

THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS
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GRAPHICS BY DITMAR

INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP (THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS)
PUBLISHED BY BILL WRIGHT, 4/1 PARK STREET, ST. KILDA, VICTORIA 3182

*"Learn the true topography. The monstrous and wonderful archetypes
are not inside you, not inside your consciousness. You are inside them,
trapped and howling to get out." - Science fiction author R A Lafferty*

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Some men have all the luck .. or have they? *

Dateline: July 23rd, 2004

A man had his car stolen from an Auckland petrol station .. along with his mother in law. He was filling his petrol tank when a man jumped into the car and drove, taking mother in law with him.

The mother in law has since been returned. The car has not been recovered.

This Issue's Cover

Happy Birthday, Mervyn Russell Binns !

Our allotted span of life, as all good believers know, is three-score-and-ten years. There must be a reason for this number, but for an ignorant agnostic such as I, those reasons are hidden in theological mists. Bill Wright, of course, will have such explanations, and may even wish to share them with those like me. But regardless of the reasons for this mystical number, it is in any event a milestone in one's life, and demands a necessary celebration - and so, on Sunday July 10th, there was a joyous feast in honour of Merv's attainment of this prize.

Every reader of *IRS* should - nay, *must* - join in the salutes to Merv and the concomitant wishes for another magical seventy years. For, and this has been repeated again and again - but the truth always bears endless iteration - if it were not for Merv, the history of Science Fiction fandom in Melbourne, and perhaps in Australia, would have been vastly different. Indeed it is likely that the very magazine you now hold in hand would not exist, nor, indeed, those others in this mailing... Mervyn was a founding member of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, way back in 1950. He was the Club's librarian. He almost single-handedly kept the Club alive when interest in SF was at a low ebb. And - and most importantly - he ran *Space Age Books* when it was the first and only specialist SF book store in Melbourne. Or Australia.

So in his seventy years Merv has done so much for us that his legacy will echo down the years. We *all* owe him a great debt of gratitude...

The cover is a tribute - a somewhat surreal, Science-Fictional tribute, to be sure - to Merv, The Great One, the Great Maker - for only a Maker would wear Working Clothes... Merv may seem somewhat bemused but there are reasons for this.

1. For any true SF fan, the reading of such (great) prose strikes immediately at the imagination. Everyone, I believe, is possessed of a creative faculty which, when operating non-consciously (as in dreams) will produce visions which are locked from most of us when we try consciously to arouse them. It is part of the attraction of SF that its stories seem to be able to free the creative demon in us, and to allow us to see a world, a universe, which non-SF readers are not privy to. Brian Aldiss, in his introduction to Edmond Hamilton's *Star of Space* in the collection *Space Opera*, is struck by 'the glee with which Hamilton wades into his descriptions of "precipices of light that went forever up into those starry spaces" ', and finds that this was 'one of those discoveries of science fiction, that it had all immensity to play with'. When I, and I hope, when *we*, read SF, such 'precipices of light' are always with us, in our minds, in our mind's eyes, for when one responds to SF, the response, I say, unlocks our hidden creativity. Which is cause for bemusement. For if we are all so capable, why is that so many of us need the stimulus of SF to unlock our visionary souls? And thus we may begin to understand the expression on Merv's face. The marvellous, chaotic, formative universe behind him is pregnant with the promise which SF holds.
2. But while the *stimulus*, the goad, to our imaginations is the written word, it is ourselves who, thus spurred, generate the images we see imaginatively. We are all creators. And so the cover depicts *that* Merv. In this interpretation, the background is the chaotic, unformed material of Merv's fancies which, together with what he reads or views, will be transformed from potentiality into entelechy. The material is the same, always, but the words being read, or the images being watched, and the imagination, will create something new each time. Merv here, then, is, in essence, a God - a genitor of Universes, multitudes of Universes, fanciful or not, probable or plausible.
3. And if Merv considers his role as Creator, perhaps his bewildered expression, in which amusement and a twinkle of compassion may be seen, is simply due to his viewing, with fresh eyes, what has been created. *Us human beings*. How can whoever made us not begin to wonder, to be bemused, at the results? Merv, in such a part, must be wondering: "Did I really create *those*?"

Technical notes

The background is what is called a *Magnet Mandelbrot*. This applies the same iterative procedure as the standard Mandelbrot, but uses a different generating equation. For those who *really* must know (the inquisitive readers of *IRS*), the Mandelbrot iterative equation is:

$$Z \Leftarrow Z*Z + c$$

and the Magnet Mandelbrot uses:

$$Z \Leftarrow \{ [Z*Z + c - 1] / [2*Z + c - 2] \}^2$$

Here Z is a complex number, and c is a complex constant. The symbol " \Leftarrow " means "is replaced by" and defines the iterative process. Since I wrote my own fractal image generating program, I have also used some non-standard bells and whistles of my own devising to generate the image.

Mervyn's image was extracted from a photo taken at the 70th Birthday Bash, and originally showed him tending the barbecue - like all great Makers, he is also a Provider. The extraction was accomplished in *PhotoShop*, and the lightning and starburst behind Merv's head were added by *PhotoShop* filters.

Dick Jensen

The editor speaks

Perceptive as he is, Ditmar has once again failed to penetrate the veil of appearance that cloaks the universe of fandom in perpetual illusion. The Elder Ghods are real. They frolic with us at conventions, contend at discussion groups, laugh and cry with us in the cut and thrust of interpersonal encounters and hoard vast troves of treasure like the Dragon Lords of old. Mervyn Binns is such a One.

The marks of ghodhood are seldom apparent in their gestation. All of us exhibit fannish characteristics to a greater or lesser degree. But on rare occasions - such as, for example, uncovering recent faan fiction by Arnie Katz on the Internet - the joy of an occasion is transformed into a moment of utter magic. It is not bewilderment that clouds the noble brow of Mervyn Binns but **concentration!** This is what was *really* going on at Merv's birthday barbecue:



Inquisitive readers of *IRS* are no doubt acquainted with the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Among its more esoteric elements is the complex interaction of major players over, under, between and around *time*. Whilst never having reached the heights of the likes of Fred Patten, Robert Litchman, Dave Locke, Mark Linneman and Robin Johnson in time management, Mervyn is no novice in the art of temporal fugue. Whereas Robin can differentiate in his mind's eye the beats of a butterfly's wings, Mervyn struggles to comprehend the butterfly in the oneness of its being.

It is thus with people, too. Ditmar's inter-dimensional spectrograph™ has captured the moment when, at the height of festivities, Mervyn is toasted by multiple images of Bruno Kautzner, Cedric Rowley and John Straede.

Bill Wright

Benford party at the Blackfords

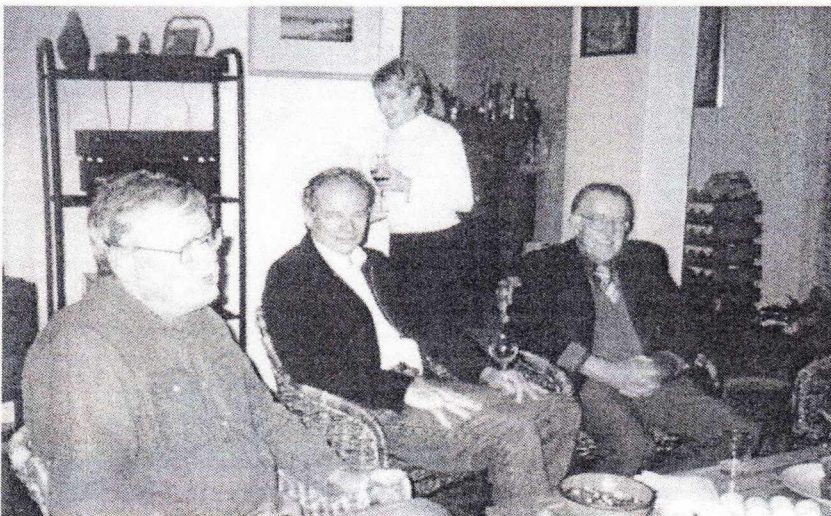


30th April 2004

Jenny and Russell Blackford's party

Photos by Helena Binns

for Bill Wright



After Conflux (Canberra, April 23-26, 2004), the principal guest of honour, Greg Benford, stayed with Russell and Jenny Blackford in their comfortable beach side town house in Albert Park.

The Blackfords threw an open party on April 30th to give the whole of Melbourne fandom the chance to meet Greg. Jenny's catering was lavish, to say the least.

At centre, the editor chats with Thomas Bull.

At bottom are, from the left, Gregory Benford, Rob Gerrand, Jenny Blackford and Mervyn Binns.

Continuum2 report

Friday 11th to Monday 14th June, 2004



Continuum2 was characterised by an abundance of wit and merriment, due in large part to the active participation of Australia's pre-eminent fan editor, Bruce Gillespie. He stole the show on Day Three when he waxed eloquent on the enduring popularity of author Philip K Dick who invented the paranoid reality breakdown in twentieth century literature and film.

Pictured in appropriately admiring attitudes are Jon Swabey on the left of Bruce and Andrew Macrae & Alison Barton on the right. Andrew is a recent Clarion South graduate who might just write the Great Australian Novel one day. Jon & Alison run the Melbourne Science Fiction Club.



Day One (Friday evening) was unremarkable except for the Super Robot Happy Hour where refugees from the Cocktail Party enjoyed Scott Pollard's *Naked Dalek* in his own show!

