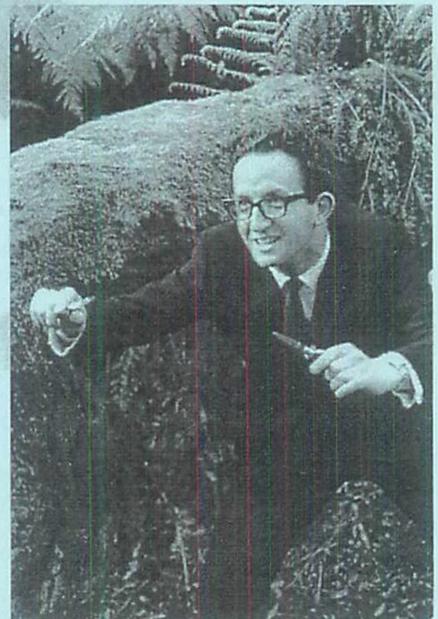


festzine

things for john foyster's sexagesimal anniversary



Honourable mentions

In addition to our visible contributors, we thank and acknowledge four shadow contributors, who were foiled by circumstance: Damien Broderick, Lucy Huntzinger, Robert Silverberg, and Michael Tolley.

Others who expressed a friendly interest in contributing are Marty Cantor, Joyce and Arnie Katz, and Myfanwy Thomas. Equally friendly but less sanguine were Marc Ortlieb (who contributes the comment: 'John is the only person I've met who not only had copies of Paul Kantner *et al.*'s *Blows Against the Empire* and *Sunfighter*, but who also had the lyric sheets') and Perry Middlemiss.

Further information and suggestions, besides those acknowledged in the text, were offered by John Bangsund, Jennifer Bryce, Bruce Gillespie, Brian Knight, Robert Lichtman, Perry Middlemiss, Mark Plummer, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Julian Warner, and Sally Yeoland. Greg Benford, just a few months ahead of John, emailed: 'Welcome him to the over 60s from me!', and Elaine Cochrane, Race Mathews, Lucy Sussex, and Janeen Webb also sent messages.

Particular thanks go to our Agents Overseas: in the UK, Claire Brialey, Maureen Kincaid Speller and Mark Plummer; and in the USA, Janice Gelb, Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal.

Art credits

p. 44 Elizabeth Darling: illustration from John Foyster's GUFF report, *Stranger in Stranger Lands*, about the 'slow luggage' problem at Heathrow: 'Perhaps, I now think, if I had worn a *polka-dotted* tie with a *striped* shirt. . .'. Our thanks to Elizabeth Darling, for permission to reprint this drawing.

p. 20 cartoon by Bill Rotsler from *Parergon Papers* 2, August 1977, John Bangsund. Thanks, John.

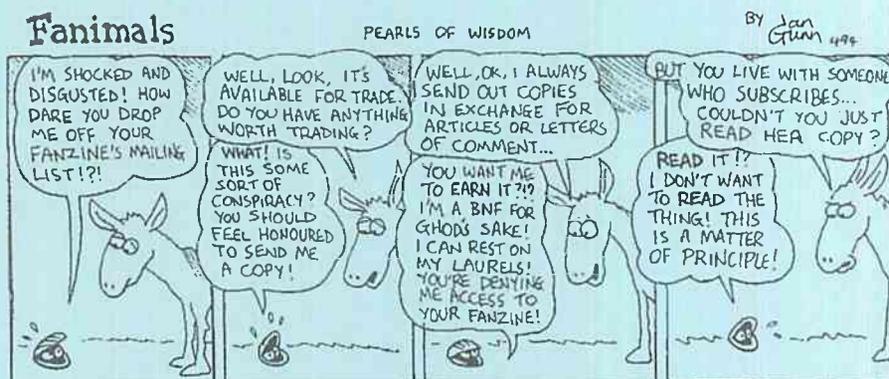
This page Ian Gunn: cartoon from Ian's 'Fanimals' series, *Thyme* 97, May 1994. A bearded Oyster, obviously sharing John Foyster's recently expressed worries about the inaccessibility of fannish news, complains to the *Thyme* editor (or doer of the donkey-work), Alan Stewart. We thank Mrs Karen Pender-Gunn, Ian's widow, for permission to reprint this cartoon.

Back cover by Ursula K. Le Guin. We are sad not to reproduce the original glorious colour.

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Fiduciary Foyster

THE PILOT EPISODE FOR the TV series *LA Law* opens with a senior partner in a law firm found at his desk one Monday morning, dead of too many working weekends. A colleague is asked to address his memorial service. 'The word that comes to mind when I think of Mort Weisberg,' he says, 'is, "Fiduciary."'

And indeed I can think of no better word for John Foyster. In the mercurial world of Australian fandom, John is the fixed star, the repository of public confidence.

We've known one another for more than forty years, and though, by the nature of our lives—his appropriately ant-like in Australia, mine a feckless grasshopper existence elsewhere—it's been an interrupted friendship, we've always resumed it after years of separation with comfort and pleasure.

To say that John has not changed in four decades does him a disservice. His character has deepened, widened, even mellowed. But at heart he remains the serious, dryly humorous, somewhat pedantic man I met in the early 'sixties on my first nervous foray to Melbourne, then, as now, the centre of Australian science fiction activity.

It was soon apparent that John would be the historian of our sf generation. Not only was he knowledgeable about what we were doing; he knew and appreciated what had been done by the fans who went before. (Some years later, making a radio documentary for the ABC, I spent a fascinating couple of hours backstage at a convention as John, without notes, summarised in parsable sentences and coherent paragraphs the entire history of Australian sf fandom, beside which modern Balkan politics is as a tinkling cymbal.)

What was even more startling, he was aware of the science fiction read by our predecessors; was even a scholar of such material, and could discourse on the superiority of Henry Kuttner's style over that of, say, Raymond Z. Gallun. When we knew one another better, I took delivery on his behalf of a quantity of sf pulps shipped from the US. (I can't recall the reason, though John undoubtedly can, even now; he may even still have the sales slip.) I leafed through these magazines with incomprehension. *Startling Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and of course *Astounding* and *Unknown* I knew and admired. But John's pulps, like the authors who wrote for them, were obscure—and rightly so, from what I read.

John, I presume, had bought the magazines with something more than diversion in mind. The scholar and historian have other concerns. But it took a while for us grasshoppers to realise this. In particular, Lee Harding and I, who had actually begun writing science fiction, viewed him somewhat askance. He seemed insufficiently amused by science fiction, and decidedly unamused. And he knew so much—not only about sf and its history, but about history, music, mathematics; arcane subjects to us, who looked on technology as something to be kicked about and jumped upon in pursuit of a good plot. John really understood the Second Law of Thermodynamics, we suspected, and maybe the First and Third as well.

When John came to Sydney, I relaxed a little more in his company, but even on my home ground I suspected that anything I said was likely to be memorised and later incorporated into the record. Recently, he reminded me of a pilgrimage we made to the government office where lurked Graham Stone, ex-president of the disgraced Futurian Society, and both *bête noire* and *eminence grise* of the Sydney science fiction scene. From across the street, we watched this unremarkable little man emerge to eat his lunch. Why did we do it? I can only assume we felt Stone was someone John, in his role as chronicler of our generation, needed to see.

More often, however, my grasshopper nature re-asserted itself. On one occasion, after we'd spent most of the evening talking during one such visit, I suggested we walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and into the city. We took a couple of hours to do so, talking all the time, and ended up in front of the old Customs House at Circular Quay at about 4 a.m. The subject of cinema came up, and I cited an opinion from the French magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

'What magazine?' John enquired. (I wanted to add 'eyebrow raised', but maybe I'm making that up.)

I told him. Reprovingly, he corrected my pronunciation. Not 'Ka-heers' but 'Ki-ay'. He knew French too! It just wasn't fair.

When we arrived home at first light, to be greeted by my somewhat puzzled and relatively new wife, I hustled her without explanation into the bedroom, leaving John alone on the couch. Even then, I recognised it as a gesture of defiance, perhaps a marking-out of territory which I felt to be invaded by this rival with superior genes. He made no comment when we emerged an hour later, but I suspect he wouldn't have said anything had we made love on the rug at his feet. As a demonstration of my territorial imperative, it was less than a success.

At subsequent meetings in Melbourne, and other encounters over the years, I found a Foyster somewhat changed physically, particularly in the matter of facial hair, but essentially the same under all that foliage. Each meeting only served to deepen my respect for him, as did reading his accounts of his personal tragedies. Would I have had the courage and the perspective to write so nakedly about the death of my child? Never. Grasshoppers flee such things. Ants stay, learn, survive and prosper. Long may Fiduciary Foyster do so.

John Baxter started writing professionally for New Worlds in the mid-'sixties, after a brief but lively career in fandom. He was subsequently diverted into the world of movies, where he co-scripted the detestable Time Guardian and wrote biographies of Luis Buñuel, Federico Fellini, Steven Spielberg, Woody Allen and Stanley Kubrick. He lives in Paris.

Why are we all here? Whose fault is it?

Leigh Edmonds' fannish career began over Easter 1966 when he attended the convention John Foyster organised. He began going to MSFC meetings regularly—soon ASFR appeared—and from then on it was nothing but fanac, fanac, fanac, more or less. In 1988 he and Valma moved to Perth and he embarked on a PhD which, as anyone who has done one will tell you, expands to fill every mental and temporal nook and cranny, so the fanac fell right off. These days about his only fanac is SAPS, which John Foyster introduced him to in the late 1960s.

IN TIMES LONG PAST, fans in the United States used to blame things on Eney: Richard H or Dick, depending on how friendly you were. I'm not sure why he got the blame. The only source I have for such esoteric information is the *Fancyyclopedia II* and since it was published by Eney there is no mention of this catchcry. But it's right there on the cover: 'It's Eney's Fault'.

On the other side of the globe, in the fan antipodes where, so far as I know, Eney has never set foot, we need another to blame for our misfortunes and our fortunes. Whose fault is it?

Let me name a name for you, one whose endeavours have visited on the hapless fan community of the antipodes much fortune and only a little misfortune. There were the elders, those who lived before fandom and gave it a life here, but they are to most of us more mythical than real and their labours, fortunes and misfortunes, are wreathed in the mists of time. Besides, the passage of the years has diminished the impact of their achievements on the modern world so they are little more than echoes like the ripples in the sky that tell astronomers about the first moments of the big bang.

So, let's blame somebody who is alive in the modern age but whose labours have helped to give the modern fan antipodes its current shape and direction. Somebody who through his intelligence, his drive, his enthusiasm, his wit, his knowledge and experience has given shape to the modern fan antipodes. It may be that with the passage of time the significance of this fan's achievements seems diminished, but that's only because as we move forward in time we tend to forget the roots that gave our fanac life and meaning. And we just as easily forget that what we learned and did in fandom shaped the rest of our lives. So let's not forget, let's recall for a moment one of the most important and inspiring people we have met. One who is truly worthy of copping the blame.

Who was it who revived convention fandom in Australia? After its decade of gentle slumber who was it who enlivened Australian fandom by getting together a bunch of unsuspecting friends and organising them into running a convention in 1966? Who was just as active in organising and assisting in all the major conventions in Australia for at least the next decade and continued to be a source of encouragement and advice in the years following? Who was it who really made Australia's first World SF Convention happen through years of organising, plotting, scheming, encouraging, pushing and endless hard work? Who was it who dreamed up the idea of holding a second WorldCon in Australia and got that show on the road too?

Who was it who revived fanzine fandom in Australia? There had been a longish tradition of publishing fanzines in Australia but as Australian fandom meandered its way through Menzies' 1950s the energy and vitality that fanzines could express seemed to evaporate. Whose was the new energetic, vital voice that took its cue from Sixth Fandom in the US (to my ear at any rate) with a blend of keen observation of the world and exciting insights into science fiction and fandom? A voice that also had a political and moral awareness sadly missing from much fanac. (I plead guilty on this count.) Who was it who fingered John Bangsund to publish *ASFR* and, if he didn't actually do the pointing, who was it who stood beside John and encouraged and helped him as he brought *ASFR* to life? Who was it who published sercon fanzines, fannish fanzines, newszines, apazines, showing the way in just about every area of fan publishing and encouraging and helping an entire generation of Australian faneds who themselves set trends that would last for over a decade in Australian fandom?

