was a case of opening the bridge before the foundations were even laid!

Anything further we have to say on the Sydcon will be printed in a later issue. Although we have a job to fill these issues we are too disgusted with this fiasco to waste any more time and energy making remarks. If you have any to make send 'em in! We'll gladly print anything which is said.

## The Historians Corner

### What is History?

After the most recent issue of this little efanzone I found myself in discussion with a well known fan who seemed to have a different idea of what history is to the one that I have.

My quick and dirty definition of history is that is 'a story about things that happened in the past'. This is because the history that works for me is that which is told as a story, the age old way in which people transmit information and ideas one person to another. There are other ways of conveying information about what happened in the past - chronologies, chronicles, lists and data bases for example, but these forms of communication don't tell you what the information means. And, to me, it is the meaning that is important.

For example, I'm old enough to recall that at primary school we had to learn by rote the names and the kings and queens of England, from the distant past down to Elizabeth II. It was a list that meant nothing to us school kids, probably because we did not understand at the time that this list gave authority and power to the entire political system under which we lived. (Perhaps American children learned the names of the Presidents of the United States for exactly the same reason.) These lists are important because of their purpose but, in themselves, mean nothing. In the same way a list of Australian national sf conventions has no meaning in itself (although it gives legitimacy to the notion of a 'national sf convention') and a list of past DUFF winners has no internal meaning. They both refer back to events in the past, but unless the reader of that list has a long memory and can recall some of these events and people (which is a way of

giving those lists meaning) the list means nothing to people who have no personal memory of those events and people.

Therefore, it is the job of the historian to give the events of the past meaning to people in the present. The question then is, how does the historian give the bare facts of the past meaning. The quick and dirty explanation is to say, 'by gathering appropriate facts and telling a story about them by interpreting them to extract their meaning'. This calls into discussion the three components of the historical process; historical facts which historians tend to call 'evidence', their interpretation and the historian who interprets them and tells the story. Doing this well is what Tom Griffith calls a 'high wire act' (*The Art of Time Travel*, which I am also reading).

Which leads us on to our text for this issue. E H Carr was another acclaimed historian in Britain in the 1960s and this book, which began as a series of lectures, has from the first pages some critique of our previous instructor, G R Elton. (Historians are as argumentative as any other group of people.) In his first lecture Carr came up to the question of the balance between the historian and their interpretation and the historical evidence they work with. I should note in passing that I am in the same boat as Carr when it comes to getting the writing itch early in a project, but I'm sublimating that urge into this little efanzone instead and it is serving, for me this time around, the same need to start writing that I've had on previous projects.

Here are the concluding paragraphs of this lecture/chapter.

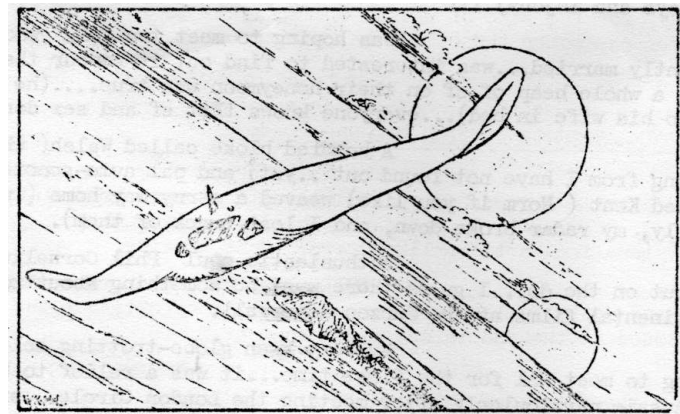
Laymen - that is to say, non-academic friends or friends from other academic disciplines - sometimes ask me how the historian goes to work when he writes history. The commonest

assumption appears to be that the historian divides his work into two sharply distinguishable phases or periods. First, he spends a long preliminary period reading his sources and filling his note books with facts: then, when this is over, he puts away his sources, takes out his notebooks and writes his book from beginning to end. This is to me an unconvincing and implausible picture. For myself, as soon as I have got going on a few of what I take to be the capital sources, the itch becomes too strong and I begin to write - not necessarily at the beginning, but somewhere, anywhere. Thereafter, reading and writing go on simultaneously. The writing is added to, subtracted from, re-shaped, cancelled, as I go on reading. The reading is guided and directed and made more fruitful by the writing: the more I write, the more I know what I am looking for, the better I understand the significance and relevance of what I find. Some historians probably do all this preliminary writing in their heads without using pen, paper, or typewriter, just as some people can play chess in their heads without recourse to board and chessmen: this is a talent which I envy, but cannot emulate. But I am convinced that, for any historian worth the name, the two processes of what economists call 'input' and 'output' go on simultaneously and are, in practice, parts of a single process. If you try to separate them, or to give one priority over the other, you fall into one of two heresies. Either you write scissors-and-paste history without meaning or significance, or you write propaganda or historical fiction, and merely use facts of the past to embroider a kind of writing which has nothing to do with history.

Our examination of the relation of the historian to the facts of history finds us, therefore, in an apparently precarious situation, navigating delicately between the Scylla of an untenable theory of history as an objective compilation of facts, or the unqualified primacy of fact over interpretation, and the Charybdis of an equally untenable theory of history as the subjective product of the mind of the historian who establishes the facts of history and masters them through the process of interpretation, between a view of history having the center of gravity in the past and a view having the center of gravity in the present. But our situation is less precarious than it seems. We shall encounter the same dichotomy of fact and interpretation again in these lectures in other guises - the particular and the general, the empirical and the theoretical, the objective and the subjective. The predicament of the historian is a reflexion of the nature of man. Man, except perhaps in earliest infancy and in extreme old age, is not totally involved in his environment and unconditionally subject to it. On the other hand, he is never totally independent of it and its unconditional master. The relation of man to his environment is the relation of the historian to his theme. The historian is neither the humble slave nor the tyrannical master of his facts. The relation between the historian and his facts is one of equality, of give-and-take. As any working historian knows, if he stops to reflect what he is doing as he thinks and writes, the historian is engaged on a continuous process of moldings his facts to his interpretation and his interpretation to his facts. It is impossible to assign primacy to one over the other.

The historian starts with a provisional selection of facts, and a provisional interpretation in the light of which that selection has been made - by others as well as himself. As he works, both the interpretation and the selection and ordering of facts undergo subtle and perhaps partly unconscious changes, through the reciprocal action of one or the other. And this reciprocal action also involves reciprocity between present and past, since the historian is part of the present and the facts belong to the past. The historian and the facts of history are necessary to one another. The historian without his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their historian are dead and meaningless. My first answer therefore to the question 'What is history?' is that it is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past

(E H Carr, *What is History?*, pp.28-30.)



Keith McLelland, *Etherline* 46, March 1955

## 1953 - One National Convention, Two Opinions

After the relative success of the first national convention in Sydney in 1952 Sydney fans turned their attention to another convention the following year. Depending on who you read, it wasn't too bad or it was a resounding mess. This is something that historians have to learn to live with.

So let's look at two of the reports written about the second national sf convention. (I seem to recall reading something about what it was like to stand in the pouring rain outside the Golf Club redirecting fans to the new party venue, but I can't find it now and, anyhow, two reports are more than enough.)

Beginning with the report written by Graham Stone and published in his *Science Fiction News* 5 of May 1953. It is worth remembering that his intended audience was not regular stf fans who had a good knowledge of fandom but a wider audience that he hoped to interest in the genre. Consequently he needed to present stf and the convention in a positive light

Sydney - 1-2-3- May

Australia's second Convention was organized on a far more ambitious scale than the first one - advancing from the tentative one-day meeting of 1952 to a full week-end affair, on Friday evening, all of Saturday and Sunday. It must be admitted that in places the organization was on the thin side, and attendance was not as high as some had hoped: nevertheless, this Convention was far more a success than the previous one.

