

# iOTA 07

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## CONTENTS

<b>Thisish Cover</b> - <i>Terran Times</i> 3	02
<b>Editorial</b> - of sorts - <i>iOTA</i> goes to a convention	02
<b>1954 - The Third Australia SF Convention</b> - The beginning of the end for Sydney fandom	05
<b>The History Corner</b> - The Art of History	11
<b>Encountering Science Fiction</b> - with George Turner	14
<b>1968 - Paul Stevens Turns on the Censors</b> - A one act play about censorship in Australia	21
<b>1970 - Fanzine Review</b> - <i>Terran Times</i> 3	22
<b>The Long and Winding Road to Aussiecon</b> - success at the HeiCon 70 business session	24
<b>Progress Report</b> - at the Monash Special Collection	25
<b>The Photo File</b> - Arthur C Clarke in Queensland	27
<b>Your Say</b> - Lee Harding, Bruce Gillespie, Rob Gerrand Roman Orszanski and Marc Ortlieb	27
<b>1968 - Graham Stone Makes John Bangsund's Blood Boil</b> - More about the Australian SF Association	31
<b>1972 - Adelaide's First Convention</b> - Bruce Gillespie Spills the Beans	34



*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* fairly soon after I've completed them.

## **Thisish's Cover**

The cover of *Etherline* on the previous issue of *iOTA* located us squarely in the mid 1950s when stf was locked inside its genre walls and fans concentrated on being serious about their interest. With this issue we find ourselves at the beginning of the 1970s when two new ideas were taking hold in Australia; fannish fandom and media fandom. The editors of *Terran Times*, Shayne

McCormack and Nomad were the first generation of media fans in Australia and their fanzone was among the first (if not the first) media fanzone to be published in Australia. Because of the relationship that had developed between Shayne, Nomad and several fans who were fannishly inclined, *Terran Times* is firmly a media fanzone, but with a twist of fannishness to give it a light and entertaining edge.

## **Editorial - of sorts**

### **First, the technical stuff**

What I did not realize is that some of you reading this have not been seeing it the way that I see it on my screen. This has something to do with the fonts that I've been using, such as the headings in 'Cooper Black'. Apparently, if you don't have that font already loaded onto your computer the *iOTA* pdf file choses a different font. Don't ask me to explain it any further, if you want the technical details write to Roman Orszanski who pointed out the problem and also showed me the solution. Smart boy Roman. So now, I hope, what I see and what you see are the same thing.

### **iOTA goes to a convention**

I guess that the most recent convention I've been to was Aussiecon 4, and that was about 7 years ago. (My, time flies...) Not that I have anything against conventions, it's just that they don't hold the same fascination they once did and so we haven't gone out of our way to attend them recently.

However, having embarked upon this project I thought it would be interesting to attend at least one day of a convention to see what they are like these days. My original plan was just to

pop along for a day to the 2017 Melbourne convention, Continuum 13, which was also the 56<sup>th</sup> Australian National SF Convention, and observe what went on from the back row. Then things happened and I ended up moderating a Fan History panel which ensured that I would be there, but with a little responsibility too.

So I bought a 'ticket' for the day and wondered that it cost me \$75 (with a concession, one of the few advantages of getting on in years), I'll have to go back and see how much it cost to join the 7<sup>th</sup> national convention in 1966, probably only a couple of dollars. But that's inflation for you. I then trundled down to the railway station and booked my free pensioner train ticket for the trip to Melbourne, made a few other arrangements, and I was set.

One of the arrangements I made was to prepare a handout for the panel, the beginnings of an annotated chronology which I called, due to lack of inspiration, *Australian Fandom, Adventures in Time*. It has pictures on the front and back covers and most of the interior is my first attempts at an annotated chronology of Australian fandom which goes up to the publication of the first issue of *Australian SF Review* in 1966. The chronology sitting on this computer goes further than that with details like references, but I didn't want to break the bank in publishing the handout so it's only eight pages all up this time around. Somehow or another you will find it as a supplement to this issue of *iOTA*.

Finding the hotel was no problem, I am certain that Valma and I attended a Doctor Who convention there in the late 1970s. Even if the hotel has changed name and had a face lift it is still in the same place where we left it.

After the initial process of getting lost in the foyer and

having to have a young fan point me to where I needed to go, I found my way to registration and traded my ticket for a dog tag that allowed me to wander around at the convention for the day. Very soon I discovered something about modern day conventions that quite astounded me.

A couple of issue ago I commented on how much the fan publishing scene has changed in a few decades, due to modern electronic technology which has changed the way that fans communicate with each other. I had thought that somehow this would change conventions too, but I soon found that it hasn't, to any noticeable extent. The trappings have changed a bit but, in essence, the convention I attended in 2017 is not much different to my first convention in 1966.

Conventions, it seems, are still about the clan coming together and fans meeting, talking and no doubt, since the convention was in a hotel, doing other things that fans can do in private if they so desire. Little clumps of fans gathered here and there around the venue talking about this and that. From some of the conversation I overheard, there seemed to be more 'filthy pro' talk than there used to be, but that is to be expected at a convention where book launches seemed a common event.

However I didn't have time to overhear too many conversations, I spent most of the time talking to people too. I had planned to sit in on some panels to see what fans are talking about these days but before I knew it I had bumped into Roman and then Justin and then Marc and Bruce and... well it went on like that for the rest of the day. There were a few fans who I had not met before and naughty Gillian Polack chatted with me about worldcons and this and that, playing me along until I recognized

who she was. A little later I found myself talking to Carey Lenehan about writing and publishing, Lucy Sussex about various things including George Turner and, later in the day, with Roman Orszanski about uranium and energy generation, with lots more in between. I was getting quite hoarse by the end of the day.

I did manage to tear myself away from all this to catch part of one panel and was reminded, very quickly, how tedious they can be. People told me that the Guest of Honor was highly entertaining so I took in a couple of minutes of her performance, but I've already seen enough of that kind of thing at conventions to want to hang around.



In the distance, the Guest of Honor amuses the assembled convention

Later, in the restaurant, while I having one of their very nice breakfasts for lunch and going over my notes for the panel, I watched another convention phenomenon I'd forgotten. Over at another table were Jack Dann and Janeen Webb having a meal

with somebody I did not recognize. After a while somebody else came in - Lee Harding actually - and gradually a clump of people had clustered around the table talking in animated fashion.



By the time I arrived on the scene some of the crowd has wandered off. In the background we have Sean McMullen and Lee Harding talking to someone who may be Sean's daughter. Seated at the table we have, with their backs to us, Bruce Gillespie and Roman Orszanski, and facing us Dick Jennsen, Jack Dann, Janeen Webb and Bill Wright. A formidable bunch. If you met them in a dark alley they'd talk you into submission.

So, what did I learn from my experiences. I learned that although communications technologies had changes the way that fans communicate over distance they still interact in the same ways as they always have when they are talking face-to-face. Fans may be slans but they are also people, just like anybody else.

And how did the fan history panel go? Quite well, actually. On the panel we had Rob Gerrand, Dick Jenssen and Lee Harding with me attempting to keep them in check. The audience seemed



interested in what we were talking about and there was little shuffling and looking at watches. I take that as a good sign. We had hoped that Race Matthews and Mervyn Binns could join us too but both were crook on the day so we had to fly without them.



The Fan History panel. From the left: me, Lee Harding, Dick Jennsen and Rob Gerrand. Thanks to Helena Binns for the photo.

Because Dick and Lee were founder members of the Melbourne SF Group in 1953 we concentrated on the attractions of stf in those days, the problems of getting your hands on it in Australia, what it was like to be a fan then and how fans acted out their creativity, mainly through writing (or trying to write) stf. Both of them went out of their way to attend and I'm sure their effort was worthwhile because they spoke from personal experience, with knowledge and conviction which was, I think, a valuable experience for the audience.

The panel was recorded, video and audio, and will

apparently be put up on You Tube - I was going to conclude by saying that 'you should have been there', but apparently you still can.

PS. Note to convention committee. I enjoyed myself at the convention, things appeared well organized and under control. In other words, a good and well run convention. Even though I might not get to conventions these days I'm glad to see that they are still in good hands.

### **1954 - The Third Australian SF Convention - The Beginning of the End for Sydney fandom**

I wonder what the fans who organized Australia's third national convention would have thought about the 56<sup>th</sup> national convention over sixty years later. Several things perhaps. First might be the number of women there because those early fans lived in a society in which gender stereotyping was the norm and stf was almost exclusively in the male realm. (It had taken the Sydney Futurians a serious debate before they voted to allow women to join their ranks.)

Second might have been the informality of the whole show. Few in 2017 were dressed up in the best clothes, suit and tie were absent and nobody used formal titles when addressing each other.

Third, and perhaps most startling, might have been that there were no panel sessions about the progress of the Mars colonies or the terraforming of Venus. Instead, everyone there seemed to have little boxes in their hands that appeared to be communications devices that they did strange, unaccountable things with.

Finally they might have been surprised that there were three or four streams of programming on a range of topics, only some of which related to stf as they would have understood it.

So much for conjecture. In 1954 science fiction and the world in general were quite different places to what they are now, and this is reflected in running of and discussion at the 1954 convention.

Before we start I want to alert you to three matters that come up in this report.

The first is the debate about the Australian SF Association at the business session of this convention, remembering that the Association was also a major topic of conversation at the 1953 business session reported in our previous issue. The Association still existed in the 1960s, working on as usual and still under Graham Stone's direction. It's role at that time will come up later in this issue.

Second is the decision of where the next year's convention would be held. Melbourne fans had already decided that they wanted to hold a convention in 1956 to go with the holding of the Olympic games in their city. In the report there is brief mention of Futurians wanting Melbourne to hold the next convention, the one in 1955, and Melbourne fans declining to do so. It is most likely that the Sydney Futurians wanted Melbourne to run the 1955 event so that the North Shore Futurians could not. Melbourne fans might not have been aware at the time, but some of the Sydney Futurians came to believe that this was a conspiracy between Melbourne and the North Shore Futurians at the expense of the Sydney Futurians, which probably helped sour further relations between some of the Sydney Futurians and Melbourne fans.

Third is the contrast between the reports given by Sydney and Melbourne fans during the business session. Sydney fans report in detail of their achievements but Bob McCubbin simply says that the Melbourne group doesn't have any formal membership, although it knows of 97 people who are interested in stf in Melbourne.

The other thing to note is the nature of the report itself; a fairly detailed description of proceedings but almost nothing about the experience of attending the convention. There is a hint of the enjoyment that might have taken place at Lyell Crane's place the night before the convention but not a word of who was there or what they did. The second major blank occurs when Melbourne fans left the room so Sydney fans could debate a motion about creating some harmony in the city, but all this report says is that whatever took place did not lead to a positive outcome. More details please, Ian, I'm sure there was plenty of gossip.