Who was it who led the way in sf criticism? When, in the 1960s, intelligent commentary on science fiction seemed limited to the works of William Atheling Jr and Damon Knight, and the idea of university courses on sf seemed as fantastic as the stories of Doc Smith, who was it who gave a new level of intelligence, insight and rigour to writing about sf? Who was it who created an environment with a group of like-minded people who could create and then expand the informed discourse on science fiction? Who is still at it, contributing as much as anyone else to the discourse at Australia's third World Science Fiction Convention, and with an energy and excitement that most highly qualified academics would love to be able to emulate in their lectures?

Who is it who continues to set us an example of how we should live our lives, reminding us of principles of nobility, friendship and the struggle with our own weaknesses and tragedies? Who is it who sets examples in comradeship, intelligence and joy for life that extend beyond fandom and science fiction into every corner of our lived lives? Who is it who has done so much for us in so many ways through words, actions and friendship that have brought us together for this commemoration? That fan probably deserves more blame than anyone else we know in common for the way we all turned out.

Let's blame him.

...

PS. All the above is an expanded and perhaps unnecessary way of saying that I think John Foyster is a special person and that I count it a great delight to have met him, worked with him and to number him among my friends. But where's the fun in writing just that sentence?

The achievements of John Foyster

An extract from Aussiecon III Fan Guest of Honour speech, 1 September 1999

JOHN FOYSTER LEARNED ABOUT fanzines and fandom from John Baxter—the same bloke who today writes film biographies and lives in France. Foyster met Baxter at Baxter's family home at Bowral, a New South Wales country town. During the same weekend they both met Damien Broderick, a teenager who was at the time training to be a priest. As John writes:

On the Monday morning John Baxter and I set off to catch a train to Sydney. We were about halfway to the station when the ground began to vibrate wildly. When the earthquake was over, we ran back to the Baxters' house to see if there was any damage. There was, as I recall, relatively little damage—a crack or two of a very minor nature. And so we turned back for the station and took the train to Sydney.

How better to start your fannish career than with an earthquake!

By the mid 1960s, John Baxter had stopped publishing fanzines, even as John Foyster began publishing them. His early titles included *Satura*, *The Gryphon* and *The Wild Colonial Boy*. Soon after, John Foyster met John Bangsund and Lee Harding, which led to the publication of Lee Harding's fanzine *Canto* 1. John Bangsund was not much interested in science fiction, but he gave the impression that he might enjoy publishing his own magazine.

In Easter 1966, John Foyster organised the first Australian convention for eight years. Held at the very crowded Melbourne SF Club rooms in Somerset Place, it generated the feeling that Australian fandom had undergone a renaissance. Kevin Dillon was so moved by the fannish significance of the event that he walked down the aisle and placed in John Baxter's hand a twenty pound note in order to set up the next Australian convention. Twenty pounds would be worth about \$400 today.

The most important event of the 1966 convention occurred during the Business Session. It was decided that Australia needed a new national magazine. John Baxter said at the time: 'What we're thinking of is an amateur magazine, circulated amongst people who are interested in science fiction, and probably containing articles and reviews and stories, perhaps.' Lee Harding named John Bangsund as the person who should edit it, and John said yes. Lee Harding and John Foyster joined the team that would produce it monthly. It was, of course, *Australian Science Fiction Review*.

Although the idea of Australia in '75 was hatched by John Bangsund in Melbourne and Andy Porter in New York, it was John Foyster who led discussions about the Bid at both the first Syncon in 1970 and the Easter convention of the same year. John had picked a committee to investigate the possibility of holding a world convention in Australia. During 1970 and 1971, every fanzine publisher in Australia churned duplicators in order to raise interest in the idea. In 1973, Australia won the bid.

I find it difficult to catalogue all of John Foyster's many achievements within fandom. In 1966, after a detective pilgrimage, he discovered the true identity of Cordwainer Smith just a week before the news came that Dr Paul Linebarger had died, and that Dr Linebarger had written sf as Cordwainer Smith. John's tribute to Cordwainer Smith appeared first in *ASFR* No. 11, and has been reprinted several times since then. John's two critical fanzines *exploding madonna* and *Journal of Ompbalistic Epistemology*, featured writers such as Samuel Delany, James Blish, Sten Dahlskog, Brian Aldiss, George Turner and many others, although its print run was only fifteen copies per issue. His many other fanzines have included *Chunder!* and *Norstrilian News*, which gave Carey and me the idea of calling our small press Norstrilia Press.

In August 1970, John began the Nova Mob, Melbourne's sf discussion group. It took the entire first meeting to decide on this name. The Nova Mob has kept going, with one or two lapses, ever since. The format has remained the same: one person will give a paper on some aspect of sf, but the rest of the evening is social. No dues are paid; we depend on the good graces of the people at whose homes we meet. Our Thirtieth Anniversary is next year (that is, in AD 2000).

John was also the Chairman of Aussiecon II during its early stages. In 1986, he gathered together a collective to publish the Second Series of *Australian Science Fiction Review*. In 1987, he moved to Adelaide, where he began Critical Mass, the Adelaide equivalent of the Nova Mob.

The trouble with reducing a person's career to a catalogue is that it gives the impression that John Foyster is a paragon of virtue. Not so. I have at home a photo of John, taken in 1963 before he grew a beard. The beard masks a sardonic smile. John prefers the role of devil's advocate because occasionally he doesn't mind siding with the devil. He has, for instance, spent the last thirty years denigrating most of my own fanzine efforts, which has only made me more determined to keep going. However, on the day when I was most deeply in trouble, in late 1975, it was John Foyster who turned up that day at the door and sat down at the same table for a couple of hours, saying little, but providing just the support I needed at the time.

Bruce Gillespie is a fan unfortunate enough to enter fandom as late as 1968, several years after and therefore forever standing under the mighty shadow of John Foyster. When Bruce began SF Commentary in 1969, John Foyster was often helpful, eventually guest editing six issues, and at other times seeming to withdraw approval, for unknown reasons. Bruce benefited most from Foyster's encouragement of the efforts of Franz Rottensteiner to promote the work of Stanislaw Lem, whose essays began to appear in SFC in 1969. The publication of Lem articles in the early 'seventies did much to help SF Commentary earn many Ditmar Awards and three Hugo nominations. Bruce, having started talking to his friends instead of exhorting them, widened his fanzine interests in the 1980s, launching The Metaphysical Review in 1984. The publication schedules of both SFC and TMR are constantly threatened by lack of money and time, but their editor lives in eternal hope of publishing further issues and perhaps even receiving contributions from JF and YR.

Let John Bangsund say it best, as he always does:

There is a certain daunting aspect to John Foyster, in person and in print. He does not suffer fools gladly—not from any malice or lack of essential humanity, but simply from having more important things on hand. This shows itself in a certain abruptness of manner—perhaps aloofness would be a better word—which is easily misunderstood by lesser mortals, i.e. most of us. In his writings he expects you to make the necessary logical leaps from one thought or sentence to the next. . .—and if you don't do this, that's tough cheese and you should be reading something else. Foyster the merciless is well known in fandom—perhaps more so overseas than here. [However] John's fandom is the pure old-time 'just a goddamn hobby' kind. Not the crass commercialism of those who charge money for their fanzines; not for him the sad hang-up of those who have nothing else in life except fandom. . . It's just lucky for us that John's way of life, in its enviable totality, includes a deep involvement with fandom. We are richer for it.



Foyster fact and fiction

The non-fiction Foyster

JOHN FOYSTER IS SUCH a multi-faceted and talented person that it is difficult to know where to start. I thought the detailed and useful Foyster timeline which John's partner, Yvonne Rousseau, provided to contributors as background to this *Festschrift* would help. In some ways it did, because I learnt things about John I had not previously known. In other respects, though, it did not really help because it only confirmed the unusual diversity of John's talents and activities.

I first met John in 1987, after he left Melbourne where he had lived for many years, working at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and Preshil School, to take up a new job at the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) in Adelaide. John's decision to move has had a profound effect on my life and my career, for in the years following he became my mentor, colleague, adviser and friend. His influence and guidance allowed me to do things in my career which I would never have thought possible before meeting him, and his thoughts and ideas continue to help (and challenge!) me in my work.

One of the things I have noticed is that people's opinions about John vary enormously. For me, he is one of the most caring, considerate and understanding people I know. He is also a man of great integrity, always true to his principles, and honest and consistent in everything he does, with a deeply-felt concern for fairness and justice. There is also an insistent, passionate side to his character which some find intimidating, especially when coupled with his powerful intellect. Those who know him well, however, realise that beneath the assertive exterior is a man of great humanity and compassion.

The serious side of John Foyster

Several things from the Foyster timeline immediately struck me. Firstly, I knew of John's involvement in science fiction, but I had no idea of the extent of that involvement, the extent of his acquaintances in that field or the regard in which he is held. This last point, though, does not at all surprise me. Secondly, I was not at all surprised to see the word 'polymath' appearing in a description of John. Nobody who knows him well could fail to notice the power of his intellect, the speed and logical precision of his thinking, the range of his interests, his phenomenal memory and his ability with language, which allows him to explain quite complex ideas in terms which others can understand. Thirdly, I was surprised that the areas where John and I have been work colleagues—basically educational research and assessment—are just a small part of the range of activities in which he has been involved.

Sadly, there are too many people who worked with John in the education and training fields who could not deal with the challenges he presented. All too often they did not have the wit to understand what he had to say or to appreciate the significance of his ideas. Yet for me, one of the things I enjoy most about working with John is the commonsense he brings to everything he does, and his practical, no-nonsense approach. This has been evident even when we have worked on complex or technically demanding projects. In research there are those who, if there is a complicated way of doing something, will find it, and then wonder why others have difficulty understanding or appreciating what they have done. This is not John's way. He only uses complicated frameworks or sophisticated technical approaches if that is what is needed for the task. And when he writes up his findings, there is an easy, relaxed flow to his writing which make the ideas accessible and easy to follow.

John's use of statistics is equally apt and straightforward. His mathematical skills and his penetrating mind have given him a profound understanding of statistics, when to use them, when not to use them, and most importantly, a deeper insight than anyone I know into the misleading messages which can arise when we attempt to depict reality through statistics. The research world is full of people who spend a lot of time using statistics to find and analyse small differences between things. These differences are often significant, statistically, but in reality mean nothing. John made this point quite colourfully and memorably to some colleagues in the vocational education and training sector when he said, 'If a difference doesn't stick out like the tits on a cow's udder, forget it!'

On matters of silly or over-complicated terminology he is equally colourful and blunt. For example, John is a strong supporter of the women's movement and women's rights, but he is unequivocal about whether we should use the word 'sex' or the more politically correct and in-vogue term, 'gender'. 'Words have gender, people and animals have sex!', he once said. You can't really argue with that.

There is also a controversial side to John. This was brought home to me most forcefully when I was the staff representative on a selection panel for a senior position for which John had applied. The others on the panel were movers and shakers in the education system—they all knew John, both personally and by reputation. The consensus of opinion seemed to be 'He is a brilliant man, but. . .' That 'but' has always troubled me, because it seems to me that when John is being controversial, all he is really doing is asking for some logic and intellectual rigour

Brian Knight does

statistically-oriented research in the education and training fields. He has worked with John Foyster for over ten years, and they have become good friends. They share a number of common interests, including educational assessment and measurement, what makes a good education, and classical music. He freely admits to being a Foyster protégé.

in public decision making. In this he is in distinguished company. For example, Hugh Stretton at the University of Adelaide consistently argued for more informed and rigorous decision making in all areas of government. For me there was no 'but' about John's application for an important, senior position. Others, though, clearly thought differently.

I have also heard people criticise John for having a singular view of the world, an ironic term to use given its meaning in mathematics and physics (a point at which all laws break down). But this comment really says more about the critics than the man being criticised. What these people are really criticising is John's consistency, and his adherence to his principles and beliefs, for he is definitely no Marquis of Halifax, the infamous trimmer who changed tack with every shift in the political wind.

In education and training circles John is often remembered for his occasional outbursts at meetings, and there are a few—a very few—who feared these outbursts and remember John only for his critical invective. The most extreme, I am told, is when he brought a particularly silly and pointless discussion to an abrupt halt with an angry, forceful declamation which began 'Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!', and proceeded to point out to those present just how aimless their discussion had become. He then gave them ten minutes to sort out their thoughts, and left. There are few who would be brave enough to take such a strong line with a committee, no matter how great the shambles.