The week-end began socially with a Cocktail Party on Friday night: nearly forty came along, and despite hitches arising

from last-minute alteration of plans had a good time, good enough for only one member of the committee to be on deck for the opening session on Saturday morning.

Saturday morning was informal, the public being invited merely to look in and get accustomed to the spectacle of a crowd of fans, and find out what went on. Not a great number were present until after lunch. It may be remarked at this point that the convention suffered from the extremely bad weather, which no doubt kept many away: also, the alteration between two halls several blocks apart was a nuisance that need not have existed in the first place.

The main session on Saturday afternoon was definitely a thorough success. This meeting was intended to explain science fiction to the newcomer, tell the experienced reader something of its history, philosophy and fan activity, and as well raise a few points for argument. A program of speakers achieved these aims excellently.

Vol Molesworth spoke on 'Science Fiction as a Development of Modern Literature', putting the discussion on a sound intellectual basis. R D Nicholson spoke on 'Science Fiction in Specialized Publications', giving an exhaustive and entertaining account of the history of the professional magazines and special book publishers. He was followed by a discussion on 'The Science in Science Fiction', Engineer Phineas Glick (BSc, BE) and Zoologist Rex Meyer (BSc Dip Ed) as fans of long standing with scientific training, spoke at length, with particular attention respectively to physical and biological science, and answered a number of questions from the

audience. Finally, Graham Stone spoke on 'Fan Organization'.

Saturday evening's program was a film showing. Once more 'Metropolis' had been booked, but not returned in time from a previous borrower. The Czech fantasy 'Krakatit' was shown, with 'The History of the Helicopter'. Another screening was held on Sunday night, with 'Atomic Physics', 'River to Cross' and technical shorts.

On Sunday morning a large amount of donated books, magazines etc were auctioned towards expenses. (Incidentally, it is understood that the Convention ended with a slight financial loss.) Beginning late, this made the business session in the afternoon rather crowded.

The business session heard reports on the progress of Australian fandom in the last year, a year of considerable expansion. At the first convention there was an interstate visitor, but fan activity outside of Sydney did not exist. At this session delegated from Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide spoke on their work and the local groups that had formed. A new fan from Perth was there as well (in Sydney on business, though) and visitors came from the country - Newcastle, Katoomba, Windsor, Towradgi, and a party from Wollongong. Messages of goodwill came from Eric F Russell, Jock McKenna (NSW), Frank Bryning (Brisbane), Tom Cockcroft (New Zealand) and Harry Brunen (Japan).

It was decided that the next Convention again would be in Sydney, with the Futurian Society of Sydney once more sponsoring it. A motion from the floor to collect a large amount of Australian stf as a donation to the next American Convention

was passed.<sup>11</sup>

This time press publicity was obtained. A straight news item appeared in the Saturday Sun, another in the Sunday Sun, a short piece in the Sunday Truth, a photograph in some editions of the Sunday Telegraph Women's Section, and a paragraph in the Monday Daily Mirror's gossip column. The following issue of the Women's Weekly gave it a page, and a very good treatment. And an article is to appear in AM, the Colliers of Australia.

Attendance was not very carefully noted, and there were obvious gate crashers; but at least eighty-six people attended at one time or another.

The general feeling is that with this Convention Australian fan activities have definitely attained a stature comparable with fandom in the US, Canada and Britain.

(*Science Fiction News* 5, May 1953)

In the fifth issue of *Etherline*, the Melbourne based newszine, Ian Crozier gave a longer, more detailed report of events. He did not hold back on his criticism, probably because he was writing for a fan audience and most of them had already heard what had happened through the fannish grape vine and didn't need to be shielded from a more frank report. I also get the impression that Crozier was a great one for good organization and it there was one thing that really annoyed him it was poor organization.

In this report I think it is possible to detect the beginnings of a parting of the ways between the cultures of Sydney and Melbourne fandoms. The way in which he loving lingers over the



debate in the business session suggests a touch of schadenfreude and perhaps also a feeling that, while Sydney fandom was much bigger, Melbourne fans had a better idea of how fandom should be successfully organized. See what you think.

#### REPORT ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION

The main impression gained from this convention was that of bad organization. It reeked of it. Where the blame is to be laid is a matter for conjecture as the organizer blames the committee for giving him no help, while the committee promptly hands the buck the organizer. The fact remains, however, that it was the show that suffered.

On Friday night affairs started off on a very bad footing, as the original booking was cancelled at 5pm, with the cocktail party due to start at 8pm!! However, substitute arrangements were made and people were diverted from the original site to the new one. The only snag was that several interstate visitors were left standing in the rain at the original venue before somebody got the bright idea that maybe they's better go back and see it anybody was left. Beer was conspicuous by it's absence in the early stages, but after everything became organized it wasn't too bad.

Saturday morning was the most dismal start for a much publicized event it has ever been my misfortune to attend. About 40 lonely and misguided fans wandered around like lost sheep, until about 11.30 somebody in authority deigned to turn up. We were immediately informed to arrive at another building at 1pm when the main session would get under way.

After a little delay, MC Ken Martin introduced the first

speaker, Mr Vol Molesworth, whose address was titled 'Science Fiction and Modern Literature'. This was very interesting and was warmly received by those present.

Doug Nicholson came next and delivered a very good address on 'Science Fiction and Specialist Literature', in which he elaborated on several points made by the previous speaker. Doug's main theme was the development of the 'pulp' magazines, starting on Gernsback issues of AMAZING STORIES, through his other two publications, AIR WONDER STORIES and WONDER STORIES into the second stage of the pulp field, ASTOUNDING STORIES. In 1934 Clayton Publications were forced to relinquish control over ASTOUNDING STORIES, and it was taken over by Street & Smith, who launched in under the name of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. A series of slides was shown depicting covers from these earlier magazines but, unfortunately the screening was marred by faulty presentation. Mr Nicholson concluded by questioning the future of the pulp magazines in the light of the large interest shown by hard cover publishers in science fiction.

Next speaker was Mr Phineas (Bluey) Glick, who discussed 'Science in Science Fiction', and cause much amusement by pulling the 'science' employed by quite a few writers to pieces. His address was, in my opinion, one of the best of the afternoon in that Mr Glick knew what he was talking about.

Mr Rex Meyer spoke on 'Biology in Science Fiction' and stressed that in his opinion the possibility of us finding another humanoid race anywhere in the galaxy is extremely unlikely, as

it entails an identical evolution with man's for a period of over 900,000,000 years. The android and intelligent BEM's he treated in the same way, with the possibility of there being BEM's of some sort inhabiting other worlds. Mutations or super bods are again, he thinks, an impossibility. Extra Sensory Perception is, on the other hand, a distinct possibility indeed, it is apparent in certain humans even now.

Graham Stone wound up proceedings with a discourse on 'Science Fiction Fandom and Fanzines'.

Among the interstate delegates were Bill Veney & Harry Brook from Brisbane, Mrs Joyce and Ian Moyse all the way from Adelaide, Mr Nicholson from Perth, & yours truly from Melbourne. Sydney fandom provided celebrities including Rosemary Simmons, Norma Hemming, Norma Williams, Lyell Crane (who, by the way is the only fan in the world to have attended conventions in UK, USA, Canada & Australia), Dave Cohen, Graham Stone, Jack Leggett, Vol Molesworth, Doug Nicholson, Mike Bos and numerous others.

The film shows on Saturday night was undoubtedly the best run part of the con, as no serious breakdowns occurred. Program included that fine old Czech fantasy, 'Karkatit' by Karel Capek, 'History of the Helicopter', and 'How to Catch a Cold'.