At left is Bruce Gillespie talking to Roman Mazurak after registering. The registration kit was supplied in red plastic bags from booksellers Dymocks. That's me with the hair at the back, leafing through the Program Book.

Photo by Helena Binns

Being poverty-stricken after Conflux (the Natcon in Canberra in April) and determined to save up for a trip to Thailand in August, I eschewed living-in at Continuum2. Of course, I slept in and missed the Saturday morning sessions completely. Only half conscious, I drifted through the afternoon sessions until five o'clock when Sean McMullen snapped me into wakefulness with his electrifying discourse on *The Computer Age of the Past*.

Taking his cue from the Convention logo, *Gods of Myth and Silicon*, Sean took us back to earlier times before silicon was added. Apparently, the Ancient Greeks invented mathematics in order to interpret their astronomical observations. Data entry was on slates. Processing units were water clocks consisting of water timers and gongs to mark the passage of time. One third of the effort was expended on Preparation (ie. getting the data ready), one third on the grunt work of Calculating and the rest on Specialisation (ie. refining the system). The Romans only perfected project methodology. The Greeks invented it.

In the early 1800s (Christian Era) the idea of a non-specific computing engine that could be re-programmed took hold, but it wasn't until 1946 that Von Neuman built ENIAC, the first electronic computer. ENIAC is the acronym for Electronic Numerator Integrator And Calculator, which aptly describes what happens in the *box* of all modern computers.

Fascinating asides by Sean McMullen included the history of calculating frames like the Abacus and discussion of their European or Chinese origins. Also discussed was the post-Renaissance fascination with robotic brains. The two conceptual extremes were Ghost and Gollum - the former being Spirit without Substance and the latter Substance without Spirit. Dichotomy was the paradigm for intellectual discourse in that Age, as indeed it is in any other.

Sean also had something to say about the predictive efficiency of science fiction. Generally, wherever SF more or less accurately predicted a breakthrough, it took up to thirty years to eventuate. But SF failed to predict the two most significant breakthroughs of the twentieth century - the atomic bomb and (in spite of the fact that a favourite SF theme had been robots with electronic brains) the modern computer.

The invention of log tables in the 17th century made large scale multiplication much easier than it had been. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) constructed an adding machine for his father who was a customs officer, and in 1694 the Leibnitz machine made its appearance.

In 1882 Charles Babbage proposed building a machine called the *Difference Engine*, a mechanical device that would have been the first that might be considered to be a computer in the modern sense. In Babbage's time, tables of logarithmic and trigonometric functions were built by teams of mathematicians known as *computers*, working day and night on primitive calculators. It wasn't until the 1930s that a working difference engine was built. After 1946, of course, the term *computer* was reserved for a computing device and its use as a job description atrophied.

Punched card technology was used commercially for office computations from the 1930s through to the 1960s. During World War II that form of automatic data processing was used by British Intelligence to crack the German *enigma* code. The office computer revolution began in the 1960s but the general run of office staff were only indirectly involved until the advent in 1972 of desk-top models called *micro-computers*.

After World War II the trail-blazing film *A for Andromeda* explored the idea that memories may be downloaded into computers. Philosophically, the idea goes back to Duns Scotus (1266-1308) who posited that personality is our memories. Medieval culture had all the clues for the invention a computing engine, ie. astronomy, mathematics, Arabic numerals and reliable calendars, but they had no incentive because the infrastructure needed to develop the required technology was absent.

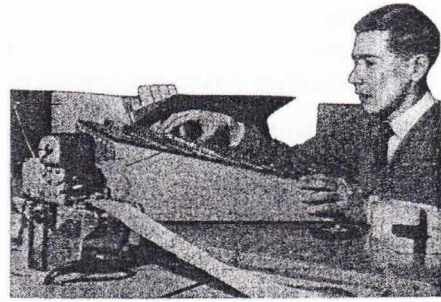
In 1977, I introduced multi-user desk top micro-computers with the brand name *MicroStar* to my firm's top insurance agents. The operating system was CPM-86. I nicknamed it 'Captain Manager'. The Captain owned an office building with twelve levels labelled User 1, User 2, etc. to identify areas of file space allotted to his various tenants. If you logged in as, say, User 5, you had access only to the file space on Level 5. Up to seven peripheral devices could be attached to the MicroStar. They could be any combination of Monitors and Printers. Discerning readers will have deduced that there were more User levels than Monitors. That was an advantage, in that the complex affairs of a big agency could be segmented for control purposes.

When IBM released its Personal Computer in 1981, Captain Manager retired and was replaced by prim and proper Ms DOS who eschewed high rise living in favour of a single storey dwelling with many data storage rooms and branching passage ways allowing access to them all. In such a complex floor plan everything was properly signposted so that, theoretically, no one got lost.

I was surprised at the rapidity with which the IBM PC and its clones caught on. There was an almost immediate quantum leap in the use of computer technology in the office. It took a while for a PC to find its way on to every desk and for computer operating skills to become part of the trade training of a clerk but, today, nearly everyone uses a PC at home or at work.

Australia was a leader in the development of computers post WWII. The CSIR Mark 1 had a memory of 512 bytes and 1024 bytes drive capacity. In 1958 Melbourne fan, Dick Jenssen, produced the first computer-generated weather forecast in the Southern Hemisphere on a later version of the CSIR, Melbourne University's CSIRAC.

The event was reported in the Melbourne Sun of Monday, Sept. 22nd, 1958. Dick says that, prior to his ground-breaking initiative, he was laughed at for suggesting that computers might have a role in weather forecasting.



Martin James Ditmar Jenssen in 1958

In the same article, the Weather Bureau was quick to point out that not even a more advanced computer than Melbourne University's CSIRAC can produce perfect weather forecasts.

"*It is impossible to take the human element and the chance of human error out of forecasting,*" a bureau spokesman said. Very true, but nowadays computer-based interpretations of satellite data and ground observations can narrow differences between forecasts and actual weather conditions.

After Lunch, I sat in on a session that explored differences between the World Fantasy Conventions and the World SF Convention. Following is a list of differences I picked up.

World Fantasy Convention	World Science Fiction Convention
800 limit	No limit. 7,500 to 6,500 attendees these days
2 voters	1000 to 2000 voters
For profit	Not for profit
Oversight rules	Tradition
Very literate	Literary, Media and Fan participation
Dealers room (books & jewellery)	Open-ended, continuous dealers room
Professional event	Something for everyone

Thank the ghods for the World Science Fiction Society where Fanarchy Rules !

Saturday evening was the highlight of the convention, when the irrepressible Ian Mond orchestrated back-to-back sessions featuring .. well .. Ian Mond.

The first was *The Sports Session* where Sarah Marland was sent out in the freezing cold to attend the *Essendon vs Brisbane Lions* Australian Rules football match at the Telstra Dome, reporting back to Ian via mobile phone. Other members of the panel were Aaron Jacks, Trevor Clark and Bruce Gillespie (who hated school sports and has never attended a football match in his life).

The spectacle of Mondy arguing heatedly with Bruce on the basis of mutually exclusive premises was a delight the like of which I thought could never be surpassed. I was wrong.

The *Ian Mond Panel* that followed was billed as a dialogue between himself and Aaron Jacks where Ian was supposed to talk about his favourite topic, himself, and his interests. Ian waxed serious about his upbringing as an Orthodox Jew and of matters both dietary and behavioural concerning the Faith. The audience was bored out of its collective mind and became restive.

Aaron, a man of quick perception, saw immediately that he must liven things up. So he began to probe Mrs Mond's little boy on his singular lack of success with women. That, it turns out, is not surprising considering the restricted field available to anyone with his orthodox orientation.

Just when that was getting going, Kirstyn McDermott (dolloed up to the nines and wearing a stunning black wig) blows in from the Furry Animal Fandom panel next door. She joins in the discussion, which becomes more involved and very, very interesting as wig swapping becomes part of the action in an intimate exploration of gender roles in interpersonal relationships.

In the middle of that, Ian's flat mate Simon turns up and immediately puts his oar in. He describes in forensic detail Ian's almost complete lack of domestic skills when he moved into the flat and of how difficult it was to house train him.

I laughed so much I couldn't take notes, in consequence of which inquisitive readers of this excellent journal are forever denied the gems of repartee that bounced back and forth between the four participants. How sad it is that we stopped taping SF conventions after Aussiecon in 1975.

I slept in again on Sunday and unforgivably (for the Australian Administrator of the BBB Fund) I missed attending the *Fan Funds* panel at 9:00 AM. No worries, though. Direct donations to the fund at the convention were in excess of \$120, the fanzine auction raised another \$60 and we sold 21 copies of *The Incomplete Bruce Gillespie* at \$10.00 a copy. That brought the total amount collected at Continuum2 to nearly \$300.00, which was a good result.

If you haven't yet purchased your copy of *The Incomplete Bruce Gillespie*, you are advised to do so now while stocks last. It is certain to become a collector's item in the not-too-distant future.

Sunday's highlight was unquestionably the *Clarion Survivors* panel immediately after lunch. Following six weeks of intensive story writing and assessment at the first Clarion South course in Brisbane, attendees were released back into the wild just in time for Continuum2. Jack Dann, one of the Clarion South instructors, moderated a panel comprising Andrew Macrae, Zara Baxter, Claire McKenna, Sarah Endacott, Matt Chrulow, Cat Sparks, Wendy Warring and Tracey Rolfe.