But as with the great conductor, Toscanini, I believe that John's reputation for irascible outbursts is unwarranted, or at least greatly exaggerated. In my experience, these incidents were very few and far between. Most of the time his contribution at meetings was patient and constructive. Only occasionally did one of those feared outbursts occur, and on my observation the people at whom it was directed were invariably being sufficiently silly, obtuse or just plain irresponsible to warrant every word. Some would take these outbursts as a personal attack, but if they had listened carefully to what John was saying they would have discovered the same reasoned, intellectual underpinning which informs all his work.

When John resigned from SSABSA to take up a position at NCVER, he left behind a number of very considerable accomplishments. In his time there a large number of the Year 12 subject curricula were evaluated, using the evaluation model which John himself had developed, and were then reaccredited. Many of his ideas and suggestions were incorporated into the new syllabuses. SSABSA's Assessment and Moderation Policy was (and still is) a model of its kind, embodying sound principles and practical good sense. John was also instrumental in the development of new statistical moderation procedures for teacher assessments, which ultimately led to the development of a state-of-the-art procedure based on locally weighted least squares regression (LOWESS) techniques (he recognised that this was one situation where a technically complex solution was needed). Among his final achievements at SSABSA was the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level (NAFLASSL), which resolved many long-standing difficulties with the curricula and assessment for languages other than English in the senior secondary system. Getting agreement to this, with each state and territory having its own vested interests, was no mean achievement, and was a precursor to similar work John was to do in the vocational education training system after he moved to NCVER.

John has always been unequivocal and passionate about the need to get things right. This was his message when he left SSABSA in 1991. By that time SSABSA was starting to have the problems which would eventually lead to serious errors in the Year 11 and 12 results issued to students. In his farewell speech John used one of the tragedies from his own life to ram his point home. I was not present but I know many people who were. None of them will forget what he had to say: 'I watched my son die because the doctors couldn't get it right!' I am told you could have cut the air with a knife at that point, and some were close to tears, so powerful was the message and so strong was the passion and commitment with which it was delivered.

The lighter side of J M Foyster

People who have worked with John generally joke about the state of his desk. Papers which come his way are read, usually only once as that is all that is needed in his case to commit them to memory or decide on their worth, and added to the top of the pile. The pile grows randomly until some frustrated colleague decides that enough is enough and tidies up the mess in his absence. On his return there would usually be a brief, angry response, the incident would then be promptly forgotten and the process of random accumulation of papers would begin again. Only a person with an exceptional memory could operate in this way.

The Foyster collection of books is one of the largest private collections I have seen. It includes, for example, an 1896 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, fascinating stuff for anyone interested in the history of knowledge. Many of the books are important works, now out of print or very difficult to obtain. The collection is not catalogued, but that does not matter as ninety-nine per cent of the time John knows whether his collection includes a particular book. On top of that, he can usually find things quickly and is generous about lending his books to others. I was horrified, though, to read in the Foyster timeline that John had come close to serious injury when a bookcase loaded with books crashed onto him. Shades of the eccentric French composer, Alkan, who legend has it was killed when a fully-laden bookcase crashed onto him.

On more than one occasion the Foyster library has been my salvation when I needed a particular book quickly. At one stage I was enrolled in a post-graduate subject on curriculum. The lecturer, known for his conservatism, wanted us to choose a writer on education and write an essay on that person's views. However, the lecturer neglected to restrict the choice to one of the writers we had studied during the course, so I decided to have some fun by writing about Bertrand Russell's unconventional views on education. The trouble was, I could not lay my hands quickly on the essays in which Russell discussed education. A visit to John solved the problem—he had all the books I needed and the lecturer had to deal with an essay about a thinker who, unbeknown to me, he despised because Russell had left his wife for another woman!

Sartorial elegance has never been a concern for John, it is simply not one of his priorities. I suspect he would say that there are far more important things in life than appearances, and I also suspect that he would regard the neatly pressed suit, shirt and tie, the conventional attire of men who work in offices, as being too much like a uniform. But his appearance is often striking, and he has an exquisite sense of the sartorial, as anyone who has worked with him will testify.

Items of dress which come to mind are the deerstalker cap, which makes John look like a latter-day Sherlock Holmes; brightly coloured woollen gloves on cold winter mornings; the not-very-elegant but practical, heavy walking boots (since John does not drive he does far more walking than most people); the shoulder bag for carrying the inevitable books, papers and floppy disks; and more recently, fingerless gloves, as the onset of post-polio syndrome has made him less able to cope with cold than in the past. Somewhere along the line—I think it was after his first visit to Malaysia—bright, multi-coloured shoelaces started to appear and are now an almost standard feature of his attire.

One of the most enduring images I have of John is of his walking to work at SSABSA early on a cold, misty morning. He had on his heavy walking boots, brightly coloured gloves and his deerstalker cap. Over his shoulder was the bag, stuffed full of materials for the day. He walked steadily but purposefully, with a slight forward stoop, heavy tread and a rolling gait, characteristics which I now realise are probably a consequence of his having polio as a child. As was his wont, he was reading intently as he walked. I knew, as I cycled by, that the three hundred page paperback would probably be finished in a day, and tomorrow morning he would be reading something quite different.

Not only does John speed-read, but his level of retention is remarkable and makes ordinary mortals feel quite inferior. This was really sheeted home to me when John lent me his newly-arrived copy of Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*. I read it, quite quickly (in two to three days), and returned it to him. He read it immediately, in less than twenty-four hours, and we ended up discussing the book. I realised very quickly that whereas I had retained ten or perhaps twenty per cent of the detail, John had retained ninety-five per cent or more. It was a humbling experience.

When John came to SSABSA as manager of curriculum development and evaluation, the then Director, Dr Viv Evers, was particularly pleased that he had been able to lure such a talented person away from Melbourne. On a visit to Melbourne Viv met up with some of John's former colleagues and part of the conversation, understandably, was about John. One of the questions Viv was asked, apparently, was 'Has he worn his red boiler suit to work yet?' Back in Adelaide, Viv made the mistake of recounting this anecdote at a staff meeting at which John was present. The following day the bright red boiler suit appeared at work, with John inside, and that was his attire for the day, much to the chagrin of some of the more conservative staff members.

I never met John's father but I sensed that he, too, was an unusual man, and that many of the remarkable qualities of the son were due, in part, to the father. At one stage John's father, then about eighty, paid a visit to John and Yvonne in Adelaide, and I remember that one evening father and son together headed off to a meeting of the Fabian Society. On another occasion we were talking at work about Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, I think—a question arose in discussion which required a reference to some obscure part of the Old Testament for the answer. John made a quick call to his father, who could not remember what the answer was in translation but could recall the passage by heart in the original Hebrew!

John's repartee at meetings and in conversation is quick, sharp and frequently sardonic. His off-the-cuff thoughts on politicians, both specific and general, have enlivened many a meeting. When someone queried whether anyone would really misinterpret the statistics in the manner being discussed, his response was immediate: 'If you don't believe it just listen to any politician!' On another occasion a mention of military music straight away brought forward the response, 'a contradiction in terms'. And on the occasion of one of John's birthdays at SSABSA (when he turned forty-nine, I think), an older staff member made a gibe at John about his reluctance to acknowledge the occasion. The gibe went something like 'I thought after almost fifty years you'd be used to it', to which John's immediate retort was 'Ah, but you've had a lot more practice than me!' Touché Foyster! Other examples of his quick wit are legion.

The human Foyster

Until now it may seem that I have presented a picture of a highly intellectual, individual and rather severe person. Yet for all his intelligence and seriousness, John is one of the most amiable, considerate and caring people I know. In fact there is nothing I feel I could not ask his advice about. There is little overt sentiment or sentimentality in his presentation to the world, but he is clearly deeply concerned about what happens to people.

I first noticed this fully when John Gaffney, one of John's colleagues and friends in the maths education field, was diagnosed with throat cancer and died quite quickly afterwards. Just before John Gaffney died John was deeply concerned that there was 'nothing there'—his friend had clearly given up the fight. It seemed to me, witnessing these events, that John was deeply distressed by this, although he hid it well. After John Gaffney died, John was equally concerned for his widow and the Gaffneys' two young children, for people must have a life after the death of someone close to them, as John knows only too well from his own experiences.

In the last few years John has been involved in a number of projects in Malaysia and South Africa. On some of these we have worked jointly. I could not help noticing (and envying) the speed with which John comes to grips with the key issues and becomes attuned to the political context which surrounds every project. Even more impressive, however, is the rapport which he develops with others on the project, and the trust and respect which is accorded him. On a number of occasions I have met people with whom John has worked on such projects. Invariably, his contribution is remembered and spoken of in the most positive terms, often years afterwards, and on quite a few occasions John's advice has been sought long after his part in a project has finished. The Malaysians have invited him back on a number of occasions, a happy circumstance given that Malaysia is a country which he finds both congenial and salubrious.

As well as developing a strong rapport with his colleagues, John is also a shrewd judge of people's capabilities and commitment. This makes him an especially valuable member of staff selection panels. A number of my colleagues, both past and present, gained their first big break because of John's perceptiveness about their potential. As a supervisor John is demanding, particularly in relation to work standards, but he is also considerate and fair. Most people who have worked for John have thrived under his guidance and tutelage.

As for myself, to have worked with John Foyster for over ten years and to have become a friend has been a real privilege.

Some scattered history moments

DAD MUST HAVE INTRODUCED me to Pogo² and the Okefenokee Swamp at a very early age... I remember Churchy the turtle and most of his mates. I remember devouring scores of cartoons from Dad's collection—Li'l Abner, Buck Rogers, Pogo. I think this may have been the genesis of my current enthusiasm for humour and caricature in architecture...

Dad also introduced me to gourmet cooking. One of my most treasured memories is of making real chocolate fudge (buttery and rich) in our first house, Glengariff Drive, with Dad. I must have been maybe four or so at the time. It's left me with an addiction to Haigh's chocolate fudge, which is almost as good. Over the years, he's introduced me to the wonders of garlic (we almost had a regular table at Enri's when Dad lived in Lennox Street), fresh bagels (I think one of the major reasons I encouraged Simon to choose our house site was because of its proximity to Glick's), and trying really hard recipes (we actually made sachertorte from scratch in his house at Norwood) and, of course, Malaysian food.

Dad's preference for being behind the camera rather than in front has left me with few photos to send you. However, I do have the attached photo of three generations of Foyster university graduates. Dad's always there to witness important rites of passage for me, no matter how difficult or bizarre it's been for him. He bravely stayed overnight at the demented student household I lived in on the occasion of my 21st (toga) party, and visited the extreme bohemian shared warehouse I lived in for my graduation. He's always seemed to get on well with my mates, and his acceptance of oddball people has been a great influence for me.

I guess the most important thing for me that Dad's handed down is his belief in being your own person. As just one example, throughout my working career, he's encouraged me to pursue my own agenda, and given me the faith to seriously follow a path to self employment.

That's all I can really add at this point—I'm sure his extraordinarily large library, enthusiasm for Charlie Parker, photography, science fiction and teaching have all been covered elsewhere...



¹2001: the MOTA house, designed by Miranda Foyster and Simon Drysdale in partnership, is featured in architecture magazines and on ABC television's Arts Show and wins the Port Phillip Award for new houses. [YR]

²John Foyster is a connoisseur of *Pogo* (1948-1973), Walt Kelly's satirical comic strip, set in Okefenokee Swamp, Georgia, USA. John and another connoisseur, Cherry Wilder, therefore often enjoin one another at Christmas time to 'Deck the Halls with Boston Charlie', and John takes pride in his daughter Miranda's extreme youthfulness when she first uttered the word 'Churchy', signifying the *Pogo*-strip turtle, Churchy la Femme.

Miranda Foyster

1967: born Melbourne

1968-1983: live variously in Glen Waverley and South Yarra and St Kilda with various parents and step-parents, and spend tedious weekends and entire school holidays by self at farm in Kyneton. Attend school and generally annoy parents and stepparents by being a teenager.

1984: complete HSC.

1985: commence Architecture at Melbourne Uni.

1991: graduate from Architecture at Melbourne Uni, discover building industry in huge slump with no work available to graduates, and promptly commence studying Arts, majoring in Philosophy and Art History. Do occasional contract work for architectural firm Ashton Raggat MacDougall (designers of the new Australian Museum in Canberra) including working on Storey Hall, St Kilda Library...

March 1994: finally get a real job with an architect.

April 1994: discover waitressing more profitable than architecture on receipt of first paycheck but decide to stick it out...

1997: make foolish decision with Simon to build our own house.

1998: commence working at Wood Marsh. Spend 1.5 years documenting new Bourke Street Pedestrian Bridge at Spencer Street Station.