On Sunday morning the lack of organization once again showed through as the advertised time came and departed. The auctioneer apparently found himself unable to find transport for himself and the books for auction. Jack Leggett once again came to the rescue, and brought the material in. Eventually Bluey Glick took over the rostrum and started the

auction. The first items were BRE Astoundings, which averaged 1/- to 2/- each. The earlier issues followed and fetched up to 5/- each. Pocket Books were not very well received, but the American magazines fetched fabulous prices as was expected.

Sunday afternoon found the Business session in full swing, with the first speaker being Graham Stone who reported on the ASFS. The title was recently changed to Australasian in view of some New Zealanders being members. The latest figure available gave the membership at 155. Mr Stone outlined the aim of the ASFS, and wished to inform the assembly that it is his aim to make every reader of science fiction a member of his organization. He said that the overseas fans and promags were almost unanimous in their negative reaction to Australian fandom.

Mr Molesworth delivered a report on the Futurian Society of Sydney, and he outlined its various & checkered existence. He requested that all aid be given to FSS by fans.

Mr Veney addressed the session on behalf of the North Shore Futurian Society, which was formed under his guidance after the last convention by Mike Bos. The organization had expanded rapidly and already had affiliations with the Port Phillip Futurians in Melbourne.

Mr Crozier reported on the activities of fans in Melbourne.

Mr Veney again arose on behalf of the Brisbane Science Fiction Group, and outlined its growth and development. The present attendance is small, but it is hoped that in the near future this will become a bit larger.

Mr Moyse reported on behalf of the Adelaide Group and said that at the moment it was in a formative state.

Mr Nicholson of Perth attended but was not in a position to report as he was not in touch with any fans.

Mr Cohen, representative of Operation Fantast, reported on the aims of the organization. Many sections & department are included, but OF is not interested in making money. He will be glad to help any fan who should write to him.

Mr Les Raethel, Librarian of the Sydney Group, is also in charge of the auction held on a Thursday night and said that they were proving very satisfactory in a financial way. He also reported on the Futurian Library, giving figures on the present number of items.

Mr Doug Nicholson, prior to his departure for Ballarat, provide an interesting insight into the pitfalls of publishing a semi-professional magazine. The first issue of *Forerunner* was a duplicate effort, while No 2 is photo-litho, making for a better presentation of the contents. He thinks the time is nearly right for a full professional magazine, and will do all in his power to make this dream a reality.

Miss Rosemary Simmons, as secretary of the FSS, reported on the clubs activities over the past year. She also recounted the history of *Vertical Horizons*, a femme fanzine which she edits in association with several other members of the opposite sex.

Mr Don Lawson gave the meeting a short history of the auctions at the Thursday night group, and thanked all supporters for their valuable aid. On the subject of films, he

reported that the Group was a registered user of the State Film Board, and this enables it to obtain a number of films free of charge.

#### MOTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr Veney moved that Mr Stone be forced to give the interstate groups more co-operation through ASFS. He explained that in his opinion, the lack of this support from Mr Stone was damaging to Science Fiction Fandom as a whole, and he would like to hear from Mr Stone regarding his future plans on this subject. The ASFS was originally planned purely as a registered body for Australian fandom, but lately it had developed into a fully fledged club, with Mr Stone as its self elected & self controlling executive. Mr Veney said that when he offered to take the post of State secretary for Tasmania, he was informed by Mr Stone that he was not acceptable. Relations between the interstate & certain sections of the Sydney groups and Mr Stone had degenerated to such an extent that some method of placating both sides had to be found. If Mr Stone wished to continue on the way he was going then he would have to realize that the interstate groups had to have some consideration.

Mr Brook, in seconding the motion, said that Mr Stone had launched a personal attack on Mr Veney by correspondence, and in his opinion, this was not doing fandom any good.

Mr Dunk, in opposing the motion, said that Mr Veney apparently had a personal feud he wanted aired in public.

Mr Lawson supported Mr Dunk, and eulogized Mr Stone

in his work, explaining the amount of time & money he put into his work.

Mr Crozier, in supporting Mr Veney, said that Mr Stone would be wise to revise his attitude towards the interstate groups. This was not a personal matter, but solely on the ways Mr Stone operated.

Mr Glick explained the aims of the ASFS, as Mr Stone refused to make any comment, except to answer 'Who is the controlling body of ASFS?' with 'I am a law unto myself'.

After much heated discussion on the issue, Mr Veney withdrew the motion with the approval of his seconder.

It was planned that one organizer be appointed by the FSS to take control over the next convention which would be held in Sydney at Easter next year. The person appointed is to delegate the various jobs to people of his own choice, and he would be solely responsible for the work. He would report to FSS at regular intervals on the progress being made & a sheet would be issued to keep all fans informed at the latest developments.

Mr Molesworth wound up proceedings by reminding the meeting that of the 12 months since the last convention, Mr A Haddon had carried out his work faithfully for the first nine months. I can see Mr Molesworth's point, but the fact remains that if Mr Haddon was unable to discharge his duties in the last vital 3 months, he should have been removed from office immediately. The least Mr Haddon could have done was to turn up at part of the convention he was supposed to be running.

Next year should be Sydney's chance to show the rest of

Australian fandom that it can run a convention efficiently. If not, then it should be it's last.

(I J Crozier, *Etherline* 5, undated)

## The Long and Winding Road to Aussiecon Crossing the Rubicon

At the ninth national sf convention business session fans debated whether or not they wanted to bid to hold a World SF Convention in Australia. This apparently followed a period of brief but frantic fanac following the convention held in Sydney at the beginning of 1970 at which the suggestion was formally discussed and it was resolved that I would publish a series of fortnightly letterzines in which anyone who was interested could write in saying what they thought of the idea. (I have no memory of this, but remember that this was at the end of the '60s, so I have my excuses.)

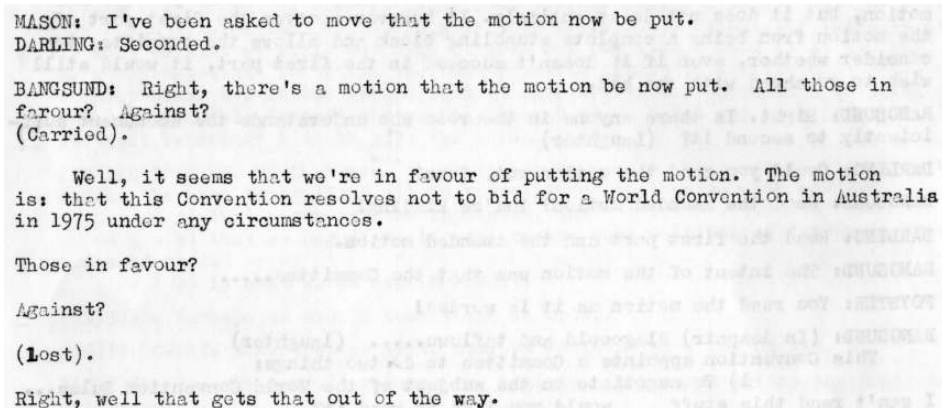
There were six issues of this letterzine called, appropriately enough, *Australia in Seventy Five*, and then the whole matter was debated at the national convention held in Melbourne over Easter that year. I have the vague feeling that this convention, or at least part of it, might have taken place in the old Melbourne SF Clubroom in Somerset Place, but perhaps not (the chronology has not advanced much from the previous issue of iOTA).

The discussion was recorded and later transcribed (I think) by Peter Darling and Robin Johnson and appeared in the next issue of *Australia in Seventy Five*. The leaders of the debate were John Foyster and Alf van der Poorten whose joint grasp of the cut and thrust of university student politics was much more advanced

than the rest of the meeting so some of the points they were debating are a little obscure, shall we say, even after all these years. As a result of this complexity the motion that John Foyster moved confused some there, because it was to resolve *not* to bid for a worldcon rather than the motion that you'd expect.