Third is the failure of a Sydney Futurian meeting to take place and the hint that people knew what the reason for that non-event was. Sadly, there are no details here.

But enough of me, over to Ian Crozier's report from Etherline 28, 28 April 1954:

### **1954 - THE THIRD AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION**

For most of the interstate delegation, this Convention opened at Lyell Crane's place on the Friday, at which liberal doses of refreshment were imbibed.

The main activity on the Saturday morning was the frantic arranging of displays by all and sundry. Those not interested in this activity slowly wandered around and got acquainted,

mainly by means of a pen and a copy of the Con booklet.

There were excellent displays of early sf magazines and fanzines, and a selection of covers from the FSS library. Two floors down Dave Cohen of the Blue Centaur Book Co had taken a room to hold his vast selection of material, including most of the original covers of the Malian Press series. These are really worth seeing.

Various personalities drifted in at odd hours, including Professor John Blatt of the Sydney University. Various other personalities drifted out as fast as they came in, including most of the delegation from Melbourne, in search of some staying power.

The press were in attendance, and D Lawson rushed madly around using reels of film, presumably to good effect.

The main session got under way at 2.15PM, slightly late, owing to the bad habit fans have of wandering it at odd hours.

Mr Judd introduced the Convention chairman, Mr Rex Meyer, who read out several congratulatory telegrams.

First speaker was Mr Neville Cohen, who delivered an address prepared by Graham Stone, CAVALCADE OF SCIENCE FICTION. This was a short resume of the modern history of sf, ranging from Wells and Verne to present day authors.

Mr Don Lawson presented an extremely interesting [talk on] SCIENCE FICTION AND THE FILM. This traced the association of sf and the film from the early trick French films of 1903, to Fritz Lang's masterpieces, FRAU IM MONDE and METROPOLIS, and the Kroda/Menzies production of Wells' THINGS TO COME, to the present day DESTINATION MOON,

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE and THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL.

The Symposium, THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, was opened by Mr S Dunk, with THE FUTURE OF THE MACHINE. Mr Dunk painted a very gloomy picture, prophesying as he did the complete disappearance of all metals and fuel. Mr H Brunen, in THE FUTURE OF MAN, carried on in the same dismal vein. He seemed to be vastly influenced by Huxley and Stapledon. Mr V Molesworth, in THE HISTORY OF CULTURE, prefaced his remarks with the statement that most of his material seemed to have been used by Mr Brunen. However, he went on to present his arguments, which boiled down to the fact that in his opinion, culture would not change very much in the future.

After a short intermission, Mr P Glick opened the Forum, challenging most of Mr Dunk's arguments very successfully in my opinion. Mr Brunen also came in for several 'Glickian' remarks. The second [member] of the Forum, Mr L Crane, delivered his address, in which he differed with many of the predictions of the Symposium. Mrs N Gore, the third member of the Forum, presented the woman's angle on the future.

Mr Meyer summed up the Symposium, and then threw it open to questions from the floor.

Mr Phillips of Sydney rose and promptly disagreed with all the speakers, outlining his various arguments. Mr Molesworth rose on behalf of all the speakers, and answered Mr Phillips. Mr Addison of Sydney asked whether the forms of education will have to be changed in the future. Mr Brunen decided that they would have to be changes, and Mr Glick

supported him.

Mr Haddon of Sydney challenged Mr Glick's statement that specialization means extinction of a species. Mr Glick answered that his statement dealt only with animals of the lower order.

Mr Meyer closed the formal session at 5.30.

Now this was all very interesting in a boring sort of way, but I fail to see the necessity of these philosophical discussions at a science fiction convention. Surely a discussion of the effect of a particular author on science fiction, or the rise and fall of a magazine would be much more interesting to science fiction fans. It would be to me, anyway. If I wanted to listen to the other, I would go to one of the meetings of the local Semantics group, or the Philosophical Society. Let's have talks on SCIENCE FICTION!

The film showing after tea was slightly on the late side, owing to the screen being locked in the meeting hall. I hope that all meetings are not started with a hacksaw!

A taped message from Robert Heinlein was played before the film showing, and we thank Mr Heinlein for his wishes of success.

The films shown were of a very high standard indeed, and the experimental Canadian films, FIDDLE DEE DEE and BEGONE DULL CARE, which were PAINTED direct onto the film by Norman McLaren to the above tunes are really terrific. If you have not yet seen them, then I suggest you make immediate arrangements to do so. The main film was MGM's THE BEGINNING OR THE END, starring Robert Walker, Brian Denlevy,

T Drake, Beverly Tyler and Audrey Totter. The theme should be familiar to all fans, dealing as it did with the first A bomb. Also shown was ACROSS ARCTIC UNGAVA, another Canadian film.

Next morning the auction started one hour late and the hacksaw was again brought into play. Early material was mainly BRE and British, which brought very low prices. The US digest mags brought fairly high prices, with F&SF bringing up to 8/6, TWS up to 7/-, GALAXY up to 5/-. The BRE ASTOUNDINGs brought a few high prices, due to the early dates. Books, mostly US editions, brought fair figures, despite the fact that many of them will be out in British editions soon. Another spate of British PBs brought an average of 6d.

American PBs brought high prices, with Remo Parlanti paying 8/- for ROGUE QUEEN. Ooooh!, Remo!!

The Business session had an attendance of around 30, and the first report was delivered by Mr B Finch, secretary of the FSS. Mr Finch outlined the early history of the FSS, and detailed the progress made over the past year.

Mr Arthur Porter had taped a report on the Futurian Society of Canberra earlier in the day, and it was then played after the conclusion of Mr Finch's report. He outlined the formation of the club after Mr Geoff Bennett's visits to Melbourne and Sydney, and [had] seen both extremes at work. Judging by the response from the reputed 300 odd readers of sf in Canberra, it would appear that the wrong extreme [was] chosen.

Mr Lyell Crane delivered a report on behalf of the Adelaide Science Fiction Group, which was prepared by Mrs J



Joyce. It outlined the growth of this group, and detailed the past year, when the upsurge was most apparent. The library must be really something.

Mr Ted Hutt was called on to report on the Newcastle & Hunter Valley Science Fiction Club, in which he gave the session the full history of the seven members. It is intended to advertise extensively in the newspapers in the near future.

Mr Crane reported on behalf of the ASFS, and it was pointed out that not much had changed in the past year, owing to the fact that both office bearers were actively engaged in publicly for the Convention. Mr Crane said that the need for ASFS had dropped somewhat, and the original idea would have to be changed. Apparently their approach to the outlying fan was not all to be desired, as the response was very disappointing. For the amount of money spent, it was thought that the results have not justified the outlay, and the position would have to be ratified at the earliest possible moment. It was decided to debate this question in General Business.

Mr Glick appealed for material for the US Convention, especially earlier Australian items.

Mr Hubble reported on behalf of the North Shore Futurian Society, tracing the club from the formation to the present day. It was indicated that the name would be changed at some future date.

Mr McCubbin reported on behalf of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group. He stressed the informality of the group, and pointed out that although it had no paid members, there were 97 contacts on its books. He pointed out that there was

a very strong publishing section attached to the group.

It was moved Glick, seconded Purdey, that the reports be accepted.

In general business, the first item of discussion was ASFS. Mr Glick suggested that ASFS be handed over intact to one of the flourishing clubs, for them to run and cover costs. Mr Stone replied that the final fate of ASFS had not been decided on, except that it was probably that one of three courses, reconstitution under the present executive, the course suggested by Mr Glick, or liquidation would be taken. Mr Butt of Newcastle suggested that ASFS canvass for gifts. Mr Stone replied that this would only mean that someone else would foot the bills.

Mr Salgram of Ballarat suggested an Australia wide book club, which would bring more readers of sf.

Mr Keating of Melbourne suggested that if ASFS were re-constituted like the majority of amateur clubs, the state bodies could carry the main body.

Mr Martin of Sydney said that it was apparent that Mr Stone and Mr Crane 'were getting old and decrepit', in that they were not prepared to carry on the apparently large volume of work tied up in ASFS. Mr Crane discussed the suggestions put forward to date, and said that it was quite true that the work was becoming too much to handle.

Mr Glick said that in the early days, when ASFS was a proprietary show, it was a very well run organization, but since the rapid growth, it would necessitate some other arrangement as he thought it would be a good idea if the FSS took over

ASFS, and appoint Mr Stone organizer.

Mr Haddon asked whether the ASFS could give any indication of what course they intended to follow.

Mr Crane stressed that the original purpose had changed, and a new purpose decided on. They wanted the meeting to indicate such a purpose.

Mr Haddon moved that ASFS draw up a course and present it to a FSS meeting for approval, and all interested organizations [be] notified accordingly. This was seconded by Mr Bos.

The chairman indicated that he doubted whether the session could decide the policy of ASFS, and said that enough courses of action had been suggested for ASFS to decide on one.

It was moved Haddon seconded Bos that the next Australian Convention be run by NSFS [North Shore Futurian Society]. In moving so, Mr Haddon said that as the aims of the FSS were to advance the causes of sf, and it was stated that most of the previous year's activities were taken up with the running of the Convention, it was apparent that not much advancing of sf was undertaken. Anyway, it was time that the younger section had a chance to show that it could run a convention.

Mr Bos seconded briefly.

Mr Crane pointed out that the Convention was under the direction of Mr Judd, and took up no time of the FSS. Personally, he would like to see Melbourne take the Convention.

Mrs Molesworth said that it would be a good thing for

fandom if Melbourne took the next Convention.

Mr McCubbin thanked the speakers, and stressed the fact that Melbourne wanted the Convention in 1956, to be run at the time of the Olympic Games, and it was intended to put on a large show. Owing to the large amount of work involved, it was thought that two years would be required for this Convention.

Mr Glick at this point suggested that the motion be put to the vote.

Mr Martin said that it was not necessary to have any organization run a Convention, as long as an Organizer be appointed.

Mr Finch said that it was necessary to have close cooperation in the running of a Con.

Miss Simmons suggested that the Convention be held in Sydney, and run by a group divorced from organized clubs.

Mr Glick asked that the motion be clarified as to who would be running the Con, Mr Haddon or the NSFS.

Mr Haddon replied that he was applying on behalf of the NSFS.

Mrs Molesworth suggested that the motion be put to the vote.

22 for, 14 against.

Mrs Molesworth moved that this session suggest to the NSFS that Mr Hubble be appointed organizer. Seconded Haddon.

Mr Martin said that in his opinion this meeting could not so move.

Mr Glick said that the meeting, as an unconstituted body, could move anything it liked.

The Chairman ruled that the body could not move such a motion.

Mr Nicholson said that the NSFS would appreciate a vote of confidence in Mr Hubble.

Moved Brunen that the session thank Mr Judd for his masterly organization of the present Convention. Seconded McCubbin.