2000: house finally finished. Bridge finally finished¹.

Foyster

Biography of Mervyn Barrett. Born and grew up in Wellington. A science fiction addict at fifteen. Lived five years in Melbourne with Jill Dudding and nine years in London by himself. Returned to New Zealand via Aussiecon in '75. Organised with Brian Thorogood first NZ con in '79. Married Janet Horncy in 1983.

I KNEW IT WOULDN'T be easy, this Foyster Surprise Tribute. There are obviously lots of good things remembered that could be put down on paper if I could but think of them, but wouldn't that be too easy? Shouldn't I, after all these years, have something incredibly insightful to offer? And talking about easy, those Americans have got this tribute thing really sewn up. Sure, they have big testimonial dinners and all that, but they also have the Celebrity Roast. The honoured one sits at a table loaded with booze while friends loaded with booze hurl loving abuse at him and tell all sorts of funny exaggerated or untrue stories about him. Because the recipient of these attentions is usually someone with some sort of public persona and it is this that receives the attention, not much that is said is seen as applying to the real person. What a pity something like this couldn't have been done. If it had been, I (and I suspect a lot of others) wouldn't have spent several hours staring at a blank screen, getting up and finally getting around to putting those books away, making unhelpful notes on odd scraps of paper, and lying awake in bed trying to figure out what to write. Would the real John Foyster please sit down so we can all make witty sarcasms about the other one?

But where is the real John Foyster, I asked myself, and how can I be sure I'm not misrepresenting him in anything I write? Then I remember that ancient piece of bi-lingual wisdom that I have just made up, 'In fanzines *veritas*.' If the real John Foyster is to be found anywhere, it's in his fanzines. I went to the fanzines—the ancient ones. The trouble with this was that, as an egoboo-starved fan, I found myself concentrating on reading all the stuff I wrote for him. I felt embarrassed about this at first—I was supposed to be researching John. Then relief. My instinct is vindicated. Admirable parts of the Foyster make-up are hereby revealed—energy and generosity. John Foyster, publishing giant, encouraging the efforts of a struggling older fan to say something interesting or, at least, readable. Even going to the extent of joining him up in ANZAPA and typing up and submitting his activity requirement for him.

But what about Foyster writing in his own fanzines? Well, except for one particular period of pain and sorrow he wrote about, there is little of obvious intimacy—which of course could be said of most fanzine writing. There is Foyster, though, in the meticulous convention reports and the sharp-edged rebuttals to some of the points he disagrees with in this or that loc. Some of it reminded me of *Anstible*. Was the young Dave Langford influenced by *The Gryphon*? Could Dave Langford's style be seen as developed personalised Foyster? Should this be considered now or is it a question for posterity? (I put the question to Max Posterity who delivers the pizzas but he is non-committal.)

As amendments and corrections to the Foyster timeline flowed in, my wife (hereinafter referred to as Janet because that is her name) who is my email intermediary would ask, 'Have you written anything yet?'

'It's not as simple as that, you know,' I would reply, echoing the words of the great Henry Crun.

'You could tell people about how John likes ordering lots of entrées when he eats out in restaurants,' she suggests. (American readers may substitute 'starters' for entrées at this point.)

I consider this. Maybe she's on to something here. John is an entrée(s) main course eater, while I am a main course dessert person. If it's true that opposites attract, then this could be the key fact our friendship is built on. And there are other things to reinforce this idea also: sport, for instance. John likes cricket and played rugby. Expressing the degree of interest I have in cricket would require a huge number of zeros after the decimal point before getting to the significant figure, and in a newspaper nothing speeds my attention elsewhere faster than the word, 'rugby'. If, for instance, the town of Rugby was wiped out in a blaze of atomic fire, it wouldn't matter how large the headlines were in the paper I was reading. I'd have to be told about the event.

'You could write about,' Janet suggested, 'that story you've told me about him meeting Sarah Vaughan.' A revealing anecdote—that might work. (While I was struggling with this in Wellington, New Zealand, Robin Johnson rang me—from Hobart, Tasmania, which will give you some idea of the desperation that this project has engendered—and complained that he didn't have any Foyster anecdotes. 'Well, I haven't got many,' I said, 'and you're not bloody well getting any of mine.')

It was in the early 'sixties, and an amazing time for someone in Melbourne interested in jazz, because several famous and important musicians came to Australia then and did whole weeks at Melbourne venues. Complete groups, too—not just soloists using local backing groups. Sarah Vaughan and her trio played a week in an unlikely hotel near Melbourne's railway station. On a Sunday night with no gig and nowhere else to go, they came around to our place. John arrived just after they got there. 'John.' I said, 'this is Sarah Vaughan.' They shook hands. The Foyster chin—visible in those days—headed floorwards and was braked only by those little hinge things we have inside our face. I asked him to stay but he had an appointment to keep with Lee Harding. Perhaps you have to be a jazz fan to appreciate this. More than a jazz fan—a jazz fan in that time when a lot of the greatest jazzmen were alive and at their peak and Sarah Vaughan, who was one of the great song stylists—a historical perspective would be Bessie Smith, Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah—knew them and had played

and recorded with most of them. And here, perhaps, is the insight. John Foyster, jazz fan, but above all a man of his word, passed up the opportunity to sit at the feet of and listen to this great lady, in order to honour his commitment to be some place at a certain time. It should not be thought that this was done without pain. John's anguished first words, as he told them to me later, when he got to his destination were, 'Look, Harding, do you know who I've just left so I could come and see you?'

We can list the things we like about people we know after we've known them for a while, but that doesn't really come to grips with why we like them. That can make writing something like this difficult, and it's why something like this can turn out to be more about oneself than the subject at hand. I think I've thought of a cunning way to get around this problem, but the idea comes too late to be developed for this tribute, since the deadline is only a couple of days away as this is written. It would go something like this:

I adapt a movie title and call it '23 Short Paragraphs About John Foyster'. Then I give each paragraph a heading—'John Foyster: Daring Gourmet'; 'John Foyster: Publishing Giant'; 'John Foyster: Fandom's Secret Master?'; 'John Foyster: World Traveller'; and so on. Then I'd come to 'John Foyster: Friend' and there'd be nothing under the heading because the heading says it all.



Glimpses of John Foyster and Australian fandom, 1964–80

John Bangsund is a 92-year-old, one-legged, transvestite airline pilot, it says somewhere. He is the world's foremost authority on Prestressed Concrete Verse, of which he is the only known practitioner, it says somewhere else. His web pages at <http://users.pipeline.com.au/bangsund/> include his CV and other well-honed fiction.

JOHN FOYSTER WAS ELEVEN when I first didn't meet him, and I was thirteen. We were at Northcote High School in 1953–4, but I was accidentally three years ahead of him, so on social grounds we had no occasion to meet (just as Mervyn Binns had not felt obliged to make my grubby-kneed acquaintance there in 1950), and besides, in those days John was known as Max. He is described in the school magazine for 1953 as one of the 'brains' of Form 1A. Since you needed a good deal more intelligence than average to get into the A stream in the first place, that was quite a compliment. I started in the B stream and drifted aimlessly downward until I turned fifteen in 1954, when I left school and started work. Later that year John won a scholarship to Scotch College. We went on not meeting for almost a decade, during which time first John then I became acquainted with Lee Harding, and it was at Lee's place that we met, in 1964. The rest is mystery.

There may be tales told in this publication that will embarrass John. Indeed, I began my contribution to this small *foystschrift* (as Dave Langford has so elegantly described it) by telling some of them, but soon realized that I would exceed the word limit if I continued. No, that's not true. I began by writing the paragraph above, all but the last sentence of it, then spent weeks wondering what to say next. The problem, as I see it, apart from my own inadequacy, is this. There are at least as many John Foysters as there are people who know him, which is a lot; these John Foysters may loosely be called the private and public man of that name; and then there is the mythical John Foyster, the one that we have all had a part in creating. I celebrate the private John Foyster, the one I know, with affection, respect and something approaching awe, but I do that in my heart or head, not usually, certainly not fittingly, and definitely not here, in writing. That leaves me with the public and the mythical John Foyster. How to celebrate him? Hmm. I have a cunning plan, Moriarty.

Happy birthday, squire!

1964

It's hard to believe now, but from 1961 to 1965 I was respectably employed as a librarian at the Victorian Railways Institute. In my spare time, which seemed endless, I read good books, listened to good music, watched good films, travelled a lot around Victoria, and wrote about these and other things in a diary. I lived alone, but I had a social life that now seems extraordinarily active. I joined the ALP, indeed belonged to the same branch as Barry Jones (then emerging as Australia's greatest TV quiz champion, now national president of the party). I was moderately active in Amnesty, writing swingeing letters to foreign dictators, who never wrote back. I went to concerts and films and exhibitions, usually with some bright girl I had met in the library. I did not watch television. I did not read science fiction. At a party in 1963 I met Lee Harding, a writer of science fiction. I was twenty-four. My life was about to change in a way I could never have imagined.

'You go through Bayswater and head for The Basin,' Lee said when I accepted his invitation to dinner, 'you'll come to a service station on your right, then our place is the third house along. You can't see it from the road.' Lee and Carla's place was full of books and music, and I felt at home the moment I arrived. And we had so much to talk about! I believe I stayed the night.

Lee introduced me to fanzines and fandom, and eventually fans. I met the fans' voices first. Lee was part of a round-robin continuing conversation on tape with John Foyster, John Baxter and Bob Smith. I think I met John Baxter first. We sat at either end of a sofa in his Sydney flat, sneaking glances at each other, because Lee had told us that we looked and talked alike. Apart from agreeing that we didn't, I remember little of that meeting with John Baxter. His interests overlapped with Lee's, but not much with mine. I met John Foyster about Easter 1964. I couldn't quite relate the man to his voice or his fanzines, and didn't know what to make of him at all. He was the youngest of us. He seemed at once shy and arrogant, considerate and condescending. I had never met anyone with such a sharp wit. When I read Shelley's comment on his friend Peacock, 'His fine wit makes such a wound the knife is lost in it,' I thought instantly of Foyster. We established a mutual respect from the start, but it says something about both of us that I was surprised, years later, to realize that he had long regarded me as a friend: such a great honor I thought he bestowed sparingly. John Foyster is probably friend to more people than anyone else I know.

In 1963 Lee and Carla became, almost literally overnight, my best friends. Lee was an enthusiast, a man born to make discoveries and share them as quickly as possible, then move on to the next. I have something of that in my own nature, so Lee and I sparked each other off. I spent most weekends at Lee and Carla's place, and during the week Lee and I had long conversations on the telephone. 'Are you two lovers or something?' my mother once asked me—a question that embarrassed me no end. 'Tell her I've got a bum like a peach,' Lee suggested when I told him. He wasn't quite as fast as Foyster, but close. As I recall, Lee didn't actively encourage me to write. In fact my first fanzine writing appeared in John Foyster's *Satura*—a letter or two, maybe other things.

The third Adelaide Festival of Arts was held in March 1964. I took a fortnight's leave from the library and went to Adelaide. At the Railways Institute there, where I was welcomed as an

emissary from some higher plane of existence (my library had thirty branches, theirs none), I was given an office and a typewriter, and there I wrote a story, 'The Beheading of Basil Pott'. From that office, and from the Hackney caravan park where I was staying, I also wrote a lot of letters to Lee Harding. When I returned to Melbourne I couldn't believe Lee's excitement. He wanted to publish my story. He wanted to publish my letters. He wanted to publish a *fanzine*. He had published fanzines before, but nothing like what he had in mind now. This one would be something really special, and he would call it *Canto*.

The rest of 1964, outside of working hours, was mainly taken up with *Canto*, a lady named Carolyn and a twelve-year-old car. 'Not an Alvis!' Lee cried in some mixture of disbelief and despair as I drove my limousine up his driveway at The Basin. At least he knew what it was. I had long admired English grand touring cars, and in 1952 I had fallen in love with the Alvis TA-21 at the Melbourne Motor Show. I never thought I would own one, but there it was, in mid-1964, a snip at 500 pounds. Carolyn liked it. I had met Carolyn the night before I left for Adelaide, and I saw the Alvis in a used-car lot in Prahran one day on my way to her place.