John Bangsund was given the job of chairing this discussion and he let John and Alf battle it out for some time before Gary Mason (or somebody close to him) moved the 'gag' to bring the debate to a conclusion. What a relief! (I'm not going to reprint the debate in iOTA, ever, but if you're really interested I can let you have a pdf of the whole thing. Just let me know if you've lost your mind and I'll get right on it.)

So, we've reached the moment of decision. Will we or won't we bid for a worldcon? The swirling waters of the Rubicon flow before us and we put our toes into the water...



MASON: I've been asked to move that the motion now be put.  
DARLING: Seconded.

BANGSUND: Right, there's a motion that the motion be now put. All those in favour? Against?  
(Carried).

Well, it seems that we're in favour of putting the motion. The motion is: that this Convention resolves not to bid for a World Convention in Australia in 1975 under any circumstances.

Those in favour?  
Against?  
(Lost).

Right, well that gets that out of the way.

## 1968 - Pat Terry goes South

There is probably a lot of stuff written about Australian fandom in overseas fanzines, some of it by Australians and some of it views of Australia from overseas. This item, which led off the

455<sup>th</sup>, June 1968 issue of the American *Science Fiction Times*, was contributed by Anne McCaffrey, probably from a letter or letters that Pat sent her. Pat was a great correspondent who became involved in the early days of the Sydney SF Foundation but whose age and infirmity limited his contribution to the then growing Australian sf fandom. (The copy of *SF Times* that I'm reprinting this item from was, by the way, Pat's own copy.)

### Australian Honored

Australia's No 1 science fiction fan was flown, by the subscription of his friends and admirers, to the Melbourne Minicon April 12-14.

The inimitable Pat Terry is 83, was bedridden for fifteen years until a device (which, as I understand it, electrically stimulates damaged muscle tissue) was inserted in his thigh last fall. He was actually able to walk to meet Edmund Hamilton and Leigh Brackett when they stopped off in Sydney on their round-the-world trip last year. You can't keep a good man down.

Pat's fascinating life includes soldiering in three wars; starting with the Boer, ending when they found out he was lying about his age in WWII. He's been interested in science fiction since (damn near) Jules Verne and H G Wells; was a lieutenant in the RAF in WWI, and flew against the Red Baron, von Richtofen.

He has been instrumental in starting the Sydney Science Fiction Club, in organizing and masterminding a circle of pen pals in Australia and around the world. Some of his devoted American correspondents, including the Hamiltons, are Andre

Norton, Keith Laumer, Lin Carter, Gordon Dickson and me, Anne McCaffrey.

After great secrecy and much collusion with his physician (who used a specious excuse to prescribe two weeks' bed rest for Pat prior to the Minicon) the surprise was spring on Pat. Would you believe? The vociferous, voluble champion of sf authors, the professional 'Irishman' (he has the loveliest brogue) was rendered speechless.

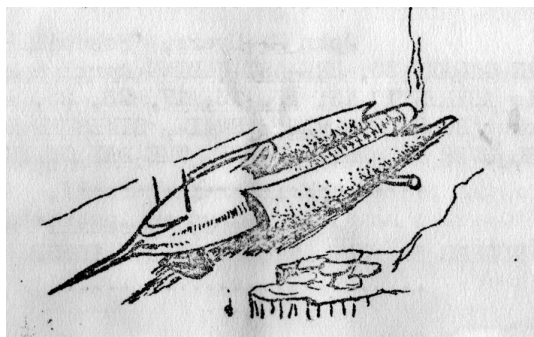
So, to signalize his attendance, and in gratitude for his marvelous letters, the following cable was sent to the Minicon to him, along with a small offering to be applied against new sf books for Pat:

APPLAUDING AMERICAN ADMIRERS APPRECIATE  
AMAZING AUSSIE'S ASTOUNDING ACTIVITY AND  
ACKNOWLEDGE ARDENTLY ATTENDANCE AT MELBOURNE  
MINICON - AD ASTRA

(Signed) Andre, Anne, Keith, Lin, Gordon

From reports, Pat had a ball! He deserves it.

Anne McCaffrey, *Science Fiction Times* 455, June 1968.



Dick Jenssen, *Etherline* 56, undated

## 1954 - Fanzine Review

*Etherline* 35, 3 September 1954, published fortnightly by the Amateur Fantasy Publications of Australia and edited by Ian J Crozier, 6 Bramerton Road, Caulfield, SE8, Victoria, Australia, production by Mervyn R Binns. 15/- per 26 issues, 7/6 per 13 issues. 24 pages, folded foolscap.

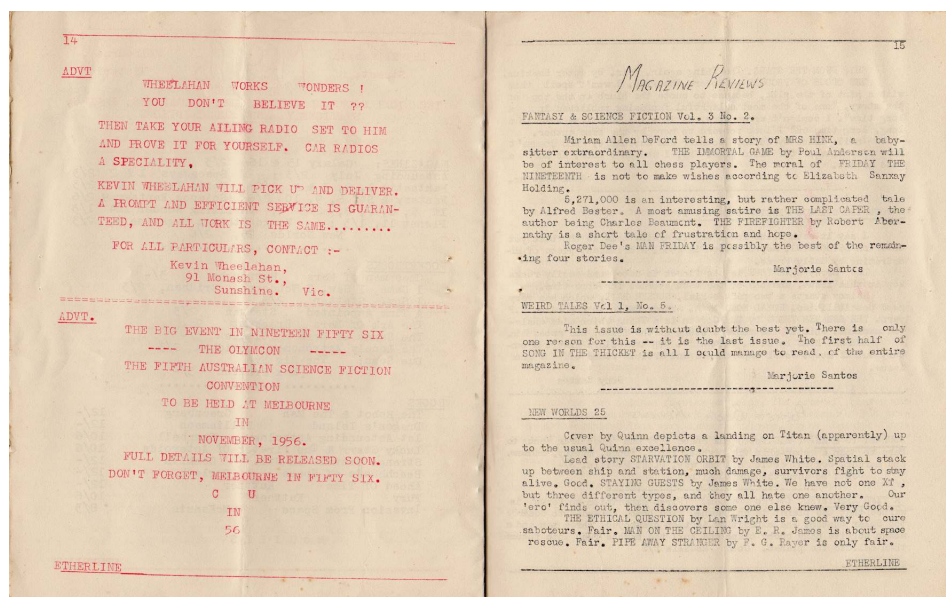
It is impossible to talk about Australian fandom in the 1950s without looking at *Etherline*. Published in 101 issues between 1953 and 1958, it became the most significant source of information about science fiction and fandom in Australia and a window onto Australian fandom for the rest of the world. After it got going it was driven by Ian Crozier who did the editorial work and Mervyn Binns who did the production. One of these days somebody is going to do a Masters Thesis on *Etherline* but, in the meantime, I've picked an issue at random to review here.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> issue of *Etherline* is fairly standard for what this newszine was like in late 1954 with a cover illo by Keith McLelland and interior illo by Dick Jenssen. It would evolve in many ways over the years but the essence of what you found in most issues of the run is also found here. There are two pages of book reviews by Bob McCubbin and 'ARMAK', no more than two or three paragraphs each; three pages of magazine reviews by Tony Santos, Marjorie Santos and Jack Keating; a page of publishing news from around the world; a page and a bit of film news and news from Melbourne and Brisbane sf clubs. Bob McCubbin adds a page of fanzine reviews including one about a fanzine from Ron Smith, who became well known around Australia a decade later:

Two regular features that I find interesting are the 'Trading



Bureau' in which fans advertise books and magazines that they have for trade with lists of the magazines or books they want (US magazines are highly sought after) and a little item called 'In Melbourne Town' which is virtually a wander around the book and magazine shops of Melbourne noting the latest arrivals. A regular feature is at least six pages of advertisements; some for overseas fanzines that have Australian agents, for AFPA and Olympicon, a regular ad for Don Latimer's binding service, for Kevin Wheelahan's electrical repair business and the regular McGills (where Mervyn Binns worked) page of advertisements for the latest books and magazines.