Jack began by asserting that Clarion graduates are sales people. "*You guys will be buying their books,*" he intoned. In the same vein, he claimed that Clarion is about connections made and, therefore, they had produced all their novels for this audience to buy. Later, I took that to heart and visited the Huckster Room where I found some of their stories in ASIM (Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine) and other publications under the Agog and Orb labels.

The best quote was from Sarah Endacott, who remarked, "*It was the best week I have had. That's because I wasn't there.*" In context, it was funny because of the intensive and stressful nature of the Clarion curriculum and the difficulties some attendees had with conditions in the venue.

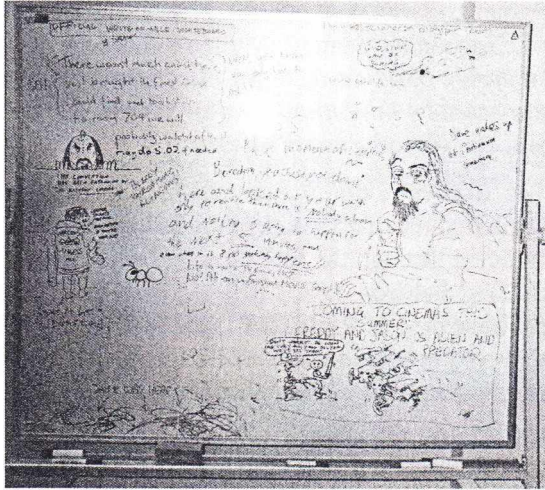
I spent the next hour in the Fanzine Room happily producing a One Shot issue of IRS. (Sorry, you had to be an attending member of Continuum2 to pick one up. No freebies, not even for ANZAPA members). After which I wandered, late, into the *Air Traffic Control in the Age of the Flying Car* session. A loud playing radio was, understandably, upsetting the audience. So I charitably turned on my heel and sought out the hotel management to ask them to restrict it to the corridor and turn it off in the conference room. When I returned, the radio was still on. When I sat down I was surprised to be mobbed by the rest of the audience. Only then did I realise that the radio in question was the transistor in my coat pocket. I fled before I was lynched.

In the Fan Lounge (a large central area with pathways to all conference rooms on the floor), Julian Warner was playing a popular card game called *Rail Barron*, or it might have been *Time Lord*, with some kids. A couple of the latter had been in the Fanzine Room earlier producing one shots.

Some time during the afternoon, Helena Binns snapped Mervyn and me in classic pose.



After dinner, I attended a session titled, "*Does it have to have a map to be good fantasy?*" With the experience of Conflux to go on, I expected this to be good value and I was not disappointed. The answer is, of course, that, whilst fantasy itself doesn't need one, a fantasy writer needs a map.

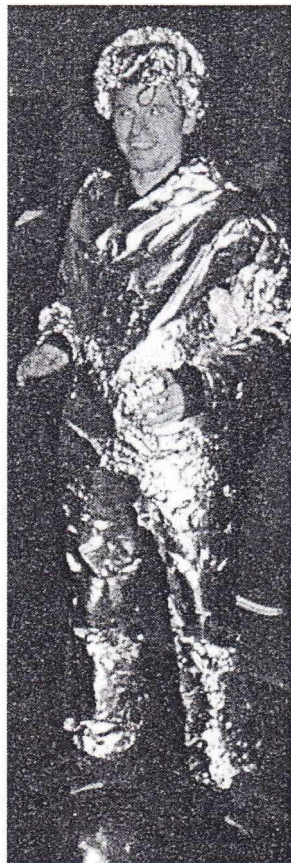


Following the *Fantasy Maps* session the main convention floor was closed. From then on the convention was restricted to the ground floor comprising a large ball room and its atrium.

I bade a fond farewell to the Fan Lounge white board (opposite) and took down all my rocket ship pictures and Ditmar art gallery pieces with which I had adorned most walls and corridors.

At 8.00 PM, the convention trouped downstairs to see Bruce Gillespie conduct the *Orb 6 Speculative Fiction Magazine* launch. He gave a bravura performance as an Elder Ghod touring the Universe and was loudly cheered at the end. There was brisk trade in copies of *Orb 6*.

The Masquerade was a gas! Some of the costumes were absolutely stunning, but all the rest were outshone by Les Robertson's magnificent outfit. Following are highlights of the photo gallery.



I didn't stay long at the Masquerade - only so long as take photos and dance a little. It had been only 5 days since surgery on my feet to remove deep-seated corns. Ouch!

At Monday's session on *Fictionalising Fact*, I asked the panel about varying Planck's Constant to invent anti-gravity. Who's to know when you, as the author, redirect readers' attention away from any disastrous implications? Answer: You cover that base, too. There are ways and means.

Special guest Max Barry's monologue on *Self Promotion* was exactly that, but informative and enjoyable to boot. Budding authors please note: Writing and marketing are two different things.

Continuum3 was announced for June 2005 at the closing ceremony. Kyrsten McDermott is chairman. Retiring Continuum2 chairman, Danny Oz wore Zebra pyjamas. Goodnight all.

Bill Wright

Battle for the mind

At Conflux (Canberra, May 23-26, 2004), science fiction author Sean McMullen in his session on medieval songs and dances delivered himself of a majestic observation to the effect that, "*In any monosexual society (men in taverns; girls in convent schools) inhibitions against sexual activity find release in song. They were songs of instructions, not always sung in taverns.*"

An example, I noted at the time, is the ancient ballad '*Rifle tifle, tiffi di dee*' which, in its origins, was a warning against venereal disease. Sean McMullen's informed insight initiated a train of thought that began with nursery rhymes and continued on through the folk tales and myths that were my refuge from the terrors of childhood. If, in those halcyon days, I had had even an inkling of the reality behind some of those parables, I might have died of fright, but I was saved from that fate - nay, freed from the shackles of everyday reality - by science fiction. Well, maybe not totally liberated. The old myths are there, but they are cleverly disguised as something new.

J B Priestley was a popular author in the early twentieth century. His celebrated novel, '*The Magicians*', is about the working out of Jungian psychology, not in the jargon of case histories, but creatively in fiction. The story introduces the concept of *time alive* by which one can live in memory whilst maintaining a sense of one's older self as a detached observer. It means that, nowadays, I can not only re-read the science fiction novels of yesteryear with a radically different mind set but also touch base in reverie with my other, younger self.

In like wise, I have recently essayed the much more dangerous course of reviewing fairy stories in *time alive*. Age and experience having taught me to look for the reality behind whatever spin is put upon happenings of the day by the powers that be, I applied the *time alive* technique to *Puss in Boots*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. The first two elicited a wry deprecation of the peccadillos of errant humanity, but the latter nearly sent me over the edge.

The story of *The Pied Piper* is based on an obscure historical event in the German village of Hamelin in June 1284. The oldest surviving record is a note in Latin written about a hundred and fifty years later. A stained glass picture in the local church, dating from before 1300 and depicting the exodus of the children, is mentioned but it didn't survive renovations that took place in 1660. There is no mention of a plague of rats or other embellishments.

A rhyme on the wall of Hamelin's *Pied Piper House*, built in 1602, states:

*In the year 1284, on John and Paul's day was the 26th of June
By a piper dressed in all kinds of colours,
130 children born in Hamelin were seduced and lost at the 'calvarie'
(possibly a place of execution) near the 'koppen' (possibly hills around Hamelin).*

Millennial madness that marked the end of Christianity's *Age of Faith* left its mark on succeeding generations. Unspeakable atrocities that occurred in its progress took root in European cultures and have been acted out again and again over the centuries. That we, under similar influences, might do the same is the waking nightmare of our times.

But such crimes of passion are, at the very least, understandable. Far worse, and less easy to countenance, are crimes of calculation perpetrated with impunity by powerful individuals who court popularity by making scapegoats of the despised. It is in that context that righteous indignation and demands for unending retribution expressed by leaders of any stripe ought to be evaluated. Any media-driven impulse that contains at its heart a powerful imperative to target particular individuals or groups is suspect. What are *they* drawing our attention away from?

Education enables us to control to some extent as individuals the symbols by which we are ruled but comprehension alone might not be enough. One must remain vigilant and make a stand. No human being is, or should imagine himself to be, exempt from call up in the battle for the mind.

Bill Wright

Countdown to a New Age



At 6:45 AM on Monday, June 21st, 2004 local time (11:45 the night before in Melbourne) the first non-governmental rocket ship flew to the edge of space and returned to a safe landing on a desert runway at Mojave airport, California.

Built by aviation designer Burt Rutan and financed by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, SpaceShipOne made history as the world's first privately owned manned spaceship.

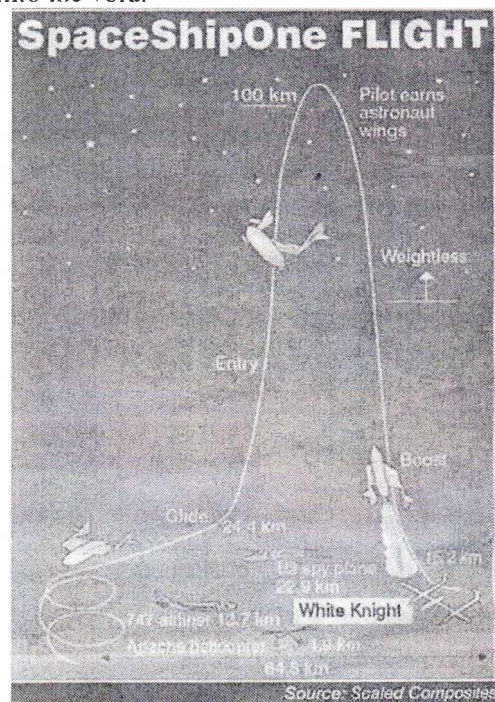
The winged, bullet-shaped spaceship was carried aloft by *White Knight*, a custom-designed transport aircraft. At an altitude of fifteen kilometres SpaceShipOne fell away from its companion, ignited its rocket and arched vertically into the void.