Mr Judd thanked the meeting very much.

M McCubbin moved that the approval of the meeting to go ahead and organize the 1956 Convention be given. Seconded by Keating.

Mr Judd commended the idea, and said that in his opinion 24 months was not too long to organize a Convention.

Mr Nicholson moved that the split which had developed in the Sydney organizations be healed in view of the cordial relations now apparent. The Melbourne group left the room while this motion was discussed. Apparently it was not successful.

Meeting adjourned at 5.15 PM.

The evening session was, in my opinion, one of the best periods of the Con. A really terrific 30 minute play was the feature, supported by some more films.

On the whole, the organization of this Convention was very much better than the last, although I think the subject matter of the last was better.

It's up to you now, NSFS.

On the Monday evening, there was a meeting of the Futurian Society scheduled. However, it never came off. I wonder why?

I J Crozier.

(*Etherline* 28, 28 April 1954)

## **The Historian's Corner**

### **The Art of History**

I get cranky at times, particularly at events like stf conventions, when I get the strong impression that I am considered less of a writer than the other there because what I do is 'only history'. That somehow what I do is a lower level of creativity because I tell stories that explain things that happened in the past rather than telling made up stories.

One conversation I overheard included the statement that 'only fiction could tell the "truth"', of human existence, presumably What about the 'truth' of power generation or air traffic control I thought to myself, but I gritted my teeth and went about my business - I'm supposed to avoid stress these days.

I suppose I shouldn't feel so glum about this. I'm sure that stf writers and fans could be made to feel second-class if they turned up to the annual Australian Historical Association conference. 'Horses for courses', so to speak. There is a kind of 'truth' found at history conferences strangely lacking from stf conventions which might have to do with the difference between the two kinds of story telling.

I'm reprinting the following passage because I want to remind everyone that writing history is a creative act too. It's not just a matter of finding out what happened and writing it down,

good history has to tell an engaging and interesting story, as well as get the facts right. To me, this is more challenging than just making up a story, which may be why I prefer reading and writing history to stf these days.

It also occurred to me recently that the reason I once read a lot of stf and now read a lot of history is because good stf and good history have one feature in common - the sense of wonder. My favourite read of last year was Stuart Macintyre's *Australia's Boldest Experiment, War and reconstruction in the 1940s*. It is an epic story of how a handful of men (almost exclusively men) turned the run down Australia of the depression era into the modern and progressive nation we live in today. It is written with all the literary devices available to the historian within the limits of 'getting it right', touches of light and shade, success and defeat, tension and release and it would make a great epic novel, apart from the fact that it is the story of what actually happened. The trouble is that we take for granted the world in which we live without seeing the wonder in it, not realizing that it is exceptional because of the things that have taken place in our collective pasts to make our world what it now is.

My favorite read so far this year is Tom Griffiths' *The Art of Time Travel, Historians and Their Craft* (though a Greg Benford novel I've been loaned is rocketing up the charts). This book comprises fourteen essays about Australian historians and writers of key Australian histories, telling us about their life experiences that made them the historians they were and are, about their techniques and styles and the contributions they've made to Australian history and how Australians understand themselves.

Number six in this catalogue is Greg Denning, one of the

many historians in this book I've never met (although he taught at ANU where I did my undergraduate work, so I'd like to think that some of his influence has rubbed off). He reads as though he was an intense and inspiring teacher, someone I would have liked to meet and perhaps study under. (On the other hand, perhaps a bit too intense for me.)

Towards the end of his essay on Denning, Griffiths writes about what Denning taught his students about writing and muses, himself, on the craft of writing history. You might not agree with them, but they cheered me up immensely.

Greg embraced the world of fiction with generosity and excitement, but he was also keenly aware that our literary culture privileges the made-up story over the true one. And it exalts the art of invention over the art of re-presentation. ... In recent years in Australia we witnessed a vigorous debate about the different and overlapping roles of history and fiction in our literature and public culture, as I explore in Chapter 12 with reference to Inga Clendinnen's response to Kate Grenville's comments about her novel *The Secret River* (2005).

It is sometimes part of the theater of the fiction writer to present themselves as lone virtuosos. 'Research' is characterized as heroic, a matter of pride but not of faith. Writing is instinctive; creativity is unconscious; insights are personal. The exhilarating freedoms of fiction are contrasted with the dutiful obligations of non-fiction. Mystery, tension, poetry and art seem only to be available to the novelist. These are the very literary codes that Denning challenged and subverted when he advocated 'the creative imagination in the

presentation of knowledge'. Without making a battle out of it, he quietly subverted all these default contrasts between fiction and non-fiction. Research, he reminded us, is collegial and requires courage; imagination need not be fantasy; freedoms do exist in non-fiction; creativity can be collaborative and communal; true stories are entrancing. Not only did he urge his students and colleagues to feel that all the arts of fiction were available to them in writing true stories, but he also aimed to educate the public to a different understanding of the realm of imagination, to see the creativity in the telling of true stories. 'There is much fiction in your non-fiction, I tell [students],' he wrote. 'Actually, I don't let my students call themselves "non-fiction" writers. They shouldn't write "non" anything... Maybe I don't have a word to replace "non-fiction". But I tell them to see themselves as writers of true stories. Creative writers, Yes, they are creative writers.' 'Be mysterious,' he would urge, echoing Paul Gauguin's advice on translating silences. Be 'experimental', 'entertaining', 'compassionate', performative', 'reforming', 'reflective', and - Greg would always say it - 'take risks'.

Like Greg, I am enthralled by the craft of discipline and imagination that is history. Sometimes the 'non' in 'non-fiction' can be seen as a denial or a suppression. To call our writing 'non-fiction' seems to deny its creative, imaginative dimensions; it's not something, and the something it's not is that wonderful and captivating world of fiction. I am reminded of the simple opposition expressed in a federal department of education question to Australian academics about their publications: 'Is it

a piece of research or a creative work?' I bridle at that choice. Historians, like novelists, are producing literary texts that have their own internal demands of consistency, plausibility and integrity, their own organic rationale derived from decisions about where to begin and end, about which characters to foreground, about what relationships to map. In non-fiction writing, this internal, textual, literary dynamic wrestles also with hard external reality. But historians also have some greater freedoms available to them. Some novelists will tell you that writers of non-fiction have a broader canvas to paint on than they do, because truth really is stranger than fiction. Historians can get away with narrating a much wider range of human action because they can show that, astonishingly, it actually happened, whereas credibility can be a narrower and stricter measure when applied to fiction. In real life, people don't behave predictably or consistently, events come from left field, and astonishing coincidences do occur, but an artist of invention might not be able to get away with it. But even when telling true stories, historians have to strive to make them believable.

A historian's finest insights are intuitive as well as rational, holistic as well as particular - and therefore always invitations to debate. As they write, they incite; they expect disagreement and they try to furnish their readers with the grounds for offering it. Footnotes are not defensive displays of pedantry; they are honest expressions of vulnerability, generous signposts to anyone who wants to retrace the path and test the insights, acknowledgments of the collective



enterprise that is history. Historians feed off the power of the past, exploiting its potency just as historical novelists do, but historians also constantly discuss the ethics of doing that. To whom are we responsible - to the people in our stories, to our sources, to our informants, to our readers and audiences, to the integrity of the past itself? How do we pay our respects, allow for dissent, accommodate complexity, distinguish between our voice and those of our characters? The professional paraphernalia of history has grown out of these ethical questions.

As Inga Clendinnen observes, historians have a moral contract with the past in a way that many novelists don't. I would add that historians also have a moral contract with each other. How could they even pretend to be brilliant loners when their ethic and their creativity are so collegial? This is another gift of Greg's - to help us be generous in our scholarship, and in our scholarly lives. Every work of history is built upon the labor and insights of others, and if it is good it seeks to display those debts and is no less creative or original for that. Greg's metaphor for such respectful engagement was 'conversation': intimate, civilized, everyday, life-enhancing. History is 'the discipline without a discipline', the one social science that aspires to represent the totality of human experience. 'Discourse is unending,' Greg reminded us. 'Nothing is discovered finally. The moments of understanding stand like sentences in a conversation.' Reflective history makes us participants in the conversation, makes us good conversationists. Denning acknowledged elaborately and

discursively his mentors, his teachers, his colleagues, his students. He wove us gratefully into the tapestry of his knowledge.

Tom Griffiths, *The Art of Time Travel*, pp.129-132

## **Encountering Science Fiction with George Turner**

We all start somewhere on our journey into and through science fiction. Stories of this encounter are often similar, depending on the age in which that encounter took place. Usually there is a period in which we discover an interest in stories that are about other than real life, a period of preparation, and then the moment when we realize for the first time that there is this fantastic literature, it has a name and it has a whole world of fascination waiting for us to explore. From that point of addiction we range over the field, finding what we like and what does not attract us, finding favorites and, if we are perceptive enough, beginning to understand the way in which this form of fiction works on us, and why.

One of the best commentators and critics to find voice in Australian fandom was George Turner. He was also one of Australia's earliest fans and known to the Sydney Futurians even though George does not appear to have concerned himself with them. It was not until the launch of *Australian SF Review* and the contacts made by John Bangsund that George found himself introduced to fandom and began making his own valuable contribution to Australia's critical commentary on sf. (It is sad to note that George died twenty years and a few days ago. He is still sadly missed by those who came to know him as a person, though perhaps those who came under his critical gaze are still much

relieved.)

In this article, from John Bangsund's *The New Millennial Harbinger* 5, of December 1968, George looks back upon five decades spent reading and thinking about sf.

### **ADDICT'S PROGRESS**

#### **Four Decades of Science Fiction**

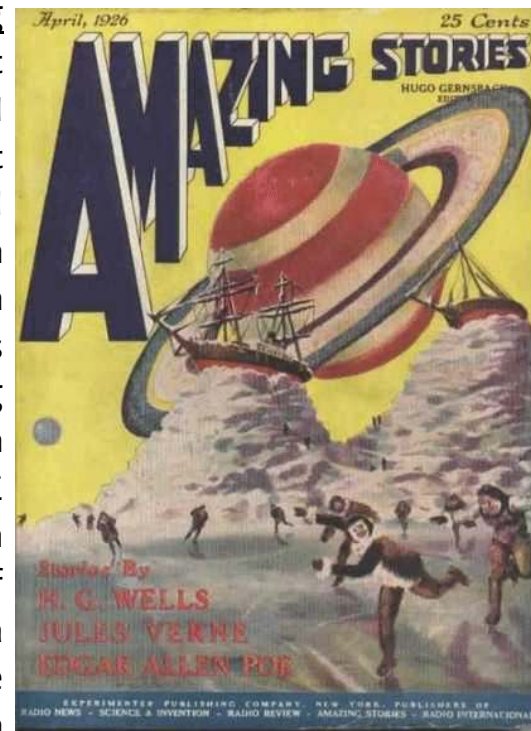
I wish I had Sam Moskowitz's files. No, I'm damned if I do. Reminiscence should be just that, with all the errors and false memories thrown in. I won't consult even my own book case for this forage into the past, and anyone who wishes may play Spot The Mistakes.