Anyone who has edited a newszine will feel right at home with the problem that Crozier faced with this issue. Everything seems a little strained and stretched, the symptoms of 'lack of contentitis' that we've all experienced from time to time. To fill

up three pages there is a reprinted article from a British fanzine criticizing the prozines for publishing so much 'undisguised sex and sadism' and the proliferation of bad language, of which 'bloody' and 'damned' seem to be prime examples. It's not a very long article and when you turn the page you find it concludes in a dozen lines; the rest of the page is blank apart from the statement 'This space donated to any club who wishes to take advantage of it'. I had to smile at the blatant honesty, but it is all too easy to imagine the editor, late at night and having to get the stencils to Mervyn the following day, running out of inspiration and just giving up with a deep sigh.

Individual issues of *Etherline* are not interesting in themselves, unless you are a crazed bibliographer who likes peering at old publishing and 'for sale' lists or a historian looking for glimpses into the past through the pages of this fanzine. It is, for the most part, a fairly uninspiring read, but it was the news of the day in it's day. So, I'm not going to suggest that you get the time machine out of the garage for this one, going back and picking up an individual issue would be like going back in time to pick up a single issue of any daily newspaper at random. Besides, I'm pretty certain that each of the three university libraries in Australia that have fanzine collections have complete runs of *Etherline* so you can see them there, and follow the flow of Australian fandom in the mid 1950s from the relative comfort of 2017.

## Etherline covers through the years

Since this issue is already too long and I've given up trying to control it, and since putting more pages in doesn't cost me anything anyhow, let's have a bit more indulgence



# ETHERLINE

THE SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER

No. 1 March 1st 1953

Published fortnightly  
by the Amateur Fan-  
tasy Publications of  
Australia

Arranged and edited by  
Ian J. Crozier.  
on behalf of A.F.P.A.

Production:  
Morvyn Barnes.

## Correspondents:

Capt. Ken Slater  
Roger Dard  
Charles Anderson  
Bob Silverberg  
H.J. Campbell  
and  
A.F.P.A. Members

Classified Ads. Rate  
2d. per word or  
Full Page 15/-  
Half Page 7/6  
Q'tr Page 3/9

8d. per issue

This Issue Gratis.

## TALKING POINT

The idea of a regular Australian newsletter has been knocking around in our collective editorial minds for some time now. It began with "PERHAPS", was pushed on a bit more when it became established, and now becomes a reality. Our aim is to pump the news out as fast as it comes in, and fear the not that you will have to put up with an editorial every issue -- that's for "PERHAPS" and --- "BACCANALIA", our companion magazines, as if you hadn't heard. Our duty is to supply NEWS, and that is what we will feature, not long solemn heddy-torials. With the co-operation of a bunch of British and U.S. fans and professionals, as well as an odd - very odd - Aussie or two to dish out the news from this side of the globe. Before I leave you, in this, my first and last editorial, I will put in a plea for "PERHAPS". We want artwork and articles by our own Australian fans. The U.S. and British fans are only too willing so what about it, Aussies. LJH

The first issue of *Etherline*, published on the first day of March 1953. Note that the editorial is written by Lee Harding, not Ian Crozier. There is a reason for this.

FORTNIGHTLY

PRICE 6<sup>00</sup>

# ETHERLINE

THE SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 10  
30/7/53

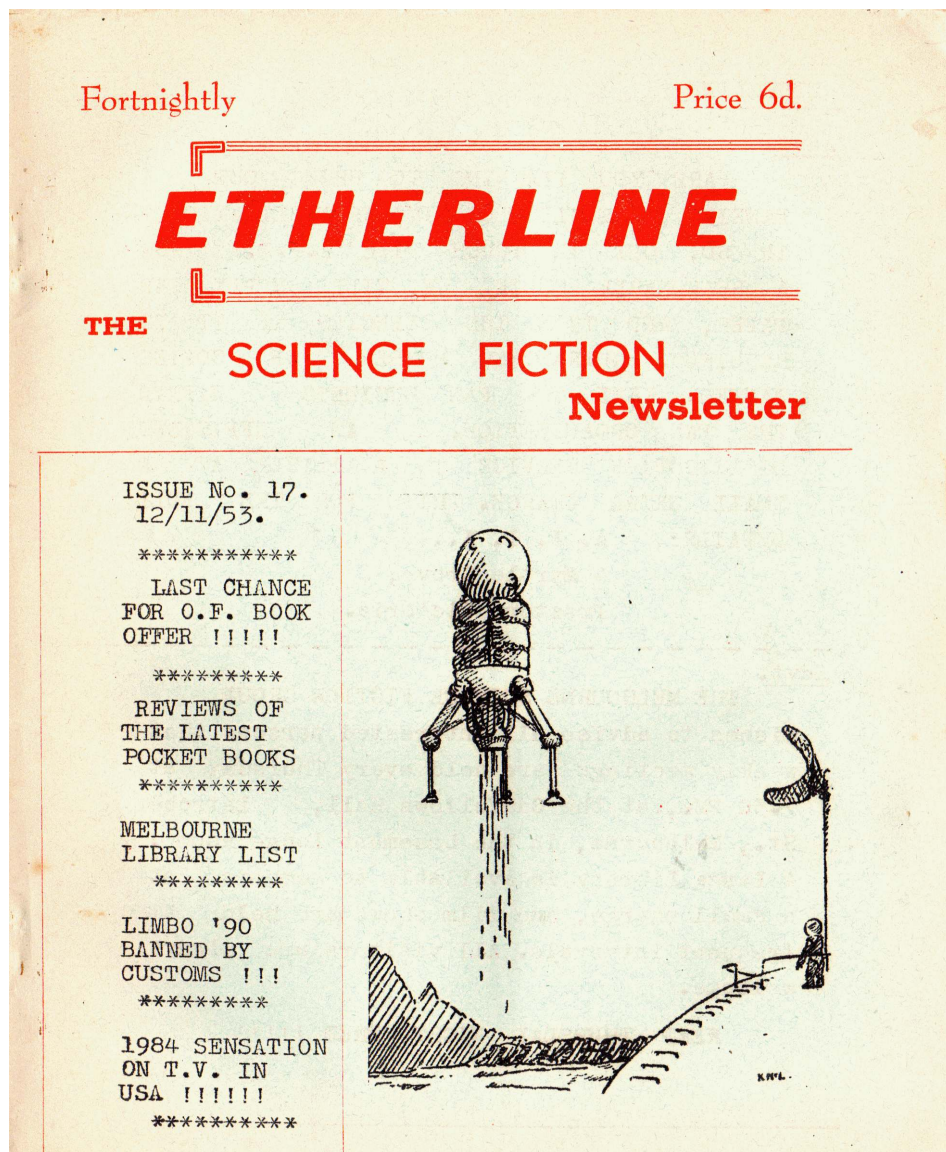
FILMS.....  
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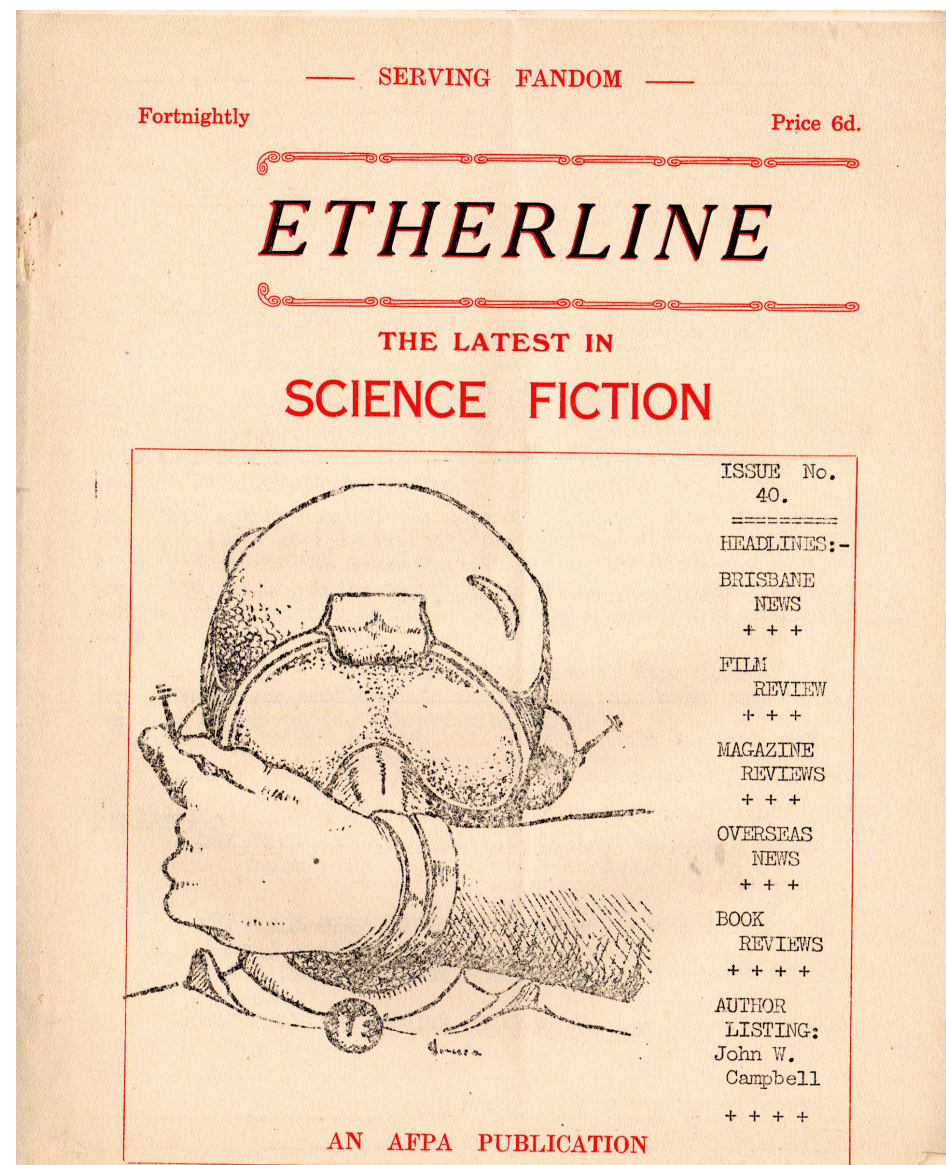