The rocket burned for about eighty seconds reaching a speed of 3,500 kilometres per hour (three and a half times the speed of sound). When its fuel was spent the craft continued upwards for another three minutes to reach an altitude of one hundred kilometres (62 miles) above the Earth. From the ground, flame and smoke could be seen as the rocket plane roared to life and shot upward through Mojave Desert skies. Slicing skyward and outside the Earth's atmosphere, the vehicle and its pilot, sixty-two year old civilian aviator now turned astronaut, Mike Melvill, spent about three minutes in free fall weightlessness.

"As I got to the top I released a bag of M&Ms in the cockpit. It was amazing," said Melvill.

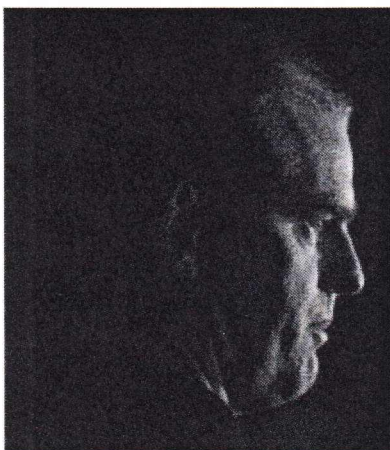
During the re-entry process, Melvill flipped SpaceShipOne's large tail section up, a step needed to slow the vehicle down as it nosed itself toward touchdown on terra firma.

After that speed-reducing manoeuvre, SpaceShipOne's tail piece was put back into glide mode. The vehicle circled overhead as onlookers, who had filled up local motels and camped at the airport, cheered. The craft landed at about 8:15 AM local time directly in front of a public viewing area on the same runway it had taken off from an hour and a half earlier.



The SpaceShipOne project team has already started gearing up for back-to-back missions in order to snag the ten million dollars *Ansari X Prize*, an international competition to be won by the first team to create a reusable aircraft that can launch three passengers into sub-orbital space, return them safely home, then repeat the launch within two weeks with the same vehicle.

Stefan Zone



"Our first duty of care is to protect life and property. It is not about protecting some lives and not others. It is an absolute."

Simon Overland

Assistant Police Commissioner (Crime), Melbourne

MELBOURNE UNDERWORLD'S SCHOOL REUNION - CLASSMATES

(This is Stefan's slip of tongue on the spate of gangland killings that has hit Melbourne recently)

I told you before about how I was helping plan our fifteen-year school reunion for later this year. We're hoping for around the same number of people (80-90) that turned up to our ten year reunion. You probably didn't know about a similar school reunion that took place in inner-Melbourne on Saturday night. It was a reunion of Melbourne's underworld figures which, for some strange reason, was poorly attended. Only two people turned up:

"Did you hear about Roberto '*Fatso*' Gandolfo? He died around this time last year, just after our last reunion. He got shot by Freddo '*Frog*' Polio."

"I heard Freddo died soon after."

"Yes. Freddo was shot by Ricardo '*The Don*' Fettuccini who ended up being stabbed by Rocco '*Brickhouse*' Calamari, allegedly over an outstanding drug debt."

"That's right. Then Rocco got shot by Ricardo's best friend, Luigi '*Two-Fingers*' Scaloppini. No one knows just how he was able to fire the gun, but it was only a day later he was knifed by Mac '*Mac-the-Knife*' the Knife, who had only pretended to be Luigi's friend for the past thirty years."

"From what I heard, Mac the Knife was put into police protection, but a few days later was found dead in the shower."

"Yes, but don't forget that a few days later Santo Capriccioso was shot in apparent retaliation by Giuseppe '*Froth*' Cappuccino, who ended up being killed by Giovanni ...

... "and then the police questioned you over the murder of Vittorio '*Slumber*' Siesta after someone realised he wasn't really asleep."

"While at the same time, they questioned you over the murder of Francesco '*Grande Sale*' Cozzo after he was implicated in the earlier murder of Giovanni's long-lost twin brother."

"Hey, come to think of it ... we're the last two of our class still alive !"

"Yeah ..."

"I KILL YOU TO AVENGE VITTORIO!!!"

"I KILL YOU TO AVENGE FRANCESCO!!!"



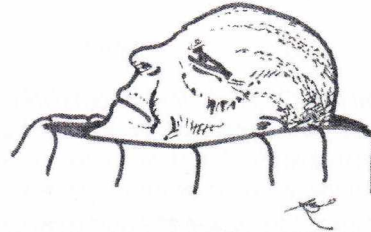
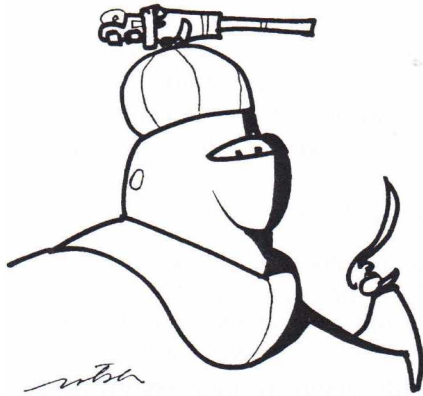
Next year's reunion has been cancelled.

BLACK MARKET UPDATE

You all see reports in the paper and on the news at night giving updates on the stock market. Not many of you know that there is also a Black Market update available to those in the know. I'm just one of many on the involuntary subscription list for a daily update on the status of the Black Market. Here is the update from last Friday:

Market Snapshot

Currency:	Value \$Aus	Daily Chg pts	Daily Chg %	Yr to date %
\$Aus / Ransom Dollar	0.76	0.01	+1.33 %	+11.04 %
\$Aus / Protection Yen	0.82	- 0.03	- 1.62 %	- 2.11 %
\$Aus / Standover Euro	1.04	- 0.02	- 1.89 %	+4.76 %
\$Aus / Blackmail Pound	0.43	0.02	+4.88 %	+7.81 %



Black Marketeers:	Daily close pts	Daily change pts	Daily change %	Financial ytd %
Mafia Concreting	1.10	+0.10	10.00 %	1,245.00 %
html://www.bullets.com	0.45	- 0.02	- 4.26 %	846.07 %
Hitz-R-Uz	3.13	+0.03	0.96 %	749.58 %
AAA Standover	2.26	- 0.10	- 4.24 %	401.00 %
Goons 4 Hiya	1.97	- 0.09	- 4.33 %	682.94 %
BMG*	0.72	+0.01	1.39 %	4,268.01 %
WMD	18.00	+2.00	12.50 %	-547.63 %

* = (Black Market Goods)

Market Summary

Mafia Concreting lost ground yesterday when the Godfather announced that the price of concrete boots was on the rise. This led to *bullets.com* increasing \$0.05. *AAA Standover* rose 3 % after an announcement was issued stating they were about to break into the lucrative Sydney market. *WMD* lost ten per cent after queries about whether it can deliver the goods.

The Ransom Dollar was steady, while both the Protection Yen and the Standover Euro were slightly down. The Blackmail pound rose on speculation of promising fourth quarter estimates.

STEFAN'S WINTER FASHION TIPS

As another winter starts, people's thoughts turn to their winter wardrobe. Stefan has kindly supplied some of his vast and up-to-date knowledge of fashion for those that are a bit unsure.

WHAT'S HOT

* Short-sleeved shirts. Despite the non-believers out there (like those who advised that short-sleeved shirts were 'Never in fashion'), short-sleeves are a 'must have' for people catching public transport. Worn under layers of coats, jumpers and jackets, they allow the wearer to quickly adjust after they go from 1 degree outside the train to 30 degrees inside.

* Beanies - While the demand varies depending on a person's hairstyle, beanies

allow your head's heat to be trapped inside. While overheating may occur, it won't cause any permanent brain damage. Worn with a suit, it gives the impression of a corporate cowboy or someone about to rob a bank.

WHAT'S NOT

* Suits of any colours. Stick with black. Not only is it harder to see you crossing the road during winter, it also increases your chances of being involved in an underworld murder - more often than not as the victim. On second thoughts, maybe it's the black that's not in fashion ?

* Sunglasses in the middle of winter. Unless you are trying to cover up a shiner or you really are an underworld 'celebrity', sunglasses make you look shift and idiotic.

STEFAN NO FRILLS AIRLINES

The launch in May 2004 of 'Jetstar' (a QANTAS subsidiary specialising in no frills service) has not been without drama. Passengers have been refused entry for being five minutes later than the half hour deadline set for registering at the airport, and a door was torn off a Jetstar airliner when it remained bolted to the boarding platform at departure time. That was too much for Stefan, who reckons he can do better.



Introducing the latest el-cheapo airline to shame our skies. *No Frills Interstate Airlines* (NFI Airlines) is inspired by, and is a distant relative of, the infamous N62986 pictured above. It is targeted, so the speak, at the 'lowest of low' end of the market.