Science fiction probably began, for me, on my father's knee when he read me a chapter of THE MAGIC PUDDING every night before bed. (That makes it nearer five decades than four, so there's the first mistake.) That book marks the beginning of the sense of wonder, together with ALICE IN WONDERLAND about the same time. I can still quote from both, and do so at the drop of an opportunity. Not sf, but pointers.

Hiatus. Memory stops again at about the age of nine, at an Australian boy's paper, Pals, long since defunct. It featured a number of stories by (I think) Jim Russell, which were definite sf, in that they were based on technological ideas. (Future surveyors of Australian sf, please note.) One of his stories involved a perpetual motion machine which eliminated friction by mounting the moving parts in a magnetic field, and my irritated mind couldn't see why it wouldn't work. He also did a little job called 'The War of the Frothients' (derived from 'from the interior') concerning an invasion by semi-human monsters

from caves under the earth. These were joys to the happy and hungry mind, and be it known that many a boy's paper of the period published sf. The Nelson Lee, another defunct, ran a serial about adventure under the earth, the name of which I have forgotten, but it featured a villain in the true Rider Haggard tradition, called 'He-whose-name-must-not-be-spoken'. The spine crawled deliciously, and that early hint of the dreadful unknown has never been forgotten. One was being primed for Merritt and Mundy and Williamson.

But life really began in 1927, outside the old tin shed in Elizabeth Street where the McGill kiosk stood, and on a day there hung on the wire racks a gaudy, irresistibly attractive treasure trove - Amazing Stories no 1. Where I got the one-and-ninepence I don't know - where I got it in succeeding months I hesitate to think - but in that joyous glance an addiction was born. It was a serious addiction, leading to crime, culmination in an attempt to steal THE CHESSMEN OF MARS from a book shop, detected of course and punished with a swift kick in the arse. There was adventure and peril in



being ten years old and short of pocket money.

In those days Gernsback was living on reprints while a stable of new writers developed by ineffably painful degrees. Everybody knows the Wells and Verne novels, but who now remembers TREASURES OF TANTALUS, STATION X (first of the invaded-mind tales), THE RUNAWAY SKYSCRAPER (Leinster's first), A MODERN ATLANTIS, BEYOND THE POLE or THE REVOLT OF THE PEDESTRIANS? These were trailblazers, for all their crudity, and dullness (they didn't seem dull then), and their ideas are still in current use.

Long deep sigh... Whatever happened to Morrison Colladay, Aladra Septama, Miles J Brewer, Raymond Gallum, Ed Earl Repp, Clare Winger Harris, Leslie F Stone and a dozen more? Not that it matter much; they were all pretty bad, in retrospect, but they carried the torch when it was still a near-guttering spark, and were giants in their day. But something remains of this baroque period - the indestructible Leinster is still with us, glibly adapting himself to changing requirements, and Schuyler Miller pontificates with the doubtful authority of age and venerability.

There were adventures in scavenging then as now. On hundred old copies of Gernsback's Science and Invention, triumphantly completing one's collection of Cummings's TARRAND THE CONQUEROR, published in seventeen monthly parts, and Merritt's METAL EMPEROR, doled out in similar miserly instalments, or found an ancient copy of the English Strand serializing Rousseau's MESSIAH OF THE CYLINDER (one instalment only, dammit). In Hall's Book Store one found

secondhand copies of most Burroughs, with an exchange system whereby a fresh one could be had for sixpence (or was it fourpence?), and on the shelves of the Prahran Public Library were to be found scads of Rider Haggard, who belongs in the tradition, if not strictly in the genre, and an occasional bonus like London's BEFORE ADAM; plus, of course, a vast mine of Jules Verne - OFF ON A COMET, DOCTOR OX'S EXPERIMENT and CASTLE IN THE BALKANS spring to mind. Here one found also some relics of an older past - FRANKENSTEIN, naturally, but also Lytton's COMING RACE and Ainsworth's ELIXIR OF LIFE, and much more gone down in the dregs of recollection. There was a surprising amount of sf around if one was prepared to look for it. And we were prepared! It was a gnawing hunger.

They were great days, but there is no point in trying to recapture them now. Re-reading is a destructive process; memory should be kept pristine. Only Wells stands the test of time, and he is the one I found dull and prosy then. You have to grow up to appreciate Wells.

Surfeit brought its inevitable revenge. At age eleven I was begin to sicken of the sweets of sf. And then came THE SKYLARK OF SPACE and the appetite revived with a vengeance.

We can laugh at Smith, accuse him of snow-jobbing, deride his characterization and inflated style, and level a dozen complaints against him, all justified, but he remains a landmark in sf and one of the most important things that ever happened to it. It seems to me that the real nature of his contribution has not been properly understood. Schuyler Miller and others remind us that he opened up the boundaries of sf to include the

whole universe (which he didn't - several others before him in traveling the stars) and ignore the innovation which is his real monument. He revolutionized the technique of sf story telling. He threw away the laborious build-up background which turned so many tales into essays, belted his plot along at breathless speed which even Burroughs could not match, and made the first horrible but effective attempts to use naturalistic dialogue; he pounded the reader with idea after idea, not discussed and developed but poured out from a bottomless well of invention, so that one was scarcely absorbed before another was beating at the mind.

The writers were swift to catch on, and the era of the no-holds-barred was upon us. His most obvious descendants, in the direct line, are Van Vogt and Bester, who have stretched the technique to what must surely be its limit. He was a shot in the arm when sf sorely needed it. He was unique, and remained so despite imitators; and we don't want another one because he was incredibly bad, but sf's debt to him is immense. Only Campbell has achieved so much and influenced the genre to such an extent.

And Campbell appeared approximately two years after Smith. Unable to use the story telling technique, for he had little true fictional ability, he took over the science-and-ideas angle and established the basis of a formidable reputation.

And while we reminisce, let us remember the 'Discussions' column in Amazing, wherein Smith and Campbell fought bitterly over a matter of invisibility, as propounded in Campbell's 'Solarite', and an English lass, Miss Olive Rogg, took

Smith to task over his execrable freewheeling dialogue. She objected to such terms as 'cuddleup', whereat the Doctor retorted that he had called his wife 'cuddleup' for years and found it a perfectly good word. And another gentleman, whose name escapes me, so much resented criticism of his novelette called 'The Superman' that he announced his intention never to write sf again. He didn't, either.

The 'Discussions' column was livelier in those days. Or perhaps it only seemed so. I contributed my two-penn'orth (at age about fourteen) because Campbell was the acknowledged rival of my divine Smith and I therefore hated him with the venom only a teenager can generate. I wrote letters, which were published (God help me), destroying Campbell for ever. Nobody seemed to notice.

But - at the recent doings at Boronia I met a bloke who actually remembered the letters and my name attached to them. Such memory is unfair. I felt about three feet tall for the rest of the afternoon.

The only other memorable appearance of the period was the eruption of John Taine into pulp fiction. (You know he was mathematician Eric Temple Bell and not unimportant in his sphere; his MEN OF MATHEMATICS, published by Penguin, is worth reading for information and a simple introduction to many of the difficulties of mathematics.) Taine has been, in my opinion, seriously underestimated and unappreciated. In a day of slapdash writing and careless melodramatics, when nothing less than the approaching destruction of humanity could inspire a story, he stuck sanely to science and thoughtful construction.

His writing was literate if uninspired, but his novels were true novels rather than great dollops of feverish activity, and signs of a present return to the method are very heartening. Also he took the trouble to be accurate in what he wrote. For instance, his adventure into cyclic history (THE TIME STREAM) showed a much deeper understanding of the battered theory than Asimov's later Foundation nonsense, and his musings over genetic interference (SEEDS OF LIFE) have profounder implications than more technically oriented writers have achieved since. He is still readable, despite archaisms of style and an unfortunate preoccupation with the evils of communism and the yellow menace. The house of Dover have kept him alive with re-publication, and a good thing it is.

There followed another period of surfeit and dullness, wherein this reader almost ceased to buy sf, being fed to the teeth with repetition.

Then came the renaissance, and there had been nothing like it since its sheer excitement of novelty and rediscovery. In a couple of years just before the war, a great blister of talent burst the skin. Heinlein, Van Vogt, Asimov, Sturgeon and de Camp surged to the front, each one established almost from his first word, and the blood-and-thunder Kuttner married C L Moore and with her became the fabulous Lewis Padgett.

Legend seems to credit Campbell, newly appointed editor of Astounding, with this outburst, but I have my doubts. Campbell certainly changed his style and approach at this time (the style was as bad as the approach was good) and produced a queer hotchpotch of original conceptions written in an

appalling yearning prose by Merritt out of Bad Poetry, culmination in the excellent WHO GOES THERE?, wherein he discarded the literary trappings (which he had never understood) and wrote one of the all-time best thrillers. He did not produce much in the way of fresh ideas, but he did offer some fresh approaches to these ideas, which was necessary and for which we must remember him. Nevertheless, the movement was in operation before he took up the running. Previous Astounding editors had set it going. Harry Bates had given ALAS ALL THINKING and FAREWELL TO THE MASTER (later altered, rewritten, mashed and brutalized into a film - THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL); H L Gold had written some provocative tales. The new wave was already in motion when Campbell took over. But, under his riding, it certainly broke with a tremendous splash.

What has happened to these bright, young men? Kuttner, who as Padgett was far and away the best writer of them all, is dead, more's the pity. Sturgeon has been virtually silent for years. Van Vogt, after a long and peculiar absence, has advanced not one inch from his start-line. De Camp writes little sf now. So, alas, does Asimov - and he, of all of them, has done most with the least literary equipment; he has done what few others in the field have bothered about; he has learned how to construct a story and by sheer technical ingenuity turned a pedestrian style into a source of constant interest. (Construction is almost non-existent among American sf writers; they simply write until they run out, lacking all sense of climax and build-up. Maybe that's where the much lamented



sense of wonder has gone - into a limbo of mere competence.) As for Heinlein, who would have imagined that such a strong talent could degenerate into petulant tub-thumping?