The 10<sup>th</sup> issue of *Etherline* published on 30 July 1953. This cover format was followed through the entire run of this fanzine. The artist on this cover is not credited.



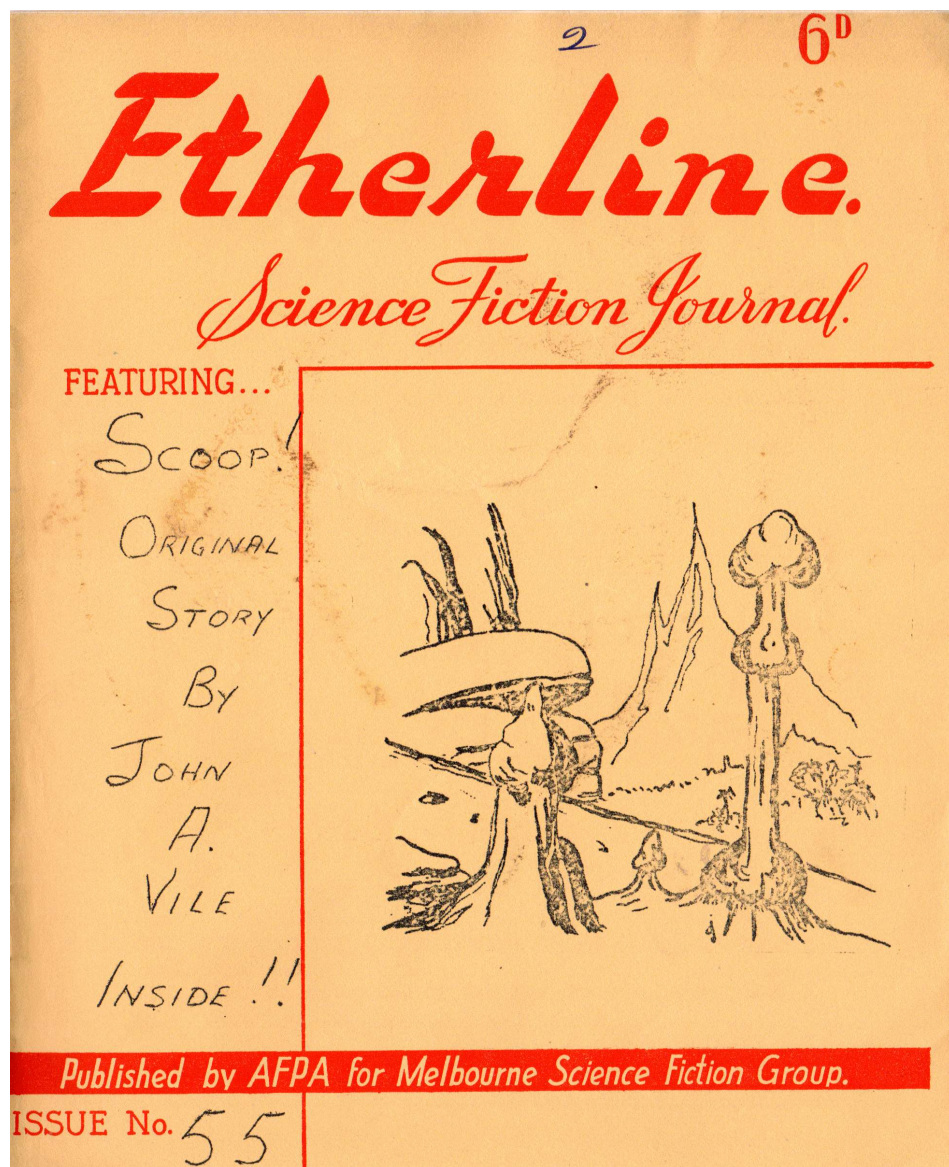


From October 1953 Ian and Mervyn used a pre-printed cover on which Mervyn added the contents information and cover art. Issue 17 for 12 November 1953 had cover art by Keith McLelland.