Our air fares are the lowest anywhere in the world - only \$1 a flight. We are hoping that once the passengers have experienced the dodgy take-off and terrorising flight, they

will be willing to pay anything to get down again safely.

Here's how it works. You make your way to our airfield, conveniently situated hundreds of miles out of Melbourne and well away from the prying eyes of the Civil Aviation Authority. Please note --the airfield itself has no parking facilities anywhere. Actually, our runway forms part of the Hume Highway to save costs. All we do is stop traffic for a few minutes until the aircraft takes off or lands.

NFI has an open skies policy, even at the terminal. When you get there, please stand on the side of the road until your plane arrives. Being No Frills, we won't be letting the plane take off until all seats are filled, so expect delays of up to a week. As there is no on-board catering, ladies bring a plate.

We also can't take off without a pilot, so if you are an out-of-work pilot wanting to do some volunteer work, or someone who has at least forty hours practice on a Flight Simulator home video game, come along.

The flight check is easy - Wander around the plane with a roll of sticky tape to cover up any holes; kick the tyres once or twice then jump into the cockpit and shout "Contact" to Davo and Johnny, our work-experience ground crew, who will wind up the propeller for you. If the large rubber band breaks, land as soon as possible and ask some of the passengers to give it a whirl.

We have saved heaps on safety by not worrying about life rafts, life jackets or oxygen masks. The first two are unnecessary as we don't fly over any source of water - only land that is still in the grip of drought. I

mean, the last thing you are going to be able to do after the plane falls from 50,000 feet over land is to chuck a life jacket on and jump into the life raft. Oxygen masks are not required as we won't be going high enough to use them. We have to be sure we stay under the radar at all times.

This doesn't mean we have skimped on safety. Not by any means. All our aircraft are fitted with the latest external safety device for aircraft - 'Bubble Wrap'. An all-over covering does wonders when our planes have that inevitable crash landing or mid-air collision. We have experienced some troubles in trials where passengers waiting to board couldn't stop themselves from popping a few bubbles, but overall the trials have been positive.

Be the first person stupid enough to join our Frequent Fliers club and receive a complimentary parachute.

We stand by our strong customer service record. To date, we have had zero complaints, possibly because no one has been game enough to fly with us. Come along for the flight of your life.

STRANGE COINCIDENCES, OR SOMETHING FAR MORE SINISTER?

Memo to whoever is forwarding my articles on to TV writers. Could you please ask them for royalties next time?

In May 2004 I predicted that a Channel Seven soapie was going to feature a terrorism attack on the local high school.

Now it's Channel 9's turn.

On May 16, I introduced a storyline about a terrorism attack on the local police station in Red Kelpie. Next week, what is on a certain police show on Channel Nine? Nothing less than a terrorism attack on the local police station. I don't think they have used my storyline to the letter - I had predicted the terrorist would crash a crop duster into the police station.

If they have to shift the police station to the local pub after the attack, as predicted in Red Kelpie, then it will be too much of a coincidence. My lawyers, Slander and Gorgeous, will be looking very closely at the credits to see if I rate a mention.

I'm only guessing here, but I think the "terrorist" that strikes next week will be a white bloke, possibly American. Anyone else and they'll have every minority group under the sun screaming Racism and Ethnic Stereotyping. This way no-one will complain.

NostraStefanus ... Dare to believe!

THOMAS, SANTA AND THE 10TH ANNUAL TRAIN PARTY

A previously unpublished article by Stefan written on December 16th, 2000

To do this article justice (if that's possible) you'll have to read it like they read *Thomas the Tank* stories on the ABC. Now I know Thomas isn't the Electric train. It's Daisy or Clarabelle Cow or something. Look I don't have a *Thomas the Tank* book and it's getting late so it will have to do.

Good morning boys and girls. Today Thomas the Electric Train hosts Santa and the Werribee Train Gang's 10th Annual Train Party.

On the day of the party, Santa awoke very, very early. He got dressed, went and fed the reindeer (read two magpies) and had a big breakfast before being dropped off at Werribee station by his sleigh (read 1981 Holden Gemini). Shortly after Thomas, the six-carriaged Comeng train pulled into the station with a squeal of brakes.

When Santa went to the driver's compartment, he got a big shock ! The Fat Controller was driving the train ! Santa offered him a plate of food. "No thank you", said the Fat Controller in a gruff voice. Santa went away with a very sad face.

Soon, other people started to arrive for the party. There was Wendy Bear, Big Ears, Miss Firefighter (we didn't have a Mr. Plod) and many others. But where was Smitty Sailor Doll ? Due to a failure in communications, he missed the train completely !

Santa's helpers decorated the first carriage with tinsel (as opposed to its usual graffiti) and soon there were lots and lots of people with lashings of food and drink having a wonderful time. Everyone wore name tags as Santa's memory was slipping a bit. Wendy Bear tried to open a bottle of bubbly on the sly, but was caught on Candid Train Camera. She looked very, very sorry for herself as she tried to hide behind Santa.

Wendy Bear wasn't the only one in trouble, girls and boys. Santa's belt kept on slipping as the pillows he had stuffed under his jacket kept moving !

Santa had actually lost weight over the year and was down to a bulimic 71 kg's. If he didn't use the pillows, they would have kicked him out of Santa school for being too skinny. Every few minutes the pillows would slip and Santa would have to do a hop and a skip to get them back in place. The pillows made Santa hot. His cheeks became redder than Rudolph's nose !

Santa and the rest of the group ate until they were bloated. Afterwards, they offered the leftover food to the needy people of the carriage. Up and down the carriage they went as the carriage swayed from side to side. Up and down. Then up and down once more until all the food was gone.

Some people were very nice to the group and wished them Merry Christmas. Others were very anti-social (I'm reminded of someone I know, but can't think who) and tried to ignore Santa. But Overbearing Santa got pushy and forced people to take the food. "Eat, eat, eat", he would say, possibly due to his mother's Italian heritage.

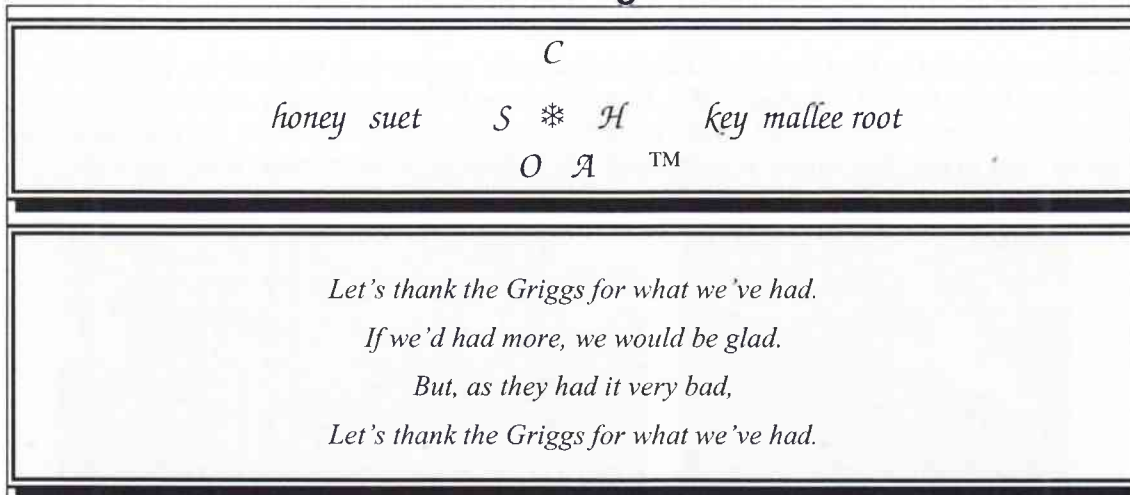
All too soon, Thomas pulled into Flinders Street Station and the party was over for another year. The Fat Controller rushed off to his office in a big hurry to get away from Santa. But Santa was more content wandering the streets of Melbourne with plastic garbage bags slung over his shoulder like a homeless person.

And that's where we'll have to leave Santa, girls and boys, as it is time for beddy byes. Sant... err I mean Stefan has to get up very early so he can wash the big red fire trucks. But that will have to be another story.

Good night

Stefan Zone Exit

Comments on the June 2004 mailing #219



ANZAPA! the last Official Organ by David Grigg, OBE Emeritus

The captain having retired ashore, the good ship ANZAPA is adrift in unchartered waters under the steadying hand of an experienced able seaman. It is hard to remember a time when a Grigg was not in command of this venerable Antipodean apa. The Middle English Dwarf is superseded on the poop deck by the hulking frame of a Gillespie. It will take getting used to.

LES CHATS PARTIS 71 Sally Yeoland

Great news about the improvement in John's health after they howked out his gall bladder. Now that he'll eat whatever you grow, you've gone mad in the vegie plot of the town house you have rented for the winter. All good fun, and the gentle exercise is doing your back the world of good. You don't say anything about work, which I interpret to be a good sign. So may it be.