Meanwhile in England another revolution was building up without fanfare but with far reaching effect. LAST AND FIRST MEN appeared in 1930 and BRAVE NEW WORLD in 1932. Neither of these was conceived or written as genre sf, their authors having much more pressing themes in mind, but each has exerted great influence on the present. They showed, in the dog days of routine sf, that it could be done with flair and panache, and with close attention to style, literacy and urgency of theme; in fact they showed that the much maligned mainstream could belt hell out of the in-group writers. Moreover they were both best sellers. It is fashionable to decry the general public on such matters, on the ground that they are reading writers approved by the 'establishment' when they would be ashamed to be caught reading sf. Well, one wouldn't blame them being ashamed to be caught with the sf of the period, and any bookseller will tell you that the supposedly sheeplike public will not read what the 'establishment' tells it to, if it doesn't feel like it. Best sellers can be manufactured and are, but very few really bad books have ever achieved such status; many have been mediocre, but not outright incompetent. The sf of the thirties was incompetent; only the uncritical could put up with it. And that means you and me. SF in the modern style began about 1936, but be it remembered that the English had done it first. Ignore Huxley and Stapledon if you will, but they had shown the field a clean pair of heels.

As if encouraged, the English began a serious attack at about this time (the early thirties). John Beynon Harris, later John Wyndham and Lucas Parkes &c), appeared regularly. J M Walsh (an Australian, by the way, though long expatriate) did VANDALS OF THE VOID and VANGUARD TO NEPTUNE. S Fowler Wright published THE WORLD BELOW (still one of the best of its kind) and THE ADVENTURE OF WYNDHAM SMITH. John Russell Fearn was also writing, but it might be kinder to forget that.

The important thing about these writers was not originality, though they had some of that, but their insistence on the English tradition of good writing. They never bowed to the pulp style. They were not geniuses, destined for literary halls of fame, but they were good craftsmen who adhered to the necessities of structure and language. English magazines were still in the future, but the groundwork of a smoother, more stylish sf was laid, and the scaffold is still rising with Aldiss and Clarke. James White and J T McIntosh are lesser men, but share the same tradition, which goes back unbroken to H G Wells, and owes surprising little to America.

Reminiscence may as well end with the war. So little has happened since. Kornbluth and Pohl made their exciting splash; then Kornbluth died and Pohl has begun to show a hairy heel. Frank Herbert gave us one fine novel, DRAGON IN THE SEA, and has gone on to the intellectual delusion in one direction and the unproductive sandhills of DUNE in another. Hal Clement continues to please with the hard science novel, but is not writer enough to found a school. Cordwainer Smith

seemed a discovery, but there was an essential hollowness to his cosmos, and his allusive prose and private jokes helped to make his intention obscure and his achievement tenuous. Only Walter Miller, Philip Dick and James Blish show genuine creative talent, with an occasional flash from Wilson Tucker on the American side; the English seem to be marking time, maintaining a high level of competence (higher than the US in general) but not advancing.

Surveying the field as it exists gives one the feeling that something is in store. There is turmoil and experiment, mostly muddled and undisciplined (and only the writer knows how necessary a thing is discipline) but pregnant with the desire to escape the chains. The writers know sf is in the doldrums, despite its unprecedented popularity, and many are struggling manfully for new expression. Zelazney has tried and been caught up in the beastly necessity to maintain a rate of production; Ballard has tried and been trapped in the coils of his own legend; Farmer has tried and been forced into foolishness in the search for stories to hang his ideas on.

A quick look at the magazines offers little hope. In Analog all bureaucrats, businessmen and professors are fools, only muscular engineers are human. Fantasy & Science Fiction continues to offer floridly evanescent tales about precious little, though the occasional original gem creeps in, unnoticed in the ocean of pleasant ladies magazine style. Pohl, in If and its sisters, seem determined to bring back the flat, gory standards of the thirties. Amazing lives by eating itself, and I hope the diet chokes it. Yet in each of these magazines an honest voice

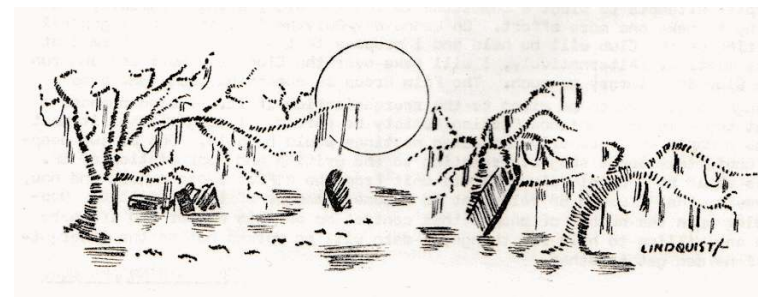
sometimes speaks, and one wonders how the editor allowed it. Perhaps suitable sf is so hard to get that even good work must be published now and then to fill up space.

Yet there is enough lucid, thoughtful work appearing to keep faith alive. The forcing bed which cultures such flowers as MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, THEY SHALL HAVE STARS and CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ must have good nurture in it. Note that these did not appear in their final, genuinely creative form in magazines. Perhaps the future lies with the hardback publishers. One would like to think so, because that is where the competition really gets tough.

There's plenty of movement in sf. Something is in store when the writhing stops. The hope is sufficient to sustain the addiction

George Turner

*The New Millennial Harbinger* 5, John Bangsund, APA-A mailing 2, December 1968.



Daryl Lindquist, *The Somerset Gazette* 2, May 1970

## 1968 - Paul Stevens turns on the censors

It's time for little bit of levity, and time to read for the first time in *iOTA*, the words of Paul Stevens. If there was ever a fan in Australia who knew how to make people laugh it was Paul, who had an endless sense of the ridiculous. His primary sense of inspiration came from the Marx Brothers school but it usually disappeared off into Paul's own particular brand of the surreal. Skits like this became part of the entertainment in the **Paul Steven Show** which became a highlight at a number of Australian conventions in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In the case of this piece, however, the topic is not at all funny. Even as late as the 1960s in Australia there were a bunch of people, called 'Wowsers' by their detractors, who thought that they knew better than the rest of us what was good for us. From the late 1930s some stf had been banned in Australia and in the 1950s, for example, it was difficult to get copies of *Weird Tales* into the country, books were routinely banned because of their subject matter and scenes were routinely hacked out of movies to protect the delicate sensibilities of Australians. (I recall reading somewhere recently that some scenes or parts of scenes were also cut out of early *Star Trek* episodes to protect us from seeing things the censor didn't want us to see.) Paul and several other members of the Melbourne SF Club began protesting publicly about this restriction. Here, in Paul's own fanzine, *Little SUPO Delux* 5 of October 1968, he turns his sense of humor on the censor

### SNIP GO THE SHEARS BOYS, SNIP, SNIP, SNIP!

SCENE: Office of the Chief Censor. Enter depraved looking character with four copies of the kinky life

of the swinging Marquis in his hip pocket, a copy of Playboy open at the center section and a copy of the Melbourne Truth. He is a film distributor. He walks across to confront the waxy visaged corpse sitting behind a desk. This is the Chief Censor. The censor is dressed in unrelieved black with a stovepipe hat that is draped in black crepe paper.

Distributor: Hi ya, baby. Now what's this I hear about youse banning our importation of THE RAVISHMENT AND SACRIFICE OF THIRTEEN VIRGINS FROM OUTER SPACE? Don't you know it's an art picture?

Censor It's filth! That's what it is, filthfilthfilthfilthfilthfilth.

Distributor: Sure it is but it will sell like crazy, baby.

Censor No! I can't let it through uncut, why in that scene where the thirteenth virgin is ravished by the purple visaged Martian crab our Miss Crudshaw went berserk and attacked our projectionist.

Distributor A real swinger baby.

Censor Swinger? She's 87 and a past president of the Unmarried Wayward Mothers of Australia League. We bury her tomorrow. No, that scene must go.

Distributor Oh, alright but only if you leave in that scene where the Empire State building is torn down by the brother of King Kong.

Censor Tell me, why don't you make some decent films?

Distributor Oh we tried that. Some character named Stunley Housebrick made a film called '2001 Space Eulogies' but it was a flop, only the sf fans attended. We made \$2.10 out of it. It cost \$222,000,000 to make.

Censor What about PLANET OF THE RAPES? That made money didn't it?

Distributor Some, a meager \$25 million profit in all. Not good enough, why CLIMB EVERY SOUND OF MUSIC made more money in two days.

Censor Oh Ghu! Don't make any more films like that again ... you'll do me out of a job.

Distributor We've got a sequel in the works. It's called MODERN MILLIE MEETS HALF A SIXPENCE SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW. It stars Dully Andrews as the sixpence, Richard Brupon as the rainbow and John Lennon as Jesus.

Censor Sounds good. Any scenes to censor?

Distributor Not a one. Sorry about that!

Censor Oh well, easy come, easy go. Want to buy some filthy postcards from Port Said?

Paul Stevens

*Little SUPO Delux 5, ANZAPA 1, October 1968.*

## **1970 - Fanzine Review**

*TERRAN TIMES* 3, December 1970, edited by Shayne McCormack and Nomad for DUSK. Dues in the club are \$1.25 a year. For details contact the club president at Starbase 1, Shayne

McCormack, 49 Orchard Road, Bass Hill, NSW 2197 or Starbase 2, Nomad, 20 Tryon Avenue, Woolstoncraft, NSW 2065.

The colophon tells us that 'TERRAN TIMES deals with STAR TREK, Leonard Nimoy, science fiction, science fact, hobbits and other things of interest to the members of DUSK for whom it was instituted'. It may well be one of the first Star Trek fanzines published in Australia but this issue also shows an influence of broader fandom, partly in the content but mainly in the production which makes it look very much like a fanzine of its time with electro-stencils provided by Noel Kerr and production help from Gary Mason.

*Terran Times* is a very entertaining fanzine. It opens with a lot of fun that put a big smile on my face, and continued through the issue to the very end. Here's the first paragraph of the issue, written by Shayne:

Well, here it is, almost Chrisy time, so I thought, why should I let them suffer through another month without the cheerful influence, that spark of gaiety amidst the drudgery of their lives. I couldn't, of course, go against the kinder instincts of my generous heart {Nomad - heart .. what heart?} so here it is for your pleasure - TERRAN TIMES THREE. Think of it as an early Christmas present.

Nomad continues this jolly introduction with her editorial, one of the more fannish pieces of writing from around this time. I will indulge myself by reprinting the opening passage in full:

'TERRAN TIMES is growing too big!' cries Shayne in despair, 'We can't possibly afford thirty-five pages! And how do you suppose we'll pay for all those electro-stencils?'

'Don't worry', I reply, 'True artists don't count the costs,

only the results – we'll make ends meet somehow', I add, 'Just wait and see.'

We're still waiting.

'It's only a fanzine after all', I remind a distraught Shayne. 'And if you can show me a fanzine that makes a profit, I will hunt down and spifflocate the capitalist editor!' I announce, bravely waving my plastic imitation spifflocator.

'But we'll still starve,' she sobs, 'and one can't eat electro-stencils!'

'Things aren't so bad,' I say comfortingly, passing her the bottle of corflu, 'Here, have a whiff, it'll turn you on and end all worries.'