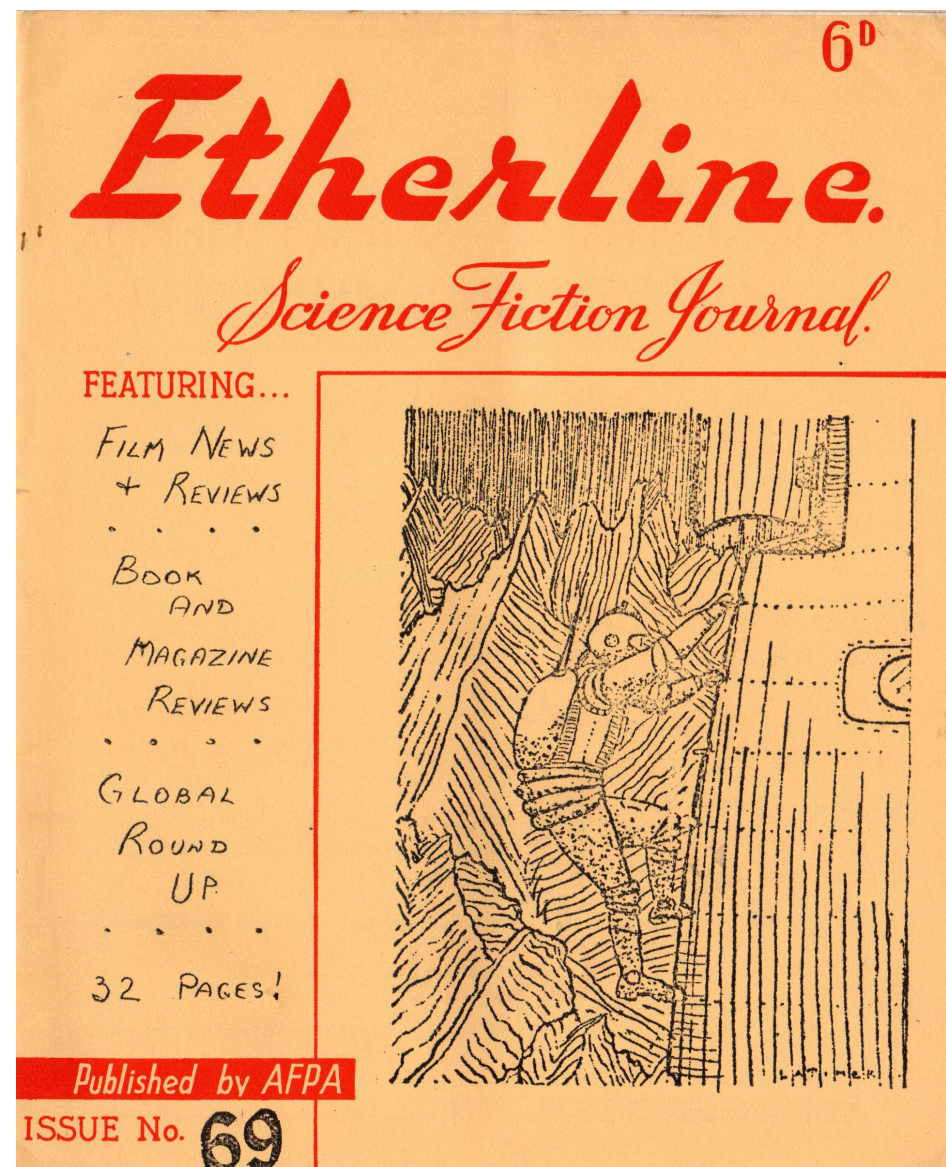


By issue 40 of *Etherline* the publication date had ceased to appear, but this issue was probably published in the first half of 1954. Cover by Dick Jenssen.





With issue 52 or 53 of *Etherline* (not having a complete set to hand is a real bugger) the cover style changed and this buff color became commonplace. Another illo by Dick Jenssen.



Although the cover format is very similar the interesting change that took place with issue 69 of *Etherline* was the shorter banner across the bottom. I wonder why this was done. Illo by Don Latimer



6<sup>D</sup>

# Etherline.

*Science Fiction Journal.*

FEATURING...

OFFICIAL  
OLYMPICON  
REPORT  
NUMBER

0 0 0 0  
FINAL ISSUE  
FOR 3 MONTHS



OLYMPICON 1956

A SECTION OF THE EXCELLENT DISPLAYS,  
FEATURING THE M.G.M. BOARD FOR  
FORBIDDEN PLANET  
THE VIEW OF WHICH IS FOUND IN THIS ISSUE.

Published by AFPA

ISSUE No. 80

The cover of *Etherline* 80, published in early 1957, was a break from tradition and one of the few photographic covers. Getting good roneo reproduction from a photograph was a bit of an art and shows Mervyn Binns mastery of the process by this time.

## 1967 - From the Dustbug

After beginning with *Australian SF Review* John Bangsund got bitten by the publishing bug and produced an enormous range of fanzines. One of the early ones was *The Cosmic Dustbug*, which was a newsletter of sorts, very entertaining and chatty. What is a 'dustbug' I hear the youngsters among you ask. Or perhaps you've all gone back to playing vinyl records, in which case I hope you're using one.

This item, published in *The Cosmic Dustbug* in April 1967, has a brush with Australian literary celebrity and also a touch of pathos.

Young Pat Terry, move over...

Unless Bertrand Russell (or some doddering bi-centenarian in Azerbaijan) can beat his record, I think I have discovered the world's most senior sf fan. And he is a man whose name is known and respected throughout Australia. His aged 93. Here is his letter:

'Many thanks for your letter and for the kind things you say about my writings. They back at least 65 years. Yes, I am interested - very much so - in your project. My acquaintance with science fiction began with my reading of various stories by Jules Verne - does anyone read him today? - and, much later, by the early books of H G Wells, who was surely a pioneer. Yes, I would be very pleased to see any spare copies of your Review. As for taking any active part in your enterprise, my handwriting will reveal to you the fact that I have reached the grey ultimate decrepitude. This letter is written in bed! It doesn't seem likely that I shall ever again write anything worth reading. Thank you

all the same for the invitation.

Yours sincerely, WALTER MURDOCH

(John Bangsund and Walter Murdoch, *The Cosmic Dustbug* 3, 17 April 1967)

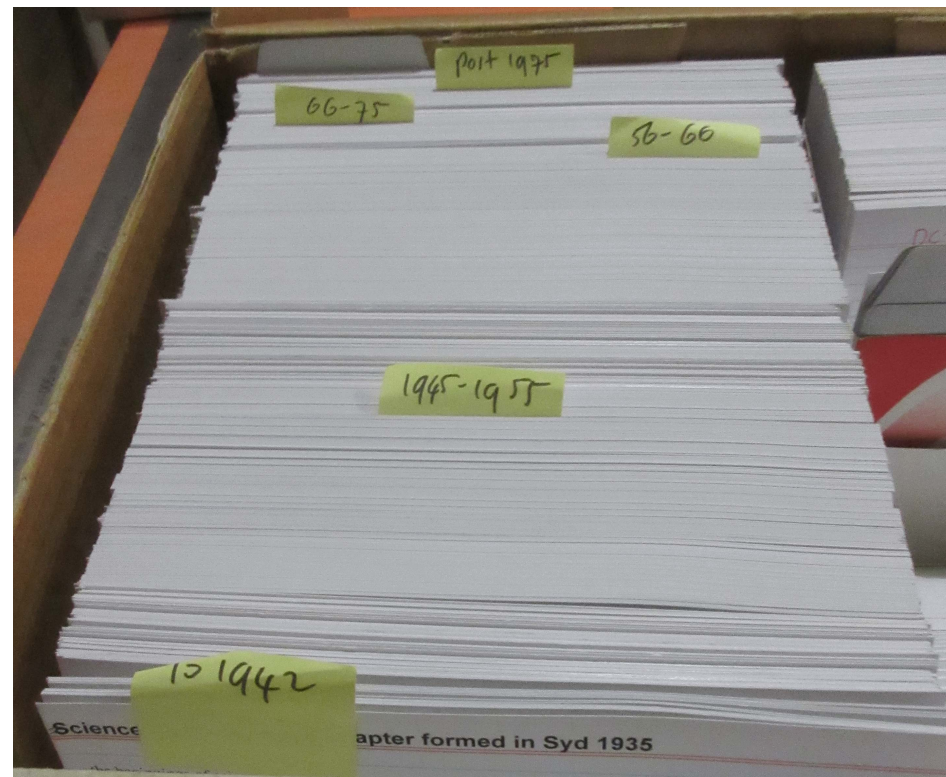
Some of our younger readers, or those not living in Australia, may wonder who Walter Murdoch was. The name is well enough known, he was the uncle of the evil Keith Murdoch and the great uncle of the even eviler Rupert Murdoch. But Walter was the good relative; a prominent Australian academic, founding Professor of English at the University of Western Australia and later its Chancellor. He was a celebrated essayist and broadcaster on a wide range of subjects and well liked for his intelligence and wit. He died in July 1970. Murdoch University in Western Australia, which has so many fanzines in its Special Collection (including this *Cosmic Dustbug*) is also named after him. It's a small world, isn't it?