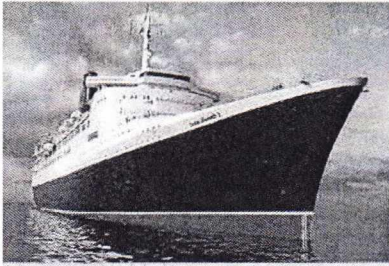
Ryct me on the new Docklands being a far less sterile environment than Federation Square or Southbank, three months ago I sussed out a Lend Lease development at Docklands from a sixth floor suite with a recessed external garden. It overlooks Telstra Dome against a backdrop of Melbourne's skyscrapers that rise majestically behind the totally obscured Spencer Street railway terminus and shunting yards. Asking price was \$640,000 - probably a bargain considering that a double garage and five square metres of external storage in the bowels of the building was thrown in. I have never regretted more not having a lazy \$640,000, but I am consoled by the fact that I can probably buy it for half that in a year or so when interest rates hit ten per cent and mortgage foreclosures go through the roof. But I don't have \$320,000 either, and neither do you. Life is so *unfair!*

Ryct John & Diane Fox concerning the late Alistair Cooke. I, too, was an avid long term listener to his 'Letter from America' broadcast at odd times on the *Overseas Service of the BBC*. Being a light sleeper, I have formed the habit of keeping a fully-charged transistor radio under the pillow. I tune in to that when boredom strikes in the dead of night. War, sport or some burning issue of the day is what I usually get but sometimes *The Voice* would come on and invest a commonplace happening with enduring significance. I loved Cooke's quirky humour and his gentle thrusts which, when you thought them over, were diamond hard and quick and sharp as a rapier.

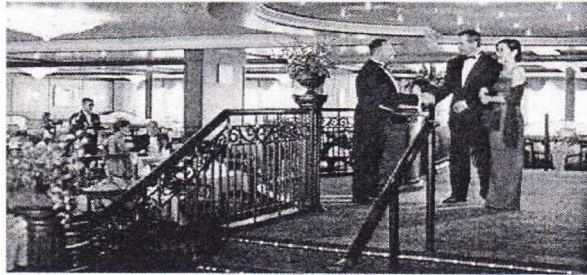
Alistair Cooke will be sorely missed by, but not wholly estranged from, us who live after him. The ABC Shop at the Commonwealth Bank Galleria might have closed its doors on 29th May, but it is resurrected at the corner of Elizabeth and Little Bourke Streets. CDs of early and recent Alistair Cooke broadcasts are available there in boxed sets. Each has three CDs.

OLD NEWS AND NONSENSE SIX Roger Sims

I am disappointed to have to wait for details of your sea voyage from Bridgetown, Barbados to Athens, Greece over March-April 2004. That there were bad spots doesn't surprise me. I hope they were all caused by Atlantic storms (merely uncomfortable, those, unless you are seasick) and weren't due to any deficiencies in crew service or malice by on-shore authorities. There are horror stories to curl your whiskers. If you and Pat were in one of those you have my sympathy.



QUEEN ELIZABETH 2



CARONIA RESTAURANT

My consolation prize was the report of your aeroplane trip to Greece over July-August 2003. What a nasty surprise to board the Greek Islands cruise ship, only to find that ownership had changed since you booked. That the on-shore excursion staff went ferrel on you is inexcusable. There is *always* something not-quite-right about accommodation when you are on holidays, but having to put up with a continuous engine roar in your cruise ship cabin would be hard for me to take, even though you took it in your stride.

The highs of the trip seem to be balanced out by the lows. Perhaps that's why you decided to take the sea road rather than to the skies on your next trip to Greece.

You tell us it wasn't quite as idyllic as you had hoped. Let's have the details.



Queen Mary 2 (reigning monarch of the Cunard Line) with Queen Victoria (to be launched in May 2004)

The pictures are from the latest Cunard Line catalogue. I know of a woman who has paid eleven million US dollars to install herself in a corner suite in the Queen Elizabeth 2 and sail around the world for the rest of her life.

If she has it in her to be institutionalised it's either that or the convent, I suppose.

KARENZAPA XII Karen Johnson

So pleased that *I* am not emigrating to the United States. The process as delineated step-by-step by your good self is convoluted enough to send anyone into a decline. That you have the resilience not only to survive that but to write about it in coherent terms speaks volumes about your fitness for residence in the Land of the Free. Like the Red Lensman (who, I note with approval, is in your *leave behind* re-reading list), you qualify!

Your visa is in the bag. And, by this time (August 2004), literally so.

Thanks for the recipe for Karen's Carrot Cake, Mark I. The only time I have lit the oven since I moved into my present digs in 1995 was during the Longford gas crisis when a technician from the Gas & Fuel Corporation who had to reconnect gas to the premises showed me how. Perhaps the prospect of scoffing large helpings of KCC1 will provide incentive, but very likely not.

Ryct John & Diane Fox in *Disaster Rhubarb*, thanks for the tip on minimising the risk of DVTS on long aeroplane journeys by drinking lots of water during the flight. By the time you are reading this, I will be in Thailand - this time for three whole weeks. Thai Airways are pretty good in the service department. So it's water instead of g & t for a number of reasons, including yours.

PING! John Newman

Congratulations on finding a congenial abode to rent for a year before deciding on a place to put down roots. Moving invests life with an astonishing intensity. It shows through in your writing.

Thank you for the list of advantages you see in a digital ANZAPA. I appreciated your comments on the PDF approach; in particular the point that paper zines could still be produced from PDF files for the dwindling number of members who need to have them run off by the OBE or his/her nominee. If, while the metamorphosis of the apa is in process, a number of primitive formats (eg. Word files with pictures encased in tables) have to be converted to PDF, maybe the OBE should share that part of the workload with the Emergency Officer. If that office is not in the ANZAPA constitution it should be.

Other formats might be supported by an OBE of the future? I am afraid I can't wrap my mind around that. I have a lot to learn before I will even be comfortable with the idea.

Paul Keating is rarely lovable but he was spot on when he labelled John Howard '*a pusillanimous po-faced prick*'. That was under parliamentary privilege, of course.

The '*Goodbye to Mount Buninyong*' photo makes me wonder how you can bear to leave.

PANTOPTICON 24 Dan McCarthy

I loved Erza Pound's Chaucer parody, *Ancient Music*. Winter is icummen in for you without benefit of a preceding Summer, which is probably why you were in so much of a cuccoo that your Contents section has absolutely no connection with the rest of the zine. I was tempted to ask, "Which part is missing?" but it's not that bad.

Glad you are able to walk around again without a stick, but I fear your days of dandling small children on your knee are gone for good.

Re the prequel to Regent Book Sale, I note that you scored a hand-me-down collection of the Mowgli stories from Runyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*. You remember your Mum reading them to you when you were eight years old and just had to read them again.

One of my prized and most used possessions is a set of audio tapes containing three of the *Jungle Book* stories - *Mowgli's Brothers*, *The King's Ankus* and *Kaa's Hunting* - read by Ian Richardson. The spoken stories come across just as clear, concise and well developed as if read from the

printed page. Hearing is the best way to appreciate poetic language. And there is always something satisfying about a well crafted story read aloud.

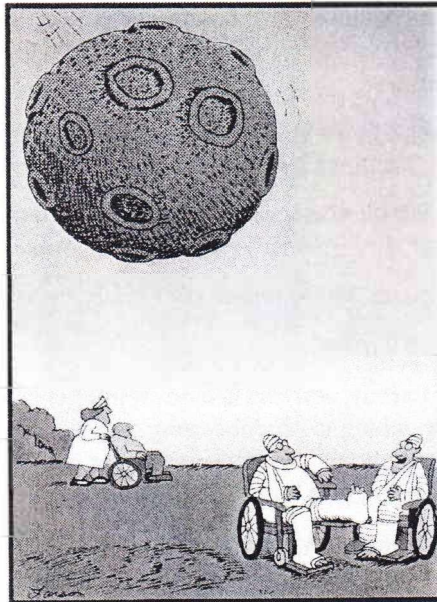
You attended a live performance of *Judas Maccabaeus*, George Frederick Handel's operatic masterpiece. At about the same time I attended a live performance of Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma* that has a far more impressive continuity of arias. And, on Saturday 19th June, I gave up my afternoon to a rare session in front of the TV where, on the SBS channel, Handel's *Alcina* was performed by the State Opera Company of Stuttgart, Germany. With performers inappropriately dressed in the modern style it was a wooden affair to watch. Arias were few but magnificent when they occurred. Like you, I go to opera to hear the voices rather than a monotonous, meandering cascade of words. That's what you get from Handel most of the time, but Bellini gives you aria after aria with a minimum of boring soliloquy in between.

I note with approval the inclusion in Pantopticon 24 of an advertisement for the master work of the Reverend Baden Powell (1796 - 1860). A great literary philanthropist of the time said of him,

'The progress of mathematical and physical science in many departments, especially optics and thermotics, and in that universal philosophy which enters into every department, has been deeply indebted for more than a third part of a century to the extensive knowledge, the logical mind, the disciplined skill and unwearied industry of Professor Baden Powell. He was one of the small band of reformers who have striven and after a long struggle, with some success, to improve the system of education pursued at Oxford by the addition to the former studies of the University of a due and recognized attention to natural knowledge.'

Michael Farraday, the father of modern physics, was another of that small band whose influence extends even to today and shall be apparent for as long as science bears on human endeavour.

Ryct Sally Yeoland on the probability of being caught up in a natural disaster ..



I was struck twice by lightning, too.

GUFF FLYER Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber

Interaction, the 63rd Worldcon in Glasgow, Scotland, 4-8 August 2005 is the Wright occasion in the Wright place at the Wright time. My father was born there. If I am well enough I will go, but I won't be a candidate for GUFF because of the doubt. Besides, there are younger and better credentialed Aussie litfen available for selection and (if they've any sense at all) willing to go.