One day Carolyn and I drove to Olympic Park to watch John Foyster running in an athletic meeting. We cheered John when we saw him, but he probably didn't hear us. Shortly after there was an announcement on the PA system: in a very plummy voice an official said that if anyone present owned a black Alvis sedan (not mine, I thought, mine is black and silver-grey), registration number WT-962 (but that is my number, I thought), they should inspect it at their earliest convenience, since it appeared to be on fire. The Alvis, it turned out, wasn't actually on fire, but was close to it. Both Carolyn and I were smokers, and one of us had dropped live ash on a cloth that I kept under one of the front seats. The car was billowing smoke when we reached it. I doubt that John Foyster ran faster that day than I did.

Canto 1 appeared early in 1965. As well as my piece on the Adelaide Festival, it included my Basil Pott story, a fannish comic strip based on Walt Kelly's Pogo characters that I did later in 1964, and pieces by Foyster, Bob Smith and Don Symons (a superb writer, known to the great world, if at all, as father of the musician Red Symons). For the second issue John Foyster wrote about Dame Joan Sutherland and Don Symons wrote about his career in gold smuggling, and other things were written or planned, but *Canto* 2 never appeared.

In 1966 John Foyster organized a science fiction convention, the first in Australia since 1958. Today's Australian fandom, and much of its science fiction, has its origins in that convention. In turn, that convention had some of its origins in a house near The Basin that you can't see from the road, and a caravan park in Hackney that has long since gone, and a fanzine that appeared just once.

[. . .]

The science fiction convention at Easter 1966, held in McGill's Newsagency's warehouse in Somerset Place, was an extraordinary event. It was, as I've said, the first since 1958, and there was something of the atmosphere of a revival meeting about it, a wonderful feeling of something happening, a powerful sense of fellowship. Towards the end, when we were discussing whether to hold another convention next year and generally what to do next, I suggested that we could keep up the momentum and preserve some of the feeling of community by publishing a fanzine. The idea was well received, and people instantly started nominating editors: Harding! Ron Clarke! Baxter! Broderick! But over them all Lee Harding was saying—very clearly, magisterially even—I nominate *John Bangsund*. 'And so', John Foyster wrote two years later, 'the die was cast, since when the cast has been dying.' The die was cast indeed: that was the moment when I became an editor.³

1972

On Wednesday 20 December I walked into the Degraives Tavern, traditional meeting-place of Melbourne fandom for some years. My arrival surprised everyone except Diane, who knew I would be there, and Henry, the proprietor, who is surprised at nothing. Even as I reached the bottom step Henry was calmly pouring me a complimentary glass of house red, which he presented to me at the bar with the words 'So you're back', or something polite like that. 'Yes, sir,' I said, 'I've been to Canberra and changed the government, and have returned for further instructions. Sir.' 'I still think you're a bloody spy,' said Henry, 'Merry xmas.' 'And a merry xmas to you,' I said, raising my glass in salute. He refilled it. 'Your friends are over there. You have noticed already. Good. Your wife looks very attractive tonight. I do not know what she sees in you and I am not interested.' Ah, it was good talking to Henry again.

Elizabeth Foyster invited me to sit opposite her, which I did. Diane looked very attractive indeed, and it was thoughtful of Elizabeth to keep me at the other end of the table. John Foyster came back from buying food or some such unsocial activity, and said 'Ah, Banger. If you want something in the next *Chunder!* I'll need it next week.' It felt good to be back. Harding walked in, bearing an enormous bunch of flowers. He caught sight of me, stopped dead, and simultaneously dropped his jaw and the flowers. A born actor, Lee. He joined us at

³Originally written for Bruce Gillespie's *The Metaphysical Review*; published as 'How I Became an Editor' in *The Society of Editors Newsletter*, September 1992; this version adapted from <http://users.pipeline.com.au/bangsund/howcomed.htm>.

the Paris End of the table, introduced me to Irene, and said 'That's the John Bangsund!' 'No!' said Irene, who is very lovely and an actor in her own right, 'Not *the* John Bangsund?' 'Not so loud,' I said, 'I'm supposed to be incognito.' 'You look more like inebriated,' said Foyster. And so the merry night went on.

[. . .]

[A week later, at the farm,] Foyster was trying to get the portable barbecue started in the barn, since it was a Total Fire Ban day. He was immaculately dressed as usual, in orange shirt, purple tie and old-slouch-hat-with-the-side-turned-up, which latter he was using, somewhat ineffectively, to fan the barbecue alight. John Alderson solved the problem by pouring some of his home-bottled 1972 Mallee Root Dry Red onto the reluctant briquettes. In no time at all—scarcely more than two hours or so—we had a roaring barbecue which engulfed tall sausages at a single gulf, and someone handed around salad and stuff and it was a fabulous mess of good eating. Then we went and played cricket.⁴

1975

[From John Foyster, 3.2.75]

Getting a fanzine from you is a rare pleasure, John, but it is that interval between appearances which hurts: today I receive something from you, and that means that it is so much longer before the next bunch of funny remarks. Has anyone ever told you that your writing is reminiscent of that of Walt Willis? No? There is a good reason for this, and perhaps one day, when we can spend a few hours idly conversing, I might take the opportunity to outline this reason.⁵

[From John Foyster, 18.2.75]

Philgas 29 received and, in places, read. The whole is no doubt eminently readable, but it's bloody hot tonight, so I have only time for a couple of quickies.

I'm surprised that you want to be an anarchist, but haven't known where to join. I should have thought that wanting to be a scholar and not knowing where to join would have taken up all your spare time.

[. . .]

I must read the longer pieces more carefully, but for now, just modestly accept some praise, could you?⁶

1977

Foyster flew in about six from Cleve. ('You would know Cleve, of course.' 'Of course. The National Trust has a branch there. It meets in an old cartmill factory.' John doesn't like sfnal puns, I remembered too late.) He was very cheerful, and led a bunch of us off for dinner at the local Yugoslav charcoal grill joint. 'No reservation, sir?' 'Ah, no.' 'How many in the party, sir?' 'Ten.' So they pushed two tables together, and somehow the ten of us crammed into room-for-six. The cevapcici was okay. Rotsler, Turner and Sally seemed to be having a fine conversation, but Foyster got stuck between me and Handfield at the other end of the tables, so he didn't have much fun.

The Official Opening and Introduction of the Guest of Honor was scheduled for seven, so we hurried back, more or less. Nothing was happening—just people standing around talking. At 7.30 there was supposed to be a film panel, but at 7.30 we were all upstairs watching television. The crew from *This Day Tonight* had been to the hotel earlier in the day, interviewing fans and toy frogs, shooting close-ups of earnest young beards and kinky old pulp covers, and doing all the special-effects stuff they only get a chance to try out when UFO nuts or SF freaks appear in their program. It was pretty awful.

While it was going on I thought *This is crazy! Here we are, watching Rotsler on telly when we could be talking to him in person—holding up the convention while we watch some free publicity for what we're not actually doing right now!* I made a mental note to ask Marshall McLuhan or Daniel Boorstin about this some time.

Eventually we reassembled downstairs, where Paul Stevens read out plot summaries and cast lists for a lot of forthcoming tenth-rate sf films, and Rotsler told us how much fun *Star Wars* was. Then we had a slide show, and all the slides were about *Star Wars*, so Bill was forced to explain what all this nonsense was about, while manfully maintaining that it really was fun.

Sally had gone home during Mervyn Binns' little outline history of fantasy movies from Herodotus to Kubrick, but I didn't know that until the lights came on after the slide show. Foyster was drooping, but he cheered up a little when I suggested we go home too. Back at Mile End we watched the cricket for a while, and during the commercials (*commercials in cricket!—next there'll be display ads in the prayer book!*) we said gloomy things about the

⁴ *Philosophical Gas* 18, February 1973.

⁵ *Philosophical Gas* 29, February 1975.

⁶ *Philosophical Gas* 30, March 1975.

convention. We decided, somewhat unenthusiastically, to get down there first thing in the morning and liberate it.

There didn't seem to be anything to liberate when we got there. 'Everyone's upstairs playing Dungeons and Dragons,' someone said. 'But they were doing that all day yesterday!' I said. 'Yair, but there's more of 'em now.' *Drag on, O dung eons!* I muttered to myself.

John and I walked out along the jetty. This is where Queen Elizabeth landed earlier this year, and roughly where Governor Hindmarsh stepped off the *Buffalo* back in 1836. (He didn't like the place much, and wanted to found Great Britain's newest colony near Victor Harbor, but he was outvoted. In those days it was sometimes possible to outvote a Governor in Australia.) I tried out my 'founding fathers didn't know whether they were coming or going, that's why they called it Glenelg' joke on John. He didn't like it.⁷

1980 (Who wrote Mozart's 39th?)

Keats and Chapman attended the world's first and so far only performance of Karlheinz Stochasm's massive composition for several large orchestras, chorus and regimental artillery, the Cantata for the Victims of Eureka. Afterwards, Keats asked Chapman what he thought of the work, and Chapman admitted that he had quite enjoyed some of the choral themes in the last movement. 'You mean melodies,' said Keats, who hadn't liked any of it. 'Themes,' Chapman insisted. 'But themes aren't what they sing!' cried Keats. 'They so rarely are,' said Chapman.

The Macmillan Company of Australia has not been treating me at all well lately. Here it is, nearly April, and I have not yet received a review copy of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which makes me think I have been quite overlooked. Further, though I have no doubt I would make good use of the *New Grove* at any time, I had most desperate need of it just after Christmas.

Picture me, if you will, sitting quietly at the Foysters' place on the evening of the 28th, meditating upon peace, goodwill and the soul of man under Reaganism, taking care the while not to smoke too many cigarettes at once because it does terrible things to my friends' wallpaper—a cosy Yuletide scene indeed, and a memory to be treasured. Suddenly the mood was shattered and my ash went everywhere when John started asking me, all in a rush, a lot of silly questions about music. *Who wrote Mozart's 39th? What do the following have in common: Fidel Castro, Yehudi Menuhin, Tommy Flynn? In which opera does the heroine say 'Gak!' and die? Which instrument handles water music?*

Well, that sort of interrogation might unsettle a lesser man, but I just fired answers back at him as fast as I could make them up. *Danzi Finzi Mackenzie. Characters in an unperformed opera by Karlheinz Stochasm. None. Bath tuba.* It was the bath tuba, I think, that unnerved him. 'You'd better have this,' he said, handing me the *National Times*, 'You seem to know more about this stuff than I do.'

And that's how I became involved in the *National Times* Music Quiz Competition, ruining my holiday (Sally was in Tasmania, building snowmen on the beach at Cremorne) and driving myself and everyone around me mad for the next week. There were a hundred questions, twenty each on Opera, Mozart, Orchestral Music, Chamber Music and Twentieth-Century Music, but because many of the questions had several parts or required multiple answers, I finished up looking for 190 answers. And look for them I did. My creative answers might have satisfied John Foyster, but I had a feeling that they wouldn't fool the judges.

By the time I got to Mervyn Binns' New Year's Eve party I had about seventy answers. 'Happy New Year yourself,' I said to Mervyn, who operates a retail space-opera establishment in Swanston Street, 'Who wrote Mozart's 39th?' 'Damned if I know,' said Mervyn genially, 'Isaac Asimov? Why don't you ask George Turner?' An excellent suggestion. I cornered George, who knows even more about opera than he knows about science fiction, which is an awful lot, and extracted a dozen answers from him (all but one, it turned out, correct). He did not know who sang Figaro at the first performance, claiming not to have been around at the time. You never know with George, but I took his word for it and went off to pester someone else. Myf and Tony Thomas said some of my answers were a bit unlikely, and that I was welcome to look them up in their paperback *Grove*, which was very decent of them, but at the time I thought that would almost be cheating. Besides, they do live a long way out, practically in the bush, beyond Wantirna. Noel Kerr said it was a pity none of the questions were about Dave Brubeck, because he knows a lot about Dave Brubeck, and I said 'Who?' and there was a bit of a friendly scuffle, and just then Damien Broderick jogged past, muttering something about 'Drunken loon!', and then we all joined hands with Lee Harding and sang 'Auld Lang Syne', and then we went home.

The party continued next day at Damien and Dianne's place. Christine Ashby asked me what I was writing for the *Age*'s funny-writing competition, and I asked her which modern composer died after tripping over a dog, and we all had a good time again. There was a lady

⁷ *Parergon Papers* 2, August 1977.

at the party who looked remarkably like Valma Brown. Slim, vivacious, reddish-haired—but Valma lives in Canberra and usually spends Christmas skiing in Brisbane, or whatever they do in Brisbane at Christmas. This lady had come to the party not knowing what Damien and Dianne's friends might be like, and was quite charmed, in an embarrassed sort of way, at the number of people who cuddled her without being properly introduced. I knew she wasn't Valma, because she couldn't tell me who had written a concerto for Ondes Martenot. Also, she was smoking. I think Valma only moved to Canberra because she couldn't stand all the smoking that still goes on in Melbourne.