## Progress Report

It's been an interesting and busy month. Among other things, but unrelated to this project, I've been to an aviation cultures conference at Sydney University and the aviation history has been put to bed. This leaves me free, more or less, to get on with this project uninterrupted.

At the end of the previous progress report I mentioned that I was having trouble printing out the results of the research so far onto filing cards so that I can use the material in writing the history. Much to my relief I finally found a way to print the information onto the cards and, after a day at it, the first batch of one thousand cards has been printed off. If this project is like any other I'd expect that there will be around ten thousand cards

printed out by the time the research is mostly concluded. So far I've just done a rough sort into a few chronological periods, a more detailed sort will take place as I get closer to writing up the history.



You will see that so far most of the material I've gathered covers the period leading up to Olympicon in 1956 and so it outside my main area of research. This is the result of the fact that most of the on-line source material, which is where I started, is about the earliest period of Australian fandom. Now that I'm working from material found on library shelves my knowledge of later periods is starting to fill out fairly nicely.



Speaking of material on university library shelves, I spent a very pleasant day in the new reading room of the Rare Books collection at Monash University. It is a very sumptuous room with some of the most comfortable seats and the service is, as always, excellent and friendly. I went through three or four boxes of John Foyster's papers, this time finding little of interest for my project but a lot that will interest anyone working on the later years.

The trawling continues. At the moment I'm working my way through old issues of *Fanew Sletter* for 1974 and 1975, which is somewhat embarrassing since I produced that newszine and made all kinds of hideous mistakes in it.

## To Be Done

More trawling. Oh boy! Also probably another day at Monash University going through more boxes.

More entertaining will be a panel session on the history of fandom that Bruce Gillespie is organizing at the national sf convention this year, Continuum 13 being held in Melbourne this coming Queen's Birthday long weekend. If you happen to be in the vicinity at 2pm on Sunday 4 June you will find me moderating a panel which will include Carey Handfield, Rob Gerrand, Lee Harding and Dick Jenssen. We will discuss several aspects of the history of fandom in Australia and field a few questions for an hour. Be there or be square, as DJs of the period used to say.

## The Photo File

### Gary Mason shows us his

The photos from GelatiCon in our previous issue inspired Gary Mason to share a couple of photos of the same event from

his collection.

The convention is remembered, by those who were there, as GelatiCon because it was enlivened by the unannounced and unplanned arrival of a gelati van on the two days of the convention held at Melbourne University. In the first photo you see the queue of fans lined up to get their share. The man in the van must have thought he'd struck it rich.



While Gary and I recognize many of the faces we are pressed to put names to most of them. At the head of the queue is Shayne McCormack and Jenny Stephensen, further back is Noel

Kerr and the person in the red jumper is probably Bruce Gillespie.

The fans in Gary's second GelatiCon photo are more recognizable; from the left John Foyster, me and Lee Harding.



We were, as I recall, responsible for organizing the convention which is why we are photographed together with John telling convention members something important. I can't help but notice that all three of us are wearing glasses, which might mean something.

The other photo that Gary sent was taken, we think, on a different occasion of a group of Sydney Star Trek fans - you can

tell this by the poster Shayne is holding. It was probably also taken in about 1970. Gary identifies them as Jenny Stephensen, Sabina Heggie and Shayne with the person standing behind Sabina being a man of mystery.



## Your Say

**Gary Mason**, along with the photos, commented on the previous issue of iOTA:

The most interesting part of this issue, for me, was learning so much more about my old friend Roger Dard. John Ryan put me in touch with him very early in my fannish career, and he sold me at bargain basement prices many bound

volumes of US comics and Sunday newspaper comics sections that I still have -- and posted them from WA, the complexity of which I appreciate better now than I did then. I had no idea at the time who he was; John provided me with no real background on him. I now discover he was a considerable BNF indeed.

Roger Dard must have built up a mighty collection but is sounds as though he was disposing of some of it by the time Gary came on the scene. It would be interesting to know what else he was selling and whether he was disposing of his entire collection at that time. We must also ask Gary to send us a couple of photos of items from Roger's collection.

After this Gary and I disappeared into an email conversation about Australia in 75 paperwork which is very interesting, if you are like that kind of thing, but I won't bore you with here.

**John Bangsund** wrote:

The bloke next to Bruce in *Iota 5* is Peter Innocent.

Peter and I seemed to follow each other around. He was at Cassell Australia as a designer when I came back from an interstate trip (and his views on design were weird: In all but the text, the capital letters in George Turner's *Lame Dog Man* were italic, to give a feeling of lameness). He shared Bundalohn Court with me for a few months, then I heard of a job going as a proofreader at Peter Isaacson's, told him, and he got it. I took it over from him when he went to AGPS in Canberra.

He wrote to me in agony once that his girlfriend had gone to Adelaide with a bloke who played the trombone, what

should he do? "Bust his trombone," I suggested.

In commenting about Bundalohn Court John mentioned: Carolyn Addison [who lived upstairs on the opposite side of the court] and Sandra Mackenzie. There was a costume party at Carolyn's flat during Gelaticon, the day I'd appeared as Professor Humphrey Tape. Liz Kinnaird was first there, George [Turner] and I were next. "And who are you?" George said to Liz, who was always ahead of fashion, "Morticia?" Liz just looked at George, up and down, down and up, and eventually said "Bitch."

We also heard from: Bruce Gillespie.

## 1975 - Fandom runs foul of The Law

The center of social fandom in Melbourne in 1975 was, without doubt, the slant shack in Drummond Street, Carlton. It was a couple of blocks from Melbourne University and just around the corner from the culinary delights of Lygon Street, which was much less commercialized than it is now. It was unusual in having a lounge room and three bedrooms at the front, behind them was an enclosed verandah and then a courtyard with the kitchen, bathroom and toilet down one side.

Among the people who seem to have lived there in 1975 were Don and Derek Ashby, John Ham and Ken Ford, a cheerful and inventive group who hosted an almost endless supply of parties and social events. Drop in almost any time and something was certain to be happening, and if it wasn't it soon would.

For the first half of 1975 the group called itself 'Innuendo Inc' and around the middle of the year it changed to become the "Magic Pudding Club (or what you will)". The Club invented



royal titles for itself; Valma was the 'Countess of Carlton' and I've still got a worn 'Baron of Balaclava' t-shire around here somewhere.

The group dissolved towards the end of 1975 and, for a part of 1976, Valma and I shared the place with Carey Handfield, who seemed to be overseas for most of the time. Later on Valma and I moved to a place in Brunswick and Carey also moved. I see that the house is still there, but I can't imagine that anyone living there has as much fun as Melbourne fans did during 1975.

INNUENDO INC BUSTED - On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April some Melbourne fans were gathered at Innuendo Inc for dinner when the police arrived. One large Sergeant and two constables entered uninvited while the inhabitants stood in a state of shock. The police barged their way through to the courtyard and there announced that they had come in response to a complaint that the Australian flag flying from the dunny flue was upside down. Don Ashby was ordered up onto the roof to remove the flag which was taken away. Ken Ford was also ordered to remove the smile from his face. The whole event lasted about ten minutes and left the fans there rather shaken and angry. First word reached the outside world via Robin Johnson who rang Innuendo Inc during the raid and by the time an official report had been filed with FANewsLETTER John Ham had contacted his lawyer to find out the legal situation which seemed to be that the police didn't have a leg to stand on except for a vague possibility of public indecency or something in that line.

(Fanew Sletter 27, 22 April 1975)