KINGDOM OF THE BLAND Eric Lindsay

Since you mentioned them at the start, I went straight to your computer woes at the end. It is a sad and lonely thing these days to be a Microsoft fan, but it seems to me that abandoning Windows altogether and striding off fearlessly into the Mackinsquash badlands is fraught with danger. Don't throw your IBM over the balcony just yet. Transfer your files to the new Macintosh PowerBook and work out how to print from the beast before acting so hastily. I can't help feeling that there is something wrong with your physical printer as well as the software connections.

Your comment to Sally Yeoland, "*If a house were renting for around \$200 a week, that would seem to imply a value under \$200,000,*" depresses me no end. Prices for houses in Melbourne's dormitory suburbs commanding \$200 per week rent have been forced up by speculators to two and a half times \$200,000. They figure that inflation is likely to push rents up. Since speculators have never been wrong since World War II, they have probably got it right again.

If the speculators are right, my currently adequate lifetime pension is likely to be devalued by hyper-inflation in the near future. I had better start squandering what little I have now.

Ryct Nick Shears, I appreciated the recorded message, "*At the sound of the tone, please hang up,*" that Jean made you delete from your telephone answering machine. I thought of installing a similar message activated by my security intercom buzzer .. something like, "*Just don't stand out there in the pouring rain. Go home!*" I chickened out, but only because of the cost involved..

NECESSITY 58 HAPPY TOGETHER Jack Herman

You know how to bucket a movie. The job on *Troy* was masterfully done. I will probably view the film just to see Peter O'Toole playing King Priam, but I will be parallel running Homer's version in the theatre of memory.

Don't write off the Sydney Swans just yet. They have shown remarkable tenacity in recent weeks and are definite contenders for the final eight. (I like the system in which eight out of sixteen teams contest the finals series. It gives a struggling team that finds form at the end of the home and away season a real chance at the premiership and ensures continued interest in Australian Rules football until the political season starts, closely followed by the cricket, then and the tennis and back to football. It's a closed universe).

St Kilda's media spokesman is on record as saying that no one should presume to comment on the management of their players, whereupon the team proceeded to lose four out of its next five matches, having been previously undefeated. I would like to say that all that is part of a strategic plan involving cunning ploys such as the *tactical soft loss*. But the Saints' recent form is just too bad. I have only a forlorn hope that they will roar back into contention near the end of the season. There is, it seems, only Plan A with Gehrig as the focus. Plan B is not in evidence .. yet.

RAMBLING THROUGH CANBERRA Gerald Smith & Womble

It was good to read your comprehensive report on Conflux, tis year's Natcon held at Rydges Lakeside Hotel, Canberra, from Friday, April 23rd, to Monday, April 26th, 2004. Although there were points of overlap, it is obvious that you experienced a very different convention from mine.

In retrospect, I didn't spend enough time in the Huckster Room and missed a couple of highlights I would like to have been present at, such as Chuck McKenzie's '*This is Your Life*' session.

HOLD THAT TIGER Terry Morris

Lovely front cover, tastefully presented on deep blue paper. The blue background didn't go with your Tiger Eye Wordwatch on page two. I had a couple of goes, but the only result was eyestrain.

I appreciated your summary of the recent flurry of e-mail correspondence on the future of ANZAPA as a paper vs electronic zine. You remind us that there is still a lot of physical cutting and pasting going on in fanzines. That can still happen when and if we go electronic. But everyone will need to have a scanner to read the finished page. And there are techniques (which I haven't yet mastered) to include scanned items as pictures in blocks of text without blowing out the size of the PDF version so that it can be quickly loaded from a website. One such technique, revealed to me last Friday by Elaine Cochrane, is *attaching a picture to a paragraph*. I can't imagine how that might be done, but it seems that we can have the best of both worlds.

LAND OF 10,000 LOONS (for #218) Jeanne Mealy

Thanks for the URL. www.winter-carnival.com Eschewing my usual practice of reading through a zine before initiating comment, I went straight to the website and marvelled at the incredible St Paul Winter Carnival Ice Palace and accompanying ice sculptures. I had ideas of downloading a few of those images to include in this mailing comment but, as you said would be the case, the files were too large. My sister spent a winter in your neck of the woods in the early 1980s. She said it was the coldest she had ever been, so I can understand you saying it was very, very cold in and around the Ice Palace. Pity the merchandise was so tacky.

I note that a sand castle was to be built on the same site in June 2004. How was that received? Not at all well by the denizens of the homeless shelter across the way from the fair grounds, I should imagine. It would be a nice gesture if next year's carnival organisers were to provide free daily passes for the homeless - but in an unobtrusive way, ie. no publicity.

GREAT Mike Peters cartoon of kangaroos at the Zoo providing day care for their joeys. Anthropomorphism is alive and well in the Twin Cities.

Ryct LynC,. thanks for explaining Shriners. I had always thought they were a Jewish sect, but it seems they are closer to the Masons. The Knight's Templar connection is a bit worrying. That outfit was the military spine of the Crusades in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It enjoyed the patronage of the infamous demagogue, Saint Bernard, who preached the first Crusade and was described by twentieth century philosopher, Bertrand Russell, in the following terms:

"St Bernard, whose saintliness did not suffice to make him intelligent, ..."

Templars lived frugally, fought ferociously and accumulated vast wealth. Early in the fourteenth century they were suppressed, first under torture by the greedy King Phillip the Fair of France and then by the weak-willed acquiescence of Pope Clement V, who ordered their dissolution.

Working against the Knights Templar was the secrecy that cloaked their initiation rites. It was the time of Europe's emergence from the Age of Faith when the entry of youths into guilds of Artisans often involved sacrilegious parodies of the holy Sacraments. Enemies of the Templars, and they were many, accused them of spitting upon the Cross, denying Christ, permitting Sodomy and worshipping an Idol. Judicial ethics of the time permitted torture in the absence of witnesses to crimes. Even by the standards of that age, tortures endured by the Templars were extreme. If the Shriners are heirs to that tradition I am amazed that their antics stop at trashing the odd hotel room. Indeed, it is highly likely that the entire spectrum of their private behaviour defies rational interpretation.

Ryct Me, .. Thank you .. thank you .. thank you for embracing the Clerihew verse form AND for honouring me with your very first attempt at it. I am chuffed .. another Britishism, concerning which, in answer to your enquiry, *charabanc* is an archaic word for a vehicle carrying many passengers and used for public transport. The word was often used for trolley buses in the first half of the twentieth century. I'm not sure why, but you need to know that.

If you were shocked by the Redfern riots in Sydney on February 16th, 2004, you will be revolted by the aftermath. A coronial enquiry has established that two police cars herded the fourteen year old aboriginal cyclist, one of them even mounting the curb so as to chase him on the footpath.

Witnesses say that the boy was in a state of terror-induced panic before he was impaled on a fence at the end of a laneway. The reaction of the police since has been to intensify an already oppressive climate of heavy policing and to demand increased powers to '*stamp out crime in the area*'. Ludicrous as it sounds, indications are that those powers will be granted.

A policeman whose earlier sworn testimony was disproved in Court has refused to answer further questions. As yet, no police personnel have faced charges over the incident. Officially, police describe the boy's death as a 'freak accident' and deny wrongdoing on the part of any officer. Undeniably we have a colour-coded criminal class in Australia, as is the case in parts of America.

Distributism (a political philosophy mid way between Socialism and Capitalism proposed by G K Chesterson, Hillaire Bellock and Dorothy Day in the nineteenth century in response to the teachings of Pope Leo XIII in his famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum*) looks more attractive to me every day. Everyone should enjoy protection in, and have a degree of ownership of, their job. In that way extremes of wealth and poverty will be ironed out and, with the gradual elimination of mass unemployment, crime will be diminished. Unemployment and crime in Redfern are chronic.

We certainly can't continue with the present system that enriches a few by creating vast pools of unemployed labour in selected areas that are bludgeoned into submission.

LAND OF 10,000 LOONS (for #219) Jeanne Mealy

Congratulations on finding a more-or-less congenial job in the aftermath of The Bus Strike. The fact that you dread having to commute over longer distances when the firm moves its administration to downtown Minneapolis strikes a familiar chord. Conditions on Melbourne's trams, trains and buses are getting worse under privatisation. We thought things were bad enough when they were State-owned utilities. Governments still haven't twigged that massively subsidising freeways is less efficient than investing in public transport. Providing a level of comfort on the busses that will entice people to leave their cars at home would seem to be beyond the comprehension of your politicians, as it is of ours.

Bite the bullet, America, and cease manufacturing automobiles at a loss. If you must export jobs, send those jobs overseas, then ration the import of cars. Besides giving impetus to investment in public transport infrastructure it would go a long way towards solving the oil crisis - or shifting it to China, which is inevitable anyway and amounts to the same thing in the long run.

THE 'BRING BRUCE BAYSIDE' FAN FUND Bill Wright

This is unquestionably a worthy fan charity.

Help Banish Bruce Gillespie Bayside - no, not to St Kilda Beach but all the way to quaint old San Francisco in February-March 2005, where Bruce will attend *Corflu* (the faneds' peak council) and *Potlatch* (a discussion-oriented con attended by opinionated writers and fans).

Fund raising for BBB has relied on donations and a fanzine auction run by Robert Litchman in North America. Closer to home is a superb production edited by Irwin Hirsh containing six of Bruce's finest essays. It is available for \$10.00 from Bill Wright or from Bruce himself. See the flyer in *this* mailing for details of how to secure your copy.