But, alas, the corflu bottle is empty at last. Not even the brush holds the faintest scent of the captivating, entrancing liquid!

'Oh, no!' wails Shayne, 'This is the last straw! We're ruined!'

And I have to agree as I reach for the salt shaker and an unappetising looking electro-stencil .....

What can go wrong after such an energetic and entertaining introduction? Not much really. It is a Star Trek fanzine that doesn't take itself too seriously and includes a lot of material that is of wider interest. There were three pieces of Trek fiction; a long one which I skimmed, a shorter one that I enjoyed for the way it captures the characteristics of the Star Trek crew and the third which cleverly incorporated the titles of Star Trek episodes into the story. There is a bit of poetry which isn't too bad and has the benefit of being short.





There are also a number of short articles - some of them a little too short - on topics such as UFOs, Mr Spock, Middle Earth, the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation and Moog synthesizers. Another article uses some lyrics from Simon and Garfunkel songs to demonstrate that Paul Simon was the greatest poet of his time. (This was wrong, or course, it was John Lennon.) Add in a letter column and some not-so-bad fan art and you end up with a nice little, if 42 pages can be considered little, fanzines. Recommended, if you can find it.

I came cross this issue among John Foyster's papers at Monash University. I wouldn't mind having my own copy so I've warmed up the time machine. Dial up December 1970... No, let's be more specific than that. Gary Mason made Sydney SF Foundation monthly meetings sound like fun, and perhaps Shayne will be there with freshly collated copies of this issue to hand out, so I can get one then. Do you think she will find me strange if I ask her to autograph it?

## **The Long and Winding Road to Aussiecon**

In the first of these segments (*iOTA* 04) we talked about concerns that Australian fans had in 1970 about recent changes to the World SF Convention site bidding rules which would make an Australian bid difficult, if not impossible, for the year 1975. Well, let's jog along to the World SF Convention which was held in Europe for the first time (since we can't call Britain part of Europe any more) at Heidelberg in what was then West Germany. Hence the name 'HeiCon '70'.

Australians had prepared a proposed change to the bidding rules that would turn them back to the way we wanted them,

making a bid for the WorldCon in 1975 possible. Let's join the other 150 fans at the convention business session which was, thankfully, summarized in *Luna Monthly* 17 of October 1970 (and which I'm summarizing even further).

The first motion proposed was a detailed explanation of the division of the North American continent into three zones for purposed of arranging WorldCon bidding. This is so complex as to make your eyes bleed, and it was passed on to the following convention for consideration, so let's pass over it too.

The next motion was torn up by the convention's parliamentarian, following a precedent set at a previous WorldCon. It is likely that the philosophy of this motion would have been too divisive for fandom, remembering that the Vietnam War was still raging in 1970. It read:

Resolved, that Heicon'70, concerned about the world of the future, concluded that the institution of war as an instrument of national policy is incompatible with the development of a humanistic society and may lead to the destruction of all societies.

The third motion concerned the establishment of a European convention. The meeting felt this was not a matter for decision by a World SF Convention but there was strong support for the proposal and immediately following this business session an informal gathering of European fans began formulating plans for the first European convention to be held in Trieste in conjunction with the film festival.

Bruce Pelz, an American BNF, then presented a motion:

That the World Science Fiction Convention rotation plan return to a zone system, ie, the Western, Mid-West and Eastern

zones of North America, beginning in 1973 with the Mid-West zone. The boundaries of these zones shall be as previously defined. Any site outside of North America may bid for a World Science Fiction Convention in any year. All bids must be placed two years in advance.

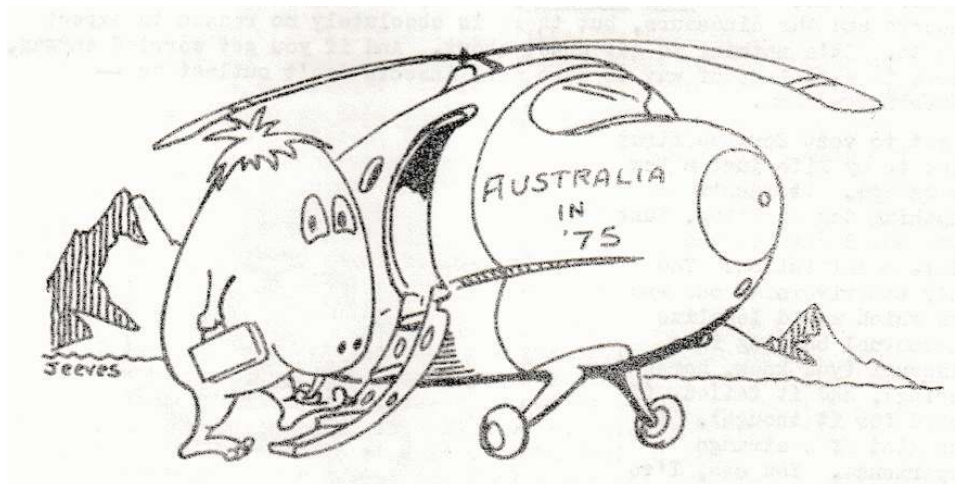
An amendment to this motion was proposed which would have made the rotation system four yearly, with an overseas country holding the WorldCon every fourth year. In the shorter term this might have had an effect on Australia's planned bid, in the longer term it would have meant that it was really only a 'world' convention every fourth year. In any event, the amendment was unanimously defeated and the Pelz motion was adopted unanimously.

This resolved the problems that Australian fans had with the bidding system so, when Robin Johnson's motion on behalf of Australian fandom came next, he withdrew it without it being read. He then presented another motion to delete a section of the constitution relating to Hugos as English language only awards, which passed by an overwhelming majority.

Following this there were two more motions related to bidding arrangements inside North America and adding 'no award' to all Hugo categories, and the meeting was over inside the hour. So far as Australian fans were concerned, the way was now open for them to bid to hold a World SF Convention in 1975 with a reasonable chance of success.

After this Australian fans embarked on the ambitious and energetic task of promoting their bid. It did not take long for overseas fans to take up the idea of 'Australia in '75' as well and many contributed to it's promotion. One of them was British fan

artist Terry Jeeves, well known in fandom around the world, who made drawings supporting the bid.



Terry Jeeves, *Rataplan 7*, undated

## Progress Report

The past month has been one of trawling, a lot of it and pretty tedious it gets too, I can assure you. Occasionally I come across something that gets me excited - like the George Turner article reprinted in this issue - but trawling is basically a matter of building up a picture of the historical past the same way that an artist builds up a mosaic, finding little pieces of glittering information and trying to find where they fit into the big picture. The difference between what I knew when I found the first pieces for this project and what I think I know, now that I've accumulated over a thousand, is the difference between being faced with a big blank space and a huge pile of potential material and beginning to see the big picture, or at least parts of it in only fuzzy detail..



The new Special Collections Reading Room at Monash University. It is fabulous with helpful and friendly staff. It makes sitting in there and reading humble fanzines seem ... well ... important.

I did take a day to go to the Rare Books Reading Room at Monash University and went through some more boxes of John Foyster's papers, which is another form of trawling. I open a box, tip its contents onto the table and then begin putting each piece of paper or fanzine back into the box, stopping to examine and copy the ones that are relevant to this project. As you may know, a fire completely destroyed John and Elizabeth home towards the end of 1966, so there is little from before that period. There's also a great deal of material from after 1975 that is interesting, but if I stop to



What work looks like in the reading room. From the left; a computer for record keeping and scanning, then the scanner, a space in which to work and behind it notebooks and other records, next the pile of fannish Foyster material to be delved into and finally the box from which it came and to which it will be returned

look at it I have less time to get on with the job.

The other thing I did was to put together the beginnings of an annotated chronology. I already have quite a detailed one on this computer but, frankly, it would not be very interesting if you read it raw. So I thought it might be interesting to give brief explanations about entries. This turned out to be useful because it showed me what I knew and what I didn't know and need to find out more about. So far it only goes up to 1966, simply





because I ran out of space for any more. I distributed copies of this first version of the annotated chronology at the recent convention and it will also be made available with this issue of *iOTA*. I should probably make myself a target of producing an expanded version later in the year, but it is quite an exercise and took more time than I would have imagined when I started on it.

### **To Be Done**

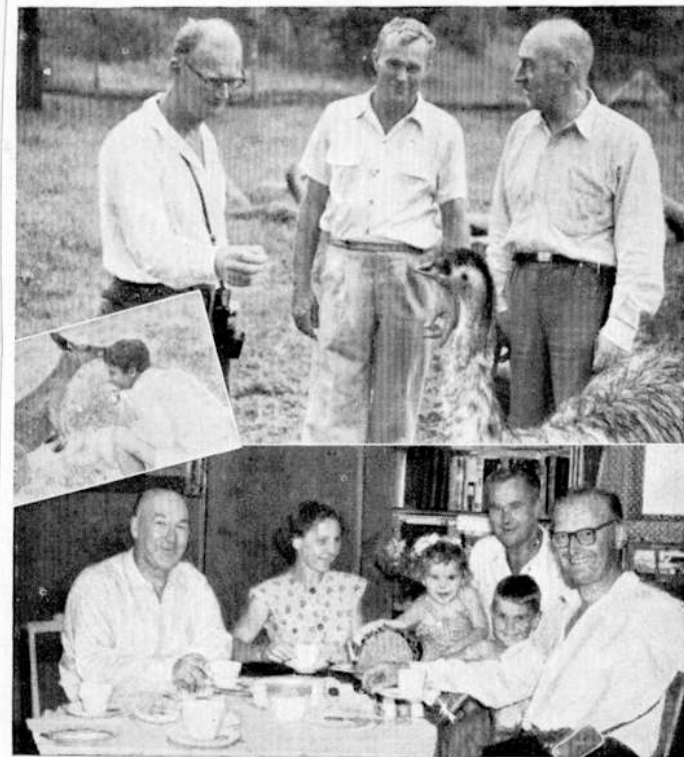
More of the same,

and probably another visit to Monash University to look at more Foyster papers. I love my job, apart from the tedious bits.

### **The Photo File**

Only one photo this time. And it's your fault! I'm sure you have piles of old photos that would be of interest to us lying about everywhere in your place, gathering dust and fading in the sunlight. Shame on you. Get them dusted off, organized and scanned and sent to me where we can all see them.

While you're doing that, here is a photo montage pasted into the 49<sup>th</sup> issue of *Etherline*. The photos were taken during Arthur C Clarke's visit to Queensland in March 1955.



Top: Arthur Clarke extends the hand of friendship to native Australian. With him are Charles Mustchin (centre) and Frank Bryning.

Below: Afternoon tea at Mustchin's. From left, Frank Bryning, Mrs. Mustchin, Margaret, Charles and Hunter Mustchin, Arthur Clarke.

Inset: Tender interlude, featuring Mike Wilson and friend.