The rest of my answers (I ended up with 154 correct by my reckoning, 146 by the judges') came mainly from the *Gramophone* magazine, of which I seem to have accumulated several hundred issues over the years, and Jenny Bryce's books on modern music. Jenny plays oboe ancient and modern, and I thought she would have a few useful books about the place, and I was not wrong, but by the time I borrowed them I was feeling a bit dejected about the competition. All the libraries I usually go to had closed down for the snow season, or whatever they close down for at Christmas. In desperation, prepared if need be to buy Einstein's *Mozart*, Kobbé's *Complete Opera Book* and other standard works, I scoured the bookshops of Melbourne—to no avail. Trudging through the relentless heat, I discovered one thing: that books about music cost the earth. That the \$1700 Macmillan charge for the *New Grove* wouldn't buy you more than two or three feet of other standard references and monographs on individual composers.

The competition closed on 7 January, and I posted off my entry on the 5th. On 11 January the *National Times* announced a new deadline, the 14th, and I went around fuming for a day or two because I'd wasted a week and the libraries were open again.

The official results took up two pages of the issue for 18 January. The three prizewinners were the secretary of a philharmonic society, a doctor who composes in his spare time and a music teacher. The judges' comments made it clear to me that I had run fourth or fifth.

Why did I go in for the competition? Was it to impress John Foyster, who knows I'm not as clever as I think but may think I don't know that? Was it to prove that a competent book editor can find out anything about any subject if he sets his mind to it? Was it simply to win first prize?

Not, I think, the latter. First prize was two season tickets to Musica Viva, and I haven't been to a musical concert since I was barred from the Union Theatre for snoring through the entire second act of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (or possibly *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*: I always get those two confused), which was many years ago, when I was still constitutionally capable of listening to music and not smoking for an hour or even more. I used to sit through entire Bruckner symphonies at the Melbourne Town Hall without too much discomfort. But these days, no, I just wouldn't last the distance at a concert.

Am I really as far gone as that? Surely not? If someone gave me a free ticket to something I liked, wouldn't I make an effort? It could be the first step towards rehabilitation and a return to a normal, full and productive life. I could go for long rides on trams. I might eventually become a librarian. It's something to think about.

Oddly enough, while I was thinking about that, the *Age* decided to give away fifty (50) pairs of season tickets to Musica Viva. All you had to do was match up the portraits and autographs of twelve composers, which was a damn sight easier than answering questions like *Which composers supplemented their incomes by (a) working as assistant to the architect Le Corbusier, (b) winning the jackpot on an Italian TV program, (c) teaching Greek at Harvard?* Then your entry had to be one of the first fifty opened.

Have you ever wondered why so many classical music concerts are absolutely ruined by people coughing? I am now in a position to tell you why this is so. These people are *smokers with free tickets*, trying to redeem themselves and regain their place in normal society. Be gentle with them, kind reader. They have to start somewhere.

Me? No, I believe I came fifty-first.⁸

1981

The Fan Guest of Honor at this convention, I am led to believe, are John Ossian and K.U.F. Widdershins, better known to fanzine readers of the old school as Anson McTaggart, or to give them his real name, Magnus Mumblegutter. Hatchet Jack, as he prefers to be called, holds the Australasian and Near North all-time championship record for fanzine title-changing, a fact not widely recognized because most of his fanzines have been published under such pseudonyms as Caractus Potter, Leigh Edmonds, Inya Boot, G. Stone, Marc Ortlieb, Leanne Frahm, Formality Hyde, Harley B. Likely, Punjent Singe, Mervyn R. Binns, Lee Harding, John Bangsund and Ita Buttrose. Franz, as he is known to his intimates at the Cricketers' Arms in trendy Richmond South, has won many Ditmar awards and been nominated for Hugos on five occasions under these false colors, and was once mistaken on a Bondi tram for Harry Warner Jr. As well as publishing fanzines, Frank has written extensively for the promags as Algis Budrys, Cosmo Claphanger, Dwight V. Swain, Lloyd Bridges, Havergal Brian, Claudio Monteverdi,

⁸ *Australian Book Review*, May 1981; this version from <http://users.pipeline.com.au/bangsund/mozart.htm>.

Karlheinz Stochasm, Daisy Bates, Alejo Carpentier, J.S.C. Dumont d'Urville, Ludwig Leichhardt, Tom Collins and Rick O'shea, and has served three terms as President of the SFWA. In Poland he is best known as Stanislaw Lem, so you will appreciate the irony of the situation he found himself in when, as President of the SFWA, he was called on to refuse that subversive author membership of the organization. As Guest of Honor at innumerable conventions in Turkey, Iran and the American Deep South, Chip has delighted audiences with his anecdotes of fan feuds in New York before the war and his mastery of the critical literature of science fiction, most of which he wrote. You are indeed perceptive, Adelaide, in your choice of Walt as your Guest of Honor, and I hope you enjoy all of him, for rarely has so much been done for science fiction and fandom by so few a man. There are some who call him the Secret Master of Fandom. Others call him Max. We know him best as John Foyster, polymath, part-time oboe-reed whittler, tail-gate rambler, amusement-park collector, GUFF-winner, cordon-rouge curry cook, photographer extraordinaire, founder of contemporary Australian fandom and genuine all-round person.⁹



⁹Manuscript dated 27.3.81.

The rational fringe of science fiction

Franz Rottensteiner, born 18 January 1942: PhD in journalism and Modern History, free-lance writer, translator and editor (since 1985: before that, part-time librarian). Edited in Germany in the early 'seventies an international series of 'SF of the World' with Insel publisher (fifteen volumes) and later some three hundred volumes of 'Fantastic Library' with Suhrkamp, and some fifty anthologies. Editor, since 1963, of critical fanzine Quarber Merkur, still running (current issue 91/92). Has also published a number of anthologies (View From Another Shore, 1973, revised 1999; The Slaying Of The Dragon, 1984) and coffee-table books in English (The Science Fiction Book, 1975; The Fantasy Book, 1978). Agent (formerly) for Stanislaw Lem and (currently) for Boris Strugatsky.

I AM AFRAID THAT my memory is so bad that, without consulting my old correspondence and the fanzines of long ago (which I don't have on hand), I cannot say anything about how I came into contact with John Foyster. I must have read something about Australian fandom and fanzine publishing and contacted him.

For me, he represents the middle period of Australian sf-criticism oriented fanzine publishing: he was the leading Australian sf critic and fanzine publisher between John Bangsund and Bruce Gillespie. I came too late to know John Bangsund really well; I think that I may have been subscribing to *Australian Science Fiction Review* when he was still editor, but I started publishing in English only under John Foyster, and even co-edited the aptly named *Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology* with him: i.e., he published a lot of the stuff that I wrote then in English.

I would not write much today as I wrote it then, but some things found a certain resonance, and I remember that when I wrote a devastating review of Robert Heinlein, Richard Geis was so enthusiastic about it that he reprinted it in *Science Fiction Review*. The unanimously negative reaction of his readers convinced him that he had made a great blunder, but reaction in Australia was more mild. This seems to pinpoint a difference between American and Australian fans: most American fans seemed to be less critical of their sf than readers down under. Was it because of the closeness, the intimate contact with the leading sf writers, most of whom were (and are, more than ever) American—and seen by many fans as beyond reproach? The Australians seemed to be more detached, more critical of sf, without being less loving of it. And of course you had to have a lot of enthusiasm to publish such a stream of fanzines. To me, they represented the voice of sanity, the *rational fringe* of sf—much as British fandom, also somewhat apart from the centre, but much closer to it, represented a more unbiased view of the genre. And John Foyster was, at the time—in his criticism of *Analog/Campbell*, for instance—the most incisive of these critics, although his love for the genre was unmistakable. These were the days before sf criticism had become an academic industry, and writings in the fanzine often were more to the point and analytically sharper than many professional publications. Nowadays this would be much more difficult.

At the time I deliberately wrote controversial and negative pieces, on the assumption that it wasn't necessary to add to something that others were already doing and usually doing better, and I didn't say many things that probably would have endeared me to some fans. For instance, I shared with John Foyster a liking for the early, romantic work of Leigh Brackett. The fact is that we all read on different levels, and I still think that Leigh Brackett did superbly well what she did, although I wouldn't have called it *serious sf*. I also must profess to a great liking for the early Jack Vance who wrote unpretentious, fast-paced adventure stories, while I find current Vance all artifice of a kind that does not reflect a wealth of cultures and customs but arbitrariness and unbelievability of a high degree. You know, his characters say the damndest things all the time, and these are accepted as if they were natural or commonplace. His figures talk like this: 'Honored scumbag, may I cut off your head, if the mood strikes me?'

'But, of course, dear sir, you have my permission to take your pleasure, only I will decapitate you first.'

But John Foyster was also among the first who took a great interest in the writings of Cordwainer Smith and introduced me to some of the subtler points in the work of this now greatly underrated writer. Although I cannot recall now many details of John Foyster's voluminous writings, I have a general impression that his criticism was always original, level-headed, balanced and yet with enough spice added to make it always interesting. And his criticism was always rewarding and worthwhile, whether you shared his opinion or not.

One tends to judge other reviewers according to how closely they come to your own views, but with John Foyster (as later with George Turner and sometimes Bruce Gillespie) this was secondary to the manner in which he presented his arguments: they were of value in themselves, aside from the fact that he was also right most of the time. And I was flattered that he was willing to publish so much by an unknown from an alien country, far apart from the springs of the English language.

He is also, aside from Cherry Wilder, Peter Nicholls whom I met once briefly, and the late Roger Weddall, the only Australian fan whom I met personally, and not once but several times when he visited Europe. I am not good at personal contacts, but he (and Jennifer Bryce as well as later Yvonne Rousseau) suffered with good humour my atrocious spoken English.¹⁰ It was always he who came to Vienna on his travels. We had some enjoyable exchanges: they were, at least, enjoyable for me, and I hope that he also enjoyed his stays. I am sorry that I never met George Turner in person, and I hope that Bruce Gillespie will go on another world tour some day, and that I can offer John Foyster some hospitality again soon.

If I look back I must say that most of my contacts, both in sf fandom and professionally, have been with people far away, and might almost say that these have been better, the larger

¹⁰Editorial note: Jennifer Bryce and Yvonne Rousseau deny that Franz Rottensteiner's spoken English is atrocious: they both remember it, rather, as excellent.

the distance, which probably means something. I only regret that John Foyster has all but withdrawn from sf criticism, but I think that it would be a good idea to publish some day a collection of his old pieces which have, I think, stood the test of time well. With current technical possibilities, this should not be a great problem, and somebody should undertake the publication of a *Best of John Foyster*.



The Foyster observations

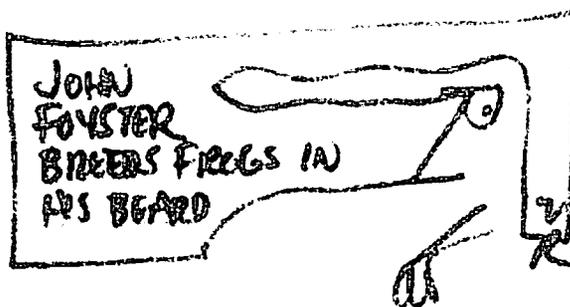
Noel Kerr joined Melbourne fandom at Somerset Place as a comics and sf visual fan. Zines he has published include the Melbourne Science Fiction Club newsletter, Somerset Gazette, and the ANZAPazines Sweet Nothings and Eyes and Ears of the World. Although formerly fond of cats, Noel now much prefers the intelligence and company of dogs, and he owns two cat-chasing black cocker spaniels. In addition to his interest in winning lotteries, Noel collects old comics and comic art, enters photography competitions, and enjoys jazz, troutfishing and woodworking. Health problems have obliged him to retire from his work as a letterpress and offset printer.

JOHN WAS ONE OF the very few sf fans in fandom that I found approachable. Where others seemed to fit into interest groups and ignore individuals, John would and wanted to be friends with everyone. I found him a most approachable and enjoyable person to talk to, and still do.

I, and I dare say many others, have often wondered what was under that beard of his. Did he keep an aviary of birds there or was his face covered with scars from his football days? Will we ever find out?

Talking about football, John with his mild mannered temperament is about the last person I would have picked to play football, particularly that N.S.W. stuff of brawn with little brains. It would seem that John was an exception in this sport.