For details on the progress of the fund and of how to participate in the fanzine auction, please refer to weekly BBB Bulletins posted on www.efanzines.com.

GOAT SNEEZE #15 Derrick Ashby

I skimmed over your computer hardware natter with a small shudder. Your business solution for the family finances was much more interesting.

Microsoft Excel is indeed a wonderful tool for that sort of thing. I don't know how far you have explored its advanced features, both for knowing what they are and putting them to use in practical applications. They are two very different things.

For example, the Subtotal command will ignore any rows that result from a list being filtered (ie. put out of sight in hidden cells so that the data in them are 'filtered out' so far as spreadsheet calculations are concerned). That is important when you want to subtotal only the visible data that results from a list you have filtered. Also, if there are any subtotals in a list being subtotaled (or any nested subtotals) they are ignored to avoid double counting. Subtotal is invalid if any items in the list are 3D references. Then, the Subtotal command returns the error message #VALUE!

Use Subtotal to give you a wide range of options to summarise listed data. The syntax is:

SUBTOTAL(summary-type-code, up to 30 cell ranges and/or data strings)

Summary type codes and their interpretation are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 = AVERAGE | The average of the values in a list. |
| 2 = COUNT | Counts the number of records or rows in a list that contain numeric-type data, ie. numbers, dates and text representations of numbers. |
| 3 = COUNTA | The number of cells in a list that are not empty. |
| 4 = MAX | The largest value in a list. |
| 5 = MIN | The smallest value in a list. |
| 6 = PRODUCT | The result of multiplying all the values in a list. |
| * 7 = STDEV | An estimate of the standard deviation of a population, where the list is the sample. |
| * 8 = STDEVP | The standard deviation of a population, where the list is the entire population. |
| 9 = SUM | The sum of the values in a list. |
| * 10 = VAR | An estimate of the variance of a population, where the list is the sample. |
| * 11 = VARP | The variance of a population, where the list is the entire population. |
| * In statistics, 'Standard Deviation' is a quantity calculated to indicate the extent of deviation in a set of figures; whereas 'Variance' is a quantity equal to the square of the Standard Deviation. | |

'Cell ranges and/or data strings' in the above mentioned Subtotal syntax means that up to thirty arguments can be included in the function. An example is =SUBTOTAL(2,A1:a7,4.25,G14) meaning 'Count the number of numeric items - ie. ignoring empty cells, text, logical values and error values - in data range A1:A7, the figure 4.25 and the content of cell G14'.

Other useful advanced Excel techniques are using buttons within Excel to click on to programs; using Visual Basic to write programs; using filters to hide data; using the Chart Wizard for graphs; using the Pivot Table Wizard to analyse data; swapping data between Excel and a data management language such as Microsoft Access to expedite data entry; and converting to Adobe PDF format for printing, sending data via e-mail and/or posting data to a website.

When using the Pivot Table Wizard, Excel ignores any filters you have applied to a list by using the commands on the Filter submenu of the Data menu. The PivotTable automatically includes all data in the list. Grand totals and subtotals in the Pivot Table are created automatically. If your data field is numeric but contains blank cells, Excel uses the Count summary function as the default summary function - ie. by default, the data field of a PivotTable uses the Sum summary function for numeric data and the Count summary function for non-numeric data OR for data of any type that include blank cells.

As I said before, Microsoft Excel is a *very* powerful tool for writing financial applications. More strength to your arm if you master its intricacies. In common with most Microsoft tools the internal documentation is of limited assistance with its advanced features. Generally, it is best to be shown how to do what you want to do by someone who knows how, then practice while you still remember..

I think your optimism about the finals chances of the Magpies was premature. OK, so they won three games in a row. That seems to have exhausted them for the rest of the season.

YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED 93 Cath Ortlieb

Two deaths in the family one after the other must have been hard to take, particularly since you were so busy at school. I read the article on Louie and Louisa's care of their Down Syndrome daughter Stephanie. At twenty seven years of age, Stephanie should be adult enough to cope with her mother's death but it must be tough going for her. By your account, she will continue to have plenty of family support.

I haven't seen the film '*Eugenio I love you*' yet, but I will if I have the opportunity. There aren't enough life-affirming images around these days.

MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST 41 David Grigg

Great image of the war elephant in action on page one. Sorry your business is experiencing a downturn, due in large measure to the duplicity of the National Australia Bank that kidded you along until they had squeezed the juice out of the lemon and then unceremoniously dumped your account. Hopefully, the new product, *ixpress*, will take off like a rocket and propel Kaleidio into the ranks of the most credit-worthy outfits in the city.

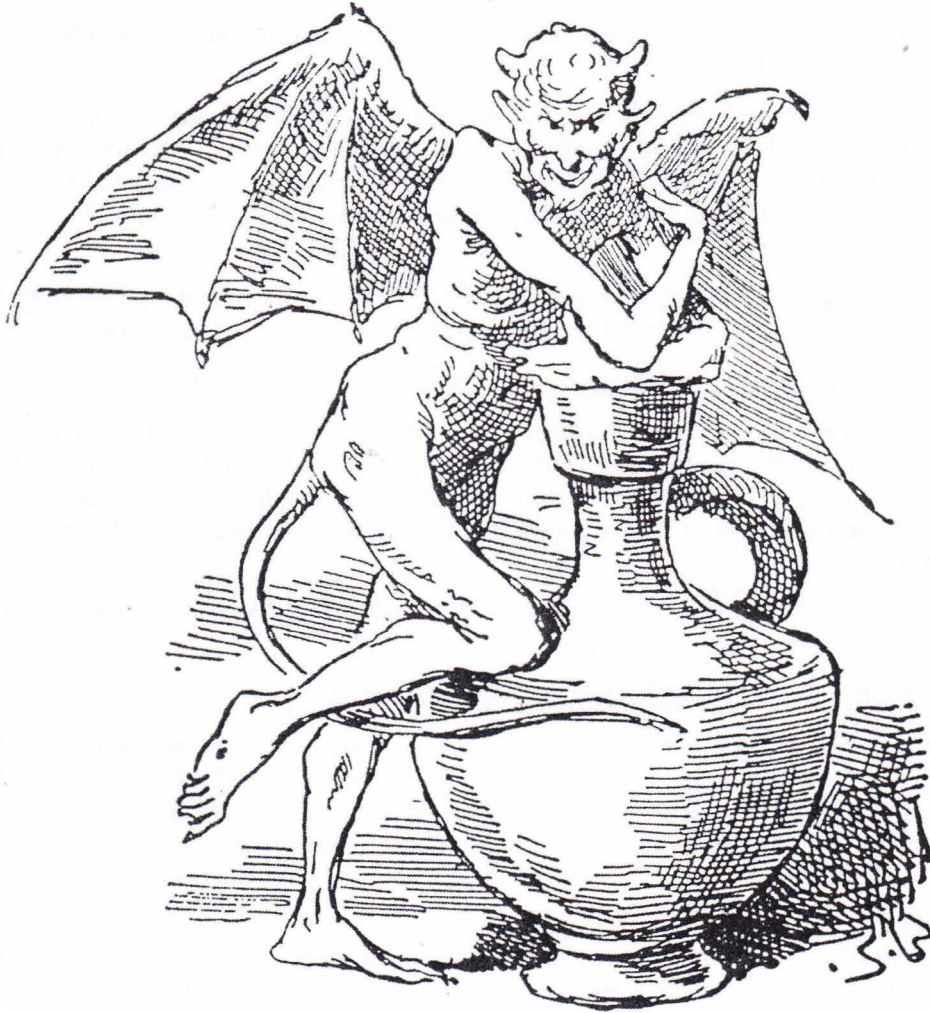
Thanks for the George R R Martin and Neal Stephenson reviews. I know you listen to talking books via the iPod on your morning walks, but what is the proportion of books that you actually read these days? Or, is it all listening? You seem to be leading a balanced life style in every way - even to the extent of cancelling out any weight loss due to your long morning walks with a corresponding weight gain through visits to bakeries along the way. Nice one, David!

GEGENSCHHEIN 98 and 99 Eric Lindsay

The diaries of your trips from Airlie Beach to Brisbane in July 2003 and to New Zealand in September 2004 had their moments, and none better than your description of the first picnic and camping area you and Jean found at Burton's Well. Nothing would have stopped me trying out the bucket showers, although I can understand the reluctance of the ten year old kid who said he didn't think it was worth the trouble. I have yet to meet a ten year old who thinks he needs a bath.

Greg Benford, in his letter of comment dated Wed. October 8th, 2003, asks if the long train ride from Adelaide to Perth is worthwhile. If he connects with the Indian Pacific at Port Augusta, it certainly is. The Nullarbor Plain is over a thousand kilometres of continuous limestone plain. I did the trip there and back in 1986 when I attended Swancon XI and never tired of watching the subtle colour variations on a never-changing landscape. Highlight of the trip was Cook, Queen City of the Nullarbor, pop. 23, where they oil the sand to establish the 'greens' for a game of golf.

Woodcut from 'Boy's Own Paper' 1887



Cerihew corner

All his own work:

*Someone sent Caligula
A Charronia Flavigula*....
Why look for words in a fictionary
When you can find them in a dictionary?*

*Chinese marten

From Sherlock Holmes::

*O-O-O
As the sleuth, Basil Rathbone
Was the quintessential clone.
As Watson, Nigel Bruce
Was the consummate goose.*

That's quite enough!

Dennis Callegari