### **Your Say**

Lee Harding begins:

Alas, my rightful place in the Fannish Hall of Fame didn't make it into the Gelatikon report in *iOTA* 6: The moment when I burst into the conference room while a fan panel was in

progress to announce: 'Hey guys, there's a gelati van parked outside!' The sudden and hasty exodus of the audience stunned the panelists, though they soon sauntered out to join the queue.

Also missing from the report was the Apollo 13 spacecraft, returning to Earth from a nearly disastrous there-and-back journey to the Moon - this was a constant topic of conversation throughout the Con: fortunately, as history records, they DID make it back. Ah, them were days to be alive, matey!

No worries Lee, your moment of fame has arrived at last. I may well have been on that fan panel, boring people within an inch of their lives and as relieved as everyone else to have something novel and lively to do when you announced the arrival of the gelati van. And as for your mention of Apollo 13, now you're starting to make me feel old.

Bruce Gillespie reminds us that a lot of the talking from GelatiCon has seen print:

John Bangsund used to have a tape of his Humphrey Tape talk. It might be unplayable now. Some idea of its quality can be obtained by reading it in the complete transcript of GelatiCon in *Boys Own Fanzine* 2, 1971. However, the run-off grooves of the long-playing records played during the performance could not be transcribed.

BOF 2 was then one of the largest Australian fanzines ever published, and includes a bracing speech by Dick Jenssen. It does not, as I remember, include the text of the Science Fiction Widows Panel, which included Diane Bangsund, Elizabeth Foyster and Carla Harding. An immensely amusing item.

Rob Gerrand adds a personal note:

I enjoyed the photo of "GelatiCon", I think I am seventh from the left, and Carey Handfield is on my left in the blue check shirt. It could be that Bruce Gillespie is behind me in the red jumper.

If I get my magnifying glass out Rob, and try to remember how good we all looked at the beginning of the 1970s, I think you might be right. Now we just need all the others in the photo to put up their hands and admit that they were at that convention too. It was quite a different world from the convention we were at just recently. I wonder which was the more enjoyable; the facilities were better more recently but there was no gelati van to create a unique occasion - I could have used one during the panel that I sat in on.

Roman Orszanski adds some interesting comments about old and new fandoms:

Your musing on modern fandom while looking at Ditmars for best Fan Publication in Any Medium struck a chord with me. Not all podcasts are sercon - we here in Adelaide manage a suitably fannish podcast; *KRAM-StuFf* at [doxa.podbean.com](http://doxa.podbean.com). We cover everything from books to TV, comics, radio plays and even immersive 3d! The length of each podcast is usually below 5 minutes.

Our podcast is named from the initials of the quartet who stated it: Kathryn, Roman, Adam and Mim, the last of whom hasn't appeared for several years. We get together about once a fortnight, record five or six episodes and then release them after editing. (Longtime fans might recall a small audiozine I produced as a cassette, called *The Steam-Driven Fluglehorn*. And

yes, duplicating multiple copies was an absolute pain. Posting audio mp3 files is much, much easier.)

I think fandom is still experimenting with the online medium, and the possibility of combining text, pictures and time-based media (audio, video, slides).

I won't disagree with you, Roman, about the need, the necessary drive even, for fans to experiment with and find the ways that suit them best to use the new media. More power to them, and you, for appropriating the new communications modes to the purposes of fandom. Keep innovating. I've thought about it for this project but, since the final outcome of it is going to be text (with images), I decided that the research work leading up to it should also be in the same medium.

The other thing is that I don't really enjoy podcasts because they are like listening into people's conversations or sitting in on talks or panel sessions at convention, with all the faults of those modes of communication. But I see that the *2016 Australian SF Snapshot* was the winner in the Best Fan Publication Ditmar category this year and that was my least favorite nomination because of its superficiality and because it had neither the personality of podcasts or the clarity of blogs. So, what do I know!

You are right in the split between old fandom and new fandom: SF is no longer a minority pursuit, and it dominates the media. Old fans might complain 'the classics' have been forgotten, but they live in a world of extraordinary riches SF wise. TV schedules are full of SF/Fantasy offerings; the cinemas are dominated by superhero comics SF/adventure films, many of high quality, and an amazing variety of excellent SF is being published by authors from a variety of backgrounds, not just

white western English-speaking males. (As was pointed out to me at Eurocon, the largest SF magazine in Europe is Polish! I suspect the Chinese magazines hold the world record for circulation.)

Rather than complain about the future in which we find ourselves, we should enjoy the feast and realize that even if only a small percentage of new fans evince an interest in fannish customs, it's still a huge number in absolute terms. But we might have to learn some things from the new fen, rather than insist the old ways are best.

I was struck by the following passages from Hansen's *THEN* (p124, Ansible Editions):

Relations between fandom's sercon and fannish wings were not always harmonious, but by 1954 external developments, in the form of SF's increasing popularity were beginning to affect them both. Writing in *HYPHEN*, Bill Temple observed that:

'Today SF batters you with more magazines and books than you could hope to read if you did nothing else all day. It's all over the cinema and TV screens, and drools from the radio. It infests advertisement headings, strip cartoons, kids' comics, toy-shops, literary weeklies, and pantomimes. It's even been mentioned at The Globe.

'We always wanted to spread SF, and now, God help us, we've done it. And somehow in the stampede the magic has been trampled underfoot.'

To which Willis replied:

'Fandom does seem to be passing through a period of



self-evaluation at the moment. For years its ostensible purpose was to promote science fiction; but now that SF has been promoted it snubs its old friends and scorns its humble beginnings. Fans are now 'unrepresentative', an esoteric clique... and the serious constructive fans have been left as high and dry as the rest of us -- in fact more so, because they have lost their entire reason for existence.'

Seems we're rediscovering the evolution of fandom, again. What was that saying? Those ignorant of their history are doomed to repeat it?

Perhaps, Roman, perhaps. Although it seems to me that while much of human life is cyclic it is also helictical. What goes around comes around but times winged arrow also shuffles us along a bit. After all, fandom is still here and, apparently, going strong even though it is a different kind of fandom to the one that Temple and Willis knew.

Your comments, and my visit to the convention, reminded me of something that I wanted to write somewhere in this issue. When I started out on this project, I had no intention to end up discussing current day fandom as much as I seem to have been doing. However, dipping my toes into the fandom of 2017 has turned out to be a very useful research experience. Had I embarked on this project in the mid 1990s, before the innovation of the www, wi fi and the mobile phone, and done a similar exploration of fandom then, I would have found it very similar to the fandom of my neofan days. But now those technologies and the use of them has changed fandom greatly in many ways so that I am now able to compare and contrast (to use the old examination phrase) 'old' and 'new' fandoms to much better effect for this

project.

This tempts me into another diversion which I will indulge in, for a moment. I was particularly struck during our panel discussion by Dick Jenssen's comment along the lines that he had come to enjoy the academic life so much that it precluded him from participating much in fandom. It was a 'lightbulb' moment for me which helped me understand my motivations in undertaking this project.

I never lived the full academic life that Dick did, but I learned to love its challenges and intellectual rewards enough to immerse myself in them to the extent that it overwhelmed any great interest in fannish achievement. Now that I have returned to the fold for a time I am enjoying the company and comradeship of friends old and new, but this would not be enough without the 'academic' challenge to explore, analyze, understand and tell a story about what we were and are all on about. Perhaps this drive to go deeper and seek greater challenges is what turns many fans into filthy pros. The only difference is that I became a different kind of pro. (Note to self: go back and reread Bloch's *The Eight Stages of Fandom*.)

And finally for this issue, Marc Ortlieb, who hastens to remind us of his gafiated status these days:

As you know, I don't do this sort of thing anymore and so I blame you for your fan history panel at Continuum. Being virtually retired I might have the occasional moment to read and respond to Iota. I started by downloading six issues from e-fanac and fascinating reading they were. I had seen some of the articles about early Sydney fandom previously, in various fanzines but they were good to revisit. (Just to re-establish my

credentials, I'm typing this while listening to far more PJ Harvey than is good for me.)

Don't blame me for the Continuum panel, I am but a humble tool in Bruce Gillespie's plans for world domination. And, you really don't need to concern yourself about doing 'this sort of thing' anymore, your reputation is safe with me. *iOTA* is, in fact, a piece of serious academic history research so you should look upon reading and commenting on it as a duty and responsibility rather than something you might find entertaining.

Your Gelaticon photos are a delight. Jenny Stephenson was very short due to spinal issues. There was one Melbourne convention where I was walking down the street with Jenny on one side and all six foot ten of Andrew Brown on the other side. I suspect that Cath has photos.

For a photo like that I'm willing to stretch the boundaries a little, so get Cath right on to the hunt.

We also heard from Ken Fletcher, Robin Johnson and Dick Jenssen

## **1968 - Graham Stone Makes John Bangsund's Blood Boil**

Remembering back to the report of the 1954 national convention in this issue and the report of the 1953 convention in our previous issue, it is clear that Graham Stone was making people's blood boil in the early 1950s. It seems that Stone was a rather obstinate fellow who got a notion into his head and stuck to it, no matter what. One of his notions was that there should be a national sf organization and he set up the Australian SF Association to fill that role. Unlike many fannish organizations

that were co-operative, the Association was Stone's baby and he kept it for himself to run as he thought best.

The problem with this, it seems to me, is that Stone had attitudes towards science fiction that he had formed around the time of his introduction to fandom in about 1940. This included a particularly defensive attitude towards the dignity that should be afforded stf and a strong leaning towards bibliography as a way of studying the field. This view of what his Association should do had been tolerable in the early 1950s when the environment in which stf was to be found had not changed much, but by the late 1960s there had been a significant evolution of stf itself and its place in the public consciousness. While Melbourne fandom by then, with its dual centers in the Melbourne SF Club and the fanzine *Australian SF Review*, lived with and understood these new realities, it appears that Stone did not. Furthermore, his move to Canberra in the early 1960s had probably isolated him from any developments taking place in Sydney so that his attitudes and his sullen resistance to change in the Association had put him well outside stf and fandom by the time John Bangsund wrote the following piece.

John Bangsund is a highly intelligent, refined and reserved person who knows what he speaks about and does it with a delightful tone and sense of humor. But not in this piece which he published in his *The New Millennial Harbinger* 3 in December 1968. This item is worth considering because it is about the gulf that had developed between two understandings of the role of fandom in the promotion of stf and the antagonism that had developed between what was then 'old' fandom in Sydney and the then 'new' fandom in Melbourne.

## **SOME NOTES ON THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION**

The Australian Science Fiction Association is a man named Graham Stone, who lives in Canberra and whom I have never met, though we have corresponded. He is a librarian. He has been for many years for many people the voice of Australian science fiction.

Graham Stone has a fair claim to being considered as Australia's no 1 fan. But he hates fandom, despises conventions, loathes fanzines, detests fannish jargon.