I wish John well. . . I like the boy!



Foyster en plein air

John D. Berry is an editor/typographer who works both sides of the design/content divide. He learned this balancing act, which he performs professionally on a daily basis, at least partly from his early years publishing fanzines in science-fiction fandom, which is how he knows John Foyster. He still considers himself a member of that community, even though he rarely participates in it these days. He lives in San Francisco with the writer Eileen Gunn.

MY FAVORITE IMAGE OF John Foyster is from my second trip to Australia, in 1989. Eileen Gunn and I were visiting John and Yvonne at their book-laden house in Adelaide, and they wanted to take us out of the city and show us the wildlife preserve on top of a nearby mountain. We did this by a complex combination of crosstown walking and bus-riding, which got us to the lower end of the park. From there, we would hike up a trail to the top.

It was a lovely late-Fall day, and the sunny countryside was dry and bushy. As we trudged up the trail, stopping frequently to admire the view and try to coax small wildlife out of the nooks and crannies, John kept scampering on ahead, like a combination mountain goat and sheep-herding dog. He was dressed in easy outdoors clothes, and wearing a floppy, wide-brimmed hat that made him look just like a French Impressionist painter on an afternoon outing. Even his full, bushy beard and his sharp features contributed to the image—perhaps Monet, though the setting would have recalled more Cézanne at Mont Ste. Victoire in the sunny south of France. All he needed was the accoutrements; I kept expecting to see him setting up an easel for a quick sketch.

When we got to the top, I had an encounter with an alien—a man-sized emu that seemed like a character from a Larry Niven story—but that's another tale.

John Foyster and *ASFR (Second Series)*

Its Mysterious Origins

MANY YEARS AGO, I stood in the tiny backyard of the little house in Port Melbourne where I lived with my husband Russell and our cat Bruce, telling John Foyster that Australia needed a really good, regular, critical fanzine, and that he and I were just the people to do it together. It would be a serious critical fanzine, but both smaller and more frequent than Van Ikin's *Science Fiction* and Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary*. Then, I think, we discussed who would be useful to help us.

Recently, I mentioned this to Russell. 'Oh, no, you must be mistaken,' he said pleasantly, 'it was my idea. I remember saying to John at Aussiecon Two that Australia needed a really good, regular, critical fanzine.' Rasputin Foyster presumably used his mesmeric powers on the other founding members of the *Australian Science Fiction Review (Second Series)* Editorial Collective as well.

Sometime after these conversations came the first meeting of what would become the Collective. Either Russ and I called Foyster, Yvonne Rousseau and Lucy Sussex together to this auspicious meeting at our little Port Melbourne house, or Foyster used his strange powers to get us all there. Of course, it wasn't called *ASFR (Second Series)* yet. But, when discussion started about a possible name, Foyster was suspiciously quick with his suggestion: *Australian Science Fiction Review* (after John Bangsund's legendary fanzine, copies of which Russ and I, at least, had never owned). Then there was the rider—we had to make it clear that it was not the same as the first one. So, the name should be *ASFR (Second Series)*. In hindsight, it might not have been Foyster's best idea ever. It doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, with that 'Second Series' in brackets.

It was rather a nuisance, the constant necessity of making a distinction between the first (real, legendary) *ASFR*, and our later (not-quite-real, non-legendary) *ASFR (Second Series)*. Just having to type that damnable 'Second Series', in brackets, and having to explain to people, 'no, not the old one, our new one', was bad; the worst thing, though, was the constant niggling feeling that the Old Fans thought our *ASFR* didn't quite live up to the legend, didn't have the amazing way with words and wit of the old one, that it was (in short) Not As Funny. Now, it was never actually meant to be funny, except in very small bits. It was meant to be a serious critical fanzine, like today's excellent *New York Review of Science Fiction*. But our title led to serious expectations of guffaw-meriting wit. If only we had called it *A Serious Critical Fanzine with Lots of Long Words (ASCFLW)* for short.

Foyster frequently used to claim that Russell's job was to write the 'long, boring articles'. When he did this, depending on the amount of champagne that had been consumed, we either did or did not mention Foyster's own serialised article 'The Long View'—all six massive, ~~excruciatingly boring~~ meticulously detailed instalments of it.

The Four Commandments

At this same first meeting which I have been describing, Foyster handed us the four commandments of *ASFR (Second Series)*. It was to be a serious, professionally run, critical fanzine.

1. There was to be absolutely no artwork, not ever, especially cartoons.
2. There was to be absolutely no fiction.
3. There were to be absolutely no fanzine exchanges—*ASFR (Second Series)* was to be paid for properly by subscription, as it would deserve.
4. We were to have no other gods before him.

Actually, he didn't have to state rule number 4. We were all just too intimidated to argue with a Secret Master of Fandom.

It was rule 3 that got us into deep disrepute with the fanzine-writing community. Now, it isn't as if we saved a lot of money by refusing to exchange fanzines. We had about nine regular subscribers, and a free list of several hundred of Foyster's friends, acquaintances and people he thought were deserving. We dutifully posted off free issues of *ASFR (Second Series)* to Slaski Klub Fantastyki in Poland, the Polish Fantasy and SF Association (also in Poland), the Hungarian SF Society (not in Poland), Club City in Italy, and umpteen other fans, editors and writers all over the world, while Australian fandom thought we were appallingly mean bastards because we wouldn't exchange for their handful of fanzines. Did anyone blame Foyster? Ha.

Incidentally, Foyster insisted on inserting amusing line drawings (which he insisted were *not* cartoons, even if some people might insist on describing them as artwork) to illustrate his Seacon report, 'Seek On! Seek On!', in issue 12, and things which can only be described as (rather funny Ian Gunn) cartoons in the issue 27, the Index issue. But is a deity bound by his or her commandments?

Jenny Blackford is a bit older but no thinner than during the days of the Collective. Her day job is still in computer networks, though not with IBM. She lives now in a largish Albert Park house a twenty minute walk from the old Port Melbourne house, with cupboards-full of back issues of ASFR (Second Series), her husband Russell and their now elderly cat Bruce.

High Technology



Ebony Books (a very small press run by Russell and me at-a-loss on a shoestring) handled the *ASFR (Second Series)* financials. We also owned the major business tool used to produce it for some years, our state of the art IBM PC. At that time, I was working for IBM as a Systems Engineer, and I had taken advantage of the IBM Employee Purchase Plan to buy a fabulous IBM PC 2 in 1984. This was NOT a PS/2—we are talking the single-celled-organism state of evolution here, not the amphibian stage. It was called a PC 2 because it came directly after the PC 1 (the very first IBM PC). It had no hard disk at all, but, instead, two floppy disk drives. It ran on old 81/4 inch floppies. **Floppy** floppies. And it had a state of the art aerodynamically curved green-and-black monitor.

So, we ran the state of the art (now totally forgotten) word processing program Displaywrite/3 from floppy drive A, and had our *ASFR (Second Series)* data on floppy drive B. Russ bravely did most of the typing-in of the scads of paper we were sent; others typed their articles into the PC around collating meetings, or popped in at other times to use the PC. And we printed on a eighty character per second dot matrix printer, on continuous forms. Wow! Then Foyster pasted up the printout and conveyed

it by mysterious means to his old mate Noel Kerr for printing.

Through 1986, '87 and '88, we put out retrospectively fabulous issues of *ASFR (Second Series)* with astonishing regularity. Coincidentally, PCs evolved smaller floppy drives, and new rudimentary hard drives. Ebony Books' equipment was looking a bit low-tech. Late in 1988, we were shamed by Foyster into getting a massive PC upgrade. One of the two 81/4 inch floppy drives came out of the old chassis, and a sleek modern 31/2 inch floppy drive plus a hard drive (and a couple of other inconsequential things, like a new mother board) went in. I tried hard not to think about the possibility that all that we were left with of the old PC 2 was the chassis and the power supply. David Harding, a mate of mine from IBM and a cheap technology buff, had got the pieces for us at a Very Good Price.

The new bits didn't fit. Foyster MADE them fit. When brute force didn't work, he used a hacksaw blade (see terrifying photos). I tried not to look, but I couldn't help it. I almost cried with relief when he turned it on and it worked.

Depending on how good the photo reproduction is, you may or may not note that Foyster is wearing his 'History of Western Philosophy' t-shirt during the brain surgery. I had one too (a prized purchase from that home of desirable things, Gleebooks in Sydney)—and still do, though it is getting very old and thin (unlike most of us, who are progressively growing older and fatter). When Foyster and I wore them at the same time, people often mistook us for twins.

Despite this upgrade, our old PC lost ground. At Conspiracy, I was ashamed of poor dowdy *ASFR (Second Series)* next to the beautifully produced US zines like *SF Eye*. Foyster, brave technophile that he is, moved *ASFR (Second Series)* into the dangerous new world of Desktop Publishing. At issue 16, it became A4 in format, properly desktop published and laser printed. Foyster, by now in Adelaide, took over production on his PC, and our old workhorse was marginalised in Melbourne.

Collatio

In the early years, every two months, Ebony Books (a.k.a. Russ and I) took the long trek out to Noel Kerr's place in Carnegie to pick up great boxes of embryonic *ASFR (Second Series)*. (Later, it was a nerve-racking attempt to find a legal parking spot near Copy Place in the city.) Then, on a scheduled Saturday or Sunday we all had a collation meeting—once more in the Port Melbourne kitchen. Most of us walked around and around the kitchen table, gradually getting dizzier (champagne helped); and Foyster used the huge, savage stapler required to puncture all those sheets of paper. Foyster was a master of collatio. Our kitchen table still bears the scars.

Foyster always brought a selection of delectable cakes (including meringues for gluten-free me) from the Acland St cake shops in St Kilda to refresh us all during and after collatio. When

I first saw the Acland St cake shops, I was reminded of C.S. Lewis's grumpy comments about strip tease and sex, that nobody would pay money to look at someone unveiling a lamb chop on stage. Maybe not; but the crowds who press their piggy little noses up to the windows of cake shop after cake shop in Acland Street, greeding (if not lusting) in their hearts, have found something a lot better than lamb chops to ogle. And they taste good, too. Others, too, provided food—Yvonne, for example, made excellent wheat-free cakes from a variety of sources including (surprisingly) the *Nursing Mothers' Cookbook* which she had indexed. The Blackford contribution was frequently **very** eighties—pâté, cheese, Aussie bubbly (cholesterol and triglycerides galore)—though I do have a random memory of once making a gigantic bowl of coleslaw. Collatio was not a slimming business.

Russ and I always made sure that there was Milo or Coke for Foyster, who spurns tea, coffee and all alcoholic beverages—the drinks which make life worth living. This solicitude confused Yvonne Rousseau, who was pleased but shocked when I offered her tea or coffee after lunch last Christmas; she had assumed it was us, not just John, who abjured tea and coffee. She had, alas, no illusions that we were teetotal.

Astonishing Regularity

Most people slow down after the first few weeks or months of a project, but not the *ASFR (Second Series)* Collective. It never occurred to us that, once the two-monthly schedule was set, we might not meet it. Unthinkable! (Well, 17/18 was special. We had a whole heap of really good excuses.) And, when we finally went down to four issues a year in our Twenties, the amount of consultation with our readers by Editorial is, in retrospect, quite touching. It was, however, the Beginning of the End. The Thin End of the Wedge. If you can cut down from six to four, how much easier to cut down to none? No more standing in lines in the Post Office, feeling embarrassed about the size of the box of envelopes and the impending complexity of the transaction, and the consequent anticipated lengthening of the queue. No more attempting to deposit foreign cheques for amounts less than the bank conversion charges. No more copy-editing, or desktop publishing, or having to write long, boring articles.

The Collective performed one, last, amazing contortion. Yvonne produced the *Index* issue, a thing of great and enduring usefulness. And John, quite rightly, put those Ian Gunn cartoons in it.



John at work

Jennifer Bryce crops up in John Foyster's life as his partner and wife for about eight years in the late '70s to mid '80s. They met through work in education. Jennifer is not a science fiction fan although she finds 'fandom' fascinating. Instead, she plays the oboe.

WHEN I WAS FIRST asked to participate in this exercise I found it difficult because it seemed a bit like writing an obituary. I had seen a very healthy-looking John at Christmas, and I know that most Foyster males (unless tainted by incurable disease or prematurity) live into their late eighties. So writing an obituary-like piece for a sixty-year-old Foyster seemed inappropriate. Nevertheless, I want to contribute to the birthday celebrations, and I will do so by providing some reflection on a non science fiction side of John Foyster.