Because I haven't met him I can't say much about him and hope to be accurate. But I have read a lot that he has written, and I have talked to many people who have met him or had dealings with him; and on the basis of this information I have reached the conclusion that he is an odd (but not that odd) mixture of Napoleon, Judge Rutherford and Lord Timothy Dexter. On a small scale of course. He acts like a dictator, believes that everyone is against him or his interests, and has the knack (odious in his case) of totally ignoring any person he wishes to.

With the July issue of his fanzine, 'The Journal of the ASFA', he enclosed a questionnaire which among other (rather personal) things asked: 'What services should the Association give priority in undertaking. What assistance can you give in these?'

I would like to answer these questions first, and point out that I am a member of the Association.

1 The Association should expand and consolidate its

bibliographical activities, giving special attention to all original fiction and critical articles published by Australians anywhere, and to original fiction and critical articles by overseas writers published in Australia.

2 It should constitute itself on a proper and legal basis, appoint representatives in each state, and give its membership a larger part in the conduct of its affairs.

3 It should act as an information bureau, freely accessible to any person in Australia or overseas who requires information about any aspect of science fiction or the activities of science fiction enthusiasts.

4 It should act as a liaison body, keeping the clubs and individual enthusiasts in Australia in contact with each other and with their fellows overseas.

5 It should sponsor the conduction of annual conventions, and from time to time, more formal public meetings.

6 I am in a position to give the Association a great deal of assistance in all these areas, and I will, if some expansion or re-organization takes place along these lines.

It is no secret that at the Melbourne SF Conference last Easter I moved for the formation of an Australian SF Society, which would have as its functions something like what I have outlined in my proposals here. My motion was defeated by a narrow margin. A committee was subsequently elected (if that's the word) to draft a recommendation to the Australian SF Convention, to be held in 1969, on the shape of such a Society.

Now it would seem a pity to have two national

organizations in Australia, each no doubt ignoring or (worse) denigrating the other. But if the ASFA does not cater for the interest and enthusiasm which exists and is growing in the country, what alternative is there? For me there would be none; I would have to sever my connection with the Association (if I didn't, I'm sure Graham would) and devote all my work and interest to the body which took the larger view.

As a paid-up member of ASFA it concerns me (frustrates and infuriates me, would be a more accurate way of putting it) that I have no say whatsoever in the running of the organization. I don't get a vote on such matters as to who should conduct the Association and what it should do. I doubt the legality of the whole business. There has been a provisional Constitution: Graham sent me a cop when I asked for it - a photo-copy of a typed sheet. Do I and my fellow members have a say in the shape of the permanent Constitution?

As an organization preoccupied with bibliography in general and Australian bibliography in particular, why has the Association ignored utterly AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW? This question is not prompted by motives of anguish at non-recognition. I simply want to know how 400,000 words (roughly) of writing about sf, including some original fiction, published in this country can be utterly ignored by anyone professing to be a bibliographer of Australian science fiction.

In the July issue of the Journal there is a review of the Berkley paperback, BEST SF: 1967. (Also issued by Sphere as THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION no 1, and this is the edition available in Australia, though you wouldn't know from the

review.) Why does this review not mention the fact that the book includes a story by A Bertram Chandler - an honor for an Australian writer, no matter what you think of the story - a story first published in ASFR? If the omission was deliberate, it is almost scandalous; if the excuse is that the review was a reprint from an American fanzine, it may merely be editorial incompetence.

In the November issue of the Journal, Graham has a wrongheaded and insulting review of THE PACIFIC BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN SF. And he doesn't even bother to mention all the contributors to the volume. (Lee Harding and Damien Broderick, two Melbourne authors, are among the three omitted; the third is Kit Denton. John Baxter's editorial is mentioned, but not his story.) Of course, it's not a terribly important book - it's only the first collection of Australian sf.

In the review of the Pacific Book, Graham grudgingly admits that Stephen (Graham spells it 'Steven', but he's only a bibliographer) Cook's story has some merit. (In fact it's far and away the best story in the book.) The Journal has yet to report the death, eighteen months ago, of this highly talented young writer.

The Journal has also neglected to mention that Leigh Brackett and Edmond Hamilton visited Sydney last year; that new science fiction groups have been launched in Sydney, Brisbane and Monash University; or that there was such a thing as a Science Fiction Conference held in Melbourne last Easter.

Is this neglect deliberate? Is it a policy? Is the Association simply not interested in matters such as these? And if so, how

does the ASFA justify its title? Is it perhaps that the source of much of this information is ASFR, and that this magazine is a fanzine and therefore unworthy of mention?

I wish I knew the answers to these questions. In a supplement to the November issue, Graham says: "SF is frequently abused and sneered at in the daily press, in fact any reference is usually slighting. Don't let them get away with it - whenever you sight something of this kind write a brief letter to the editor complaining...'

Well, Graham Stone, you are abusing Australian science fiction yourself - and your function as a bibliographer - by refusing to recognize the fan press and anything that pertains to it. This is my letter of complaint to you, and I want an answer.

You don't own me anything, Graham, though I expect common decency. I couldn't care less about your persecution complex, though it occasionally makes me wonder how many other members have the same 1930-style idea about the acceptance of sf by the general public. But as a spokesman for Australian sf, and as a bibliographer, you own it to all the people who have written for AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW to explain why you have totally ignored their contributions to Australian sf.

Who are these people?

[John then gives the names of 92 contributors to ASFR, many of them leading names in Australian and international sf, only one of which, Norma Williams, would have been found among the ranks of the old FSS.]

And you owe it to your members to make a statement on the propositions I have set out on the first page of these notes.

John Bangsund (23/11/68)

*The New Millennial Harbinger* 3, ANZAPA 2, December 1968.

## **1972 - Adelaide's First Convention**

Your examination question for this issue is:

Read this article written for the January/February 1972 issue of the *A75 Bulletin*: by Bruce Gillespie and then reread the report of the 1954 convention reprinted earlier in this issue. Write a 1000 word essay comparing and contrasting the two conventions for the activities that took place at them and the ways in which the two authors have described them. Marks will be deducted for a lack of humor in your response.

### **ADVENTION**

#### **The first Adelaide Science Fiction Convention**

Many people who attended the first science fiction convention ever to be held in Adelaide (including me) voted it the best Australian convention for a long time. It was Australia's first 'live-in' convention, held in Melville House, a guest house/university camp site in the Belair National Park, about twelve miles from the center of Adelaide. Most people arrived on December 31, and the committee was faced with providing meals a day earlier than expected. Like every other impossible job, they managed to do it. Food was provided by the committee for \$2.00 per person per day, accommodation was 50¢ a night. The food was mainly prepared by Joy Window, Monica Addington and friends, who kept on keeping of for four

days.

The first night settled into a general discussion group, which ended when one of the Committee members arrived at about one o'clock in the morning. His girlfriend wanted very much to meet John Bangsund, about whom she had heard a great deal. John Bangsund had however been asleep for several hours, but some people decided to wake him anyway. A group of people went over to the dormitory, turned on the light, and debated whether or not to wake John. At last John put his head out of the blankets, said: 'I keep telling you fellows: no autographs after midnight,' and fell back asleep. The committee member's girlfriend got her interview. Next morning. John Bangsund maintained that the event didn't happen because he couldn't remember it happening.

People then tested their hard beds, finally got to sleep about 3am if they got to sleep at all, and most woke up at about 7 or 8 in the morning. Breakfast was on at 9, and people began to think about a convention by 2 o'clock in the afternoon on New Years Day. After registration and welcomes, Paul Anderson, Bill Wright, Robert Bowden, Alan Sandercock and Bruce Gillespie debated the merits of various magazine, anthology and book editors. Luckily Lee Harding arrived at this point, and improved the program greatly by debating at length with Robin Johnson, Blair Ramage and other members of the audience.

Jeff Harris led a very interesting panel on 'pseudo-science in science fiction' for which he had done a fair amount of research. A disintegrating 16mm print of Richard Fleischer's

FANTASTIC VOYAGE preceded tea. After Bruce Gillespie's Guest of Honour speech, the first part of a spirited auction followed, conducted by Monica Addington. FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH, a magnificently horrifying film based on QUATERMASS AND THE PT sent everyone to bed in a state of cold shivers.

This was the last pretension to a program during the convention. The sun came out the next day. Everyone moved outside for the second part of the auction, and Lee Harding mustered some spirited bidding for piles of musty pulps and comics. People got sunburnt, or went for rides on a motorbike which had mysteriously turned up. Alan Sandercock tried to insist that we stick to the program. He tried to arrange a panel outside, based on the topic: 'Robert Heinlein - The Man You Love to Hate'. I remember that there were other people on the panel besides Blair Ramage, Alan Sandercock, John Hewitt and myself. Unfortunately, Blair was the only person who wanted to talk about Heinlein. Harding, Bangsund and company didn't want a panel at all, and the rest of the panel members couldn't be bothered arguing with Blair. So Blair talked about the virtues of Heinlein, Harding and Bangsund made jokes at the expense of Heinlein and Blair, and the rest of the panel tried to pretend that they had nothing to do with. At one stage, John Hewitt was taking photos of the audience while the audience conducted the panel discussion.

Mild Lunacy followed the panel. John Bangsund began to play the piano. Merv Binns began to whistle and sing (he even smiled as well). The rest of us gaped in astonishment. Lee



Harding began to dance some Fred Astaire routines. The convention became a singalong and mainly stayed that way. Tea disintegrated into complete lunacy. There were loud cheers for the committee, finishing with a round of 'Happy Birthday, Dear Tolkien', and a final toast to Alphonso the Wise. 'Speech, speech!' said somebody. 'He can't make a speech', said John Bangsund, 'He's been dead for six hundred years'. Redoubled cheering. By this time the honorable committee member's girlfriend was seated between John Bangsund and Lee Harding.

Alan Sandercock tried to tell people about Australia in '75, but nobody was listening, and then Dracula (alias Paul Stevens) interviewed a cretinous monster, a lunatic film director, and a drunken critic 'who really doesn't know much about films' (ably portrayed by Merv Binns, Lee Harding and John Bangsund in that order.). The Adelaide fans disposed of Dracula by rushing at him with crosses mounted on broomsticks. Those people who could still see watched Byron Haskins' very good sf thriller, THE POWER, and most people retired by 2am. Some people went on a midnight hike, and arrived back at 4am. A lot of people had to head back interstate the next morning, but the pleasant atmosphere lasted most of the day.

During Adventon, Bill Wright and I decided that (a) all future Australian conventions must be live-in, (b) all future conventions must have a piano, and (c) no future convention need have a program. Thanks very much to the convention committee, and all who turned up.

Bruce Gillespie, January 1972  
(A75 Bulletin: Jan/Feb 1972.)



*Terran Times 3 back cover*