John and I met through our work: educational research. What we had in common had little to do with reading—and certainly nothing to do with science fiction. Early in our friendship I ploughed my way through William Gaddis' *Recognitions* because it seemed that I would lose John's respect if I didn't read it. I don't remember much about the novel except some rather quirky humour—I like the idea of naming a character Agnes Dei. But my recreational reading—biography and social history—was very different from John's.

I am not going to write about our life together. The major events in our shared life (our children and travel) have been documented at length elsewhere. But maybe I can recall a few vignettes.

When John started at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) he shared an office with me and a couple of other women. I encountered him on his first day, standing in the recreation area, perusing the collection of magazines as he waited to meet with our 'boss', Bernard Rechter. I think I introduced myself and asked whether I could help... I remember he was wearing a suit. It was 1972.

John soon settled into our office and set up an elaborate contraption which involved a paper aeroplane—I forget the exact purpose, but it probably illustrated some principle of physics. Maybe he had coloured it with Miranda's coloured pencils—anyway, through this model we learnt that he had a five- or six-year-old daughter. I don't remember John being especially untidy in our shared office, but a year later he had an office to himself, and it soon reached a point where one had to wade through piles of paper to get to his desk. John was an avid practitioner of the archaeological method of filing, and became incensed if anyone disturbed his 'diggings'.

John and I both worked in the Test Development Division of ACER, but, for the first few years, he worked on science and maths tests while I was a member of the humanities team, so we didn't work together closely. But Test Development was an exceptionally convivial place and all who worked there shared in a very special camaraderie. On Fridays (and some other days as well) we retreated for long lunches at the Rice Bowl. John was a dab hand with chopsticks, his only rival being Bernard Rechter. The rest of us had to fight for survival. For years I thought that John ate only Chinese food.

For a while Tennis was the favoured lunch-time activity. We played at near-by Grace Park. John went onto the court in his black leather Julius Marlow work shoes insisting that they met the requirements of tennis shoes because their 'wearite' soles were made of rubber. By this time he had abandoned his formal business suit and had started to don his famous collection of T-shirts: 'papa bourbaki' (Bourbaki was the Foyster pet dog), 'quant suff' and indeed around this time he instigated the design of a Test Development T-shirt with a 'T' designed to look very much like a 'ch'.

John did a great deal more than develop science and maths tests. Amongst other things he undertook psychometric analysis and evaluation studies. The Whitlam government had provided various grants for innovations in education and one of John's projects was to undertake an evaluation of the projects resulting from these grants. This work sent him into remote parts of Australia, such as Elcho Island. Because John is a non car-driver, these travels sometimes gave much pleasure to taxi drivers who conveyed him through the Queensland rain forests and outback South Australia. At other times (because he didn't drive) he was conveyed by light aircraft—so light that he had to help with the navigation. On a project of this kind, undertaken some time after leaving ACER, John had the pleasure of flying with Flo, wife of Jo Bjelke-Petersen (he flew with Flo).

But life at ACER was not all beer and skittles (or coke and chopsticks). John resigned from ACER on a matter of principle. So far as I know he has always stuck to his principles unwaveringly. When a very senior researcher distorted data to gloss over (from my memory) the serious deficits in literacy of Aboriginal children, John wanted absolutely no association with the place.

A few snatches from our life together:

- * John painting the verandah wearing a personally tailored suit (that cost about \$700 in the early 1980s). He arrived home from work, felt he could improve on my painting technique—took up the brush. . .
- * John and I striding through the streets of Vienna like Mme and M. Hulot (in this case, Madame was trailing behind). At one point on the underground train M. Hulot lunged at the speedily operating automatic doors. Out he jumped. The doors slammed shut. Madame was trapped within, not quite sure where she was, or where they were meant to be going!
- * John making extremely rich chicken liver pâté when my parents came to dinner. They don't eat garlic. Dad consumed an excessive amount of the pâté. It had about twelve cloves of garlic in it. He loved it. John also makes terrific curries and Viennese pancakes.
- * John—who hates cars—cowering in the front seat of my Volkswagen Beetle gripping the 'panic' bar conveniently (but dangerously) placed over the glove box. And on one occasion, when it had broken down, peering into the engine with a fellow non-driver (Richard Bell) trying to make intelligent comments that would not reveal their complete lack of mechanical knowledge.
- * Sitting in the back yard at St Kilda. Sunday morning, with Ashbys and maybe the Bangsunds. Eating bagels coated in Nutella.
- * John sitting at his desk in his St Kilda library, gentle tap of typewriter keys and Mahler on the Nakamichi.

In which Damien Broderick leads an expotition to Ayers Rock

In September 1981 Jennifer 'A.A.' Bryce produced what her fannish readers admire as an uncannily accurate representation of the way the Melbourne Nova Mob community interacted at that time, and thus of John Foyster's character in this context. In 1980, Norstrilia Press had published Damien Broderick's novel *The Dreaming Dragons*, featuring a quest to discover the origin of Ayers Rock (as Uluru was then generally called). Just as the real North Pole plays no part in Christopher Robin's earlier 'expotition', so the real Uluru plays no part in this 1981 'expotition'. Readers of this legendary exposé—first published here, in the twentieth year after it was written—may welcome two hints. First, John Bangsund highly esteems the works of Brian O'Nolan, whose 1939 novel *At Swim-Two-Birds* was published under the pseudonym 'Flann O'Brien', with an opening sentence repaying investigation by 'Expotition' readers. Secondly, the writer and editor Virginia Kidd, as literary agent, has represented (in addition to *Aussiecon Guests of Honour Ursula K. Le Guin and Gene Wolfe*) a number of Australasian authors.

ONE FINE DAY JOHN Bangsund had stumped over to Brunswick to see if his friend Damien Broderick was interested in Bangsunds at all. At breakfast that morning (a simple meal of marmalade spread lightly over a honeycomb or two) he suddenly thought of the opening line of a novel. It began like this:

Having placed in my mouth sufficient bread for three minutes' chewing, I withdrew my powers of sensory perception and retired into the privacy of my mind, my eyes and face assuming a vacant and preoccupied expression. . .

When he had got this far he scratched his head and thought to himself 'That's a very good first sentence, but what about the second?' He tried sitting with a vacant and preoccupied expression for half an hour, but that didn't seem to help. 'Perhaps it would be better', he thought, 'if I typed out the first sentence twice very quickly; then I might find myself typing the second, third, and fourth sentences before I knew what was happening.' But. . . he still had a vacant and preoccupied expression when he reached Damien's house.

Damien was sitting outside his door, putting on his Big Boots. As soon as he saw the Big Boots, John knew that an Adventure was going to happen, and he brushed the honey off his nose together with most of the vacant expression and spruced himself up as well as he could so as to look Ready for Anything.

'Good Morning, Damien,' he called out.

'Hallo, John Bangsund. I can't get this boot on.'

'That's bad,' said John.

'Do you think you could kindly lean against me, 'cos I keep pulling so hard that I fall over backwards.'

John sat down, dug his feet into the ground, and pushed hard against Damien's back, and Damien pushed hard against his, and pulled and pulled at his boot until he got it on. 'And that's that,' John Bangsund said. 'What do we do next?'

'We are all going on an Expedition,' said Damien, as he got up and brushed himself. 'Thank you, John.'

'Going on an Expotition?' said John eagerly. 'I don't think I've ever been on one of those. Where are we going on this Expotition?'

'Expedition, silly old Bangsund. With an "x" in it. We're going to discover the origin of Ayers Rock. You'd better tell the others to get ready while I see if my Exorcism Kit is all right. And we must all bring provisions.'

John Bangsund stumped off. The first person he met was John Foyster.

'Hallo, John! We're all going on an Expotition with Damien Broderick.'

'What are we going on?'

'I think it's a sort of boat.'

'Well, so long as it isn't a car, I guess it's all right,' said John.

'We've got to bring pro—, er, things to eat.'

'To eat?'

'Yes. Can you tell Harding? I've got to tell Mervyn.'

Mervyn Binns was sitting at the door of Space Age Books, blowing happily on a dandelion, and wondering whether it would be this year, next year, some time, or never, that he got to a World Convention, when John Bangsund approached.

'Oh! Mervyn,' said John Bangsund excitedly, 'we're going on an Expotition, all of us, with things to eat. To discover something.'

'To discover what?' said Mervyn anxiously.

'Oh, just something.'

'Nothing fierce?'

'Damien didn't say anything about it being fierce. He just said that it had an "x" in it.'

'It isn't their necks I mind,' said Mervyn earnestly, 'It's their teeth.'

In a little while they were all ready at the top of Sydney Road, and the Expotition started. First came Damien and John Foyster, then John Bangsund, then Virginia Kidd with Lee in her pocket, and George Turner, Rob Gerrand, Mervyn Binns, then Bruce Gillespie, and at the end in a long line all the dregs of the Nova Mob. 'What I say,' said Bruce Gillespie, 'is that it's unsettling. I didn't want to come on this Expo-thing; it's not Expovin at all. I only came to oblige. But here I am; and if I'm at the end of the Expo-thing then let me be at the end. But if every time I want to sit down for a little rest I have to brush away half of the Nova Mob first, then it isn't an Expo-thing at all, it's simply a Confused Noise.'

There was a shout from the top of the line.

'Come on!' called Damien.

'Come on!' called John Bangsund.

'Come on!' called George Turner.

'We're starting,' said John Foyster, 'I must go.' And he hurried off to the front of the Expotition with Damien.

'All right,' said Bruce. 'We're going. Only Don't Blame Me.'

So off they went to discover the origin of Ayers Rock. And as they walked they chattered to each other of this and that, all except John Bangsund, who was making up the second sentence of his novel.

'Hush!' said Damien, turning around to John Bangsund, 'we're coming to a Dangerous Place.'

'Hush!' said John Bangsund, turning around quickly to Mervyn.

'Hush!' said Mervyn to Lee Harding.

'Hush!' said Lee to George Turner.

'Hush!' said George to Rob Gerrand.

'Hush!' said Rob to Bruce Gillespie.

'Hush!' said Bruce in a terrible voice to all the dregs of the Nova Mob, and

'Hush!' they said hastily to each other down the line, until it got to the last one of all. And the last and smallest dreg of the Nova Mob was so upset to find that the whole Exposition was saying 'Hush!' to her that she buried herself head downwards in a crack in the ground, and stayed there for two days until the danger was over, and then went home in a great hurry.

They had come to a stream which twisted and tumbled between high rocky banks, and Damien saw at once how dangerous it was. 'It's just the place', he explained, 'for an ambush.'

'What sort of bush?' Mervyn asked John Bangsund.

'I think he said something about a gorse bush,' said John.

'An ambush', said George Turner, 'is a sort of surprise.'

'So is a gorse bush sometimes,' said John Bangsund.

'If people jump out at you suddenly, that's an ambush,' said George. John Bangsund tried to explain that a gorse bush had once jumped out at him suddenly when he fell off a tree, and it had taken him six days to get all the prickles out of himself.

They were climbing very cautiously up the stream now, going from rock to rock, and after they had gone a little way they came to a place where the banks widened out at each side, so that on each side of the water there was a level strip of grass on which they could sit and rest. As soon as he saw this Damien called 'Halt!', and they all sat down and rested.

'I think', said Damien, 'that we ought to eat all our provisions now, so that we shan't have so much to carry.'

'Good idea,' said John Bangsund, opening a bottle of Carlton Light with his teeth, taking great care not to frighten Mervyn.

'Have you all got something?' asked Damien, with his mouth full.

'All except me,' said Bruce. 'As usual.' He looked round at them in his melancholy way. 'I suppose none of you is sitting on a chocolate pancake by any chance?'

'I believe I am,' said John Foyster. 'Ugh!' He got up and looked behind him.

'Yes I was. I thought so.'

'Thank you John. If you've quite finished with it.' He moved across to John's place and began eating.

'It doesn't do them any good, you know, sitting on them,' he went on as he looked up munching. 'Takes all the life out of them.'

As soon as he had finished his provisions Damien whispered to John Foyster, and John said 'Yes, yes, of course,' and they walked a little way up the stream together.

'It's—I wondered—it's only—John, I suppose you don't know. What's it going to look like?'

'Well,' said John, stroking his whiskers, 'Now you're asking me!'

'I did know once, only I've sort of forgotten,' said Damien carelessly.

'It's a funny thing,' said John, 'but I've sort of forgotten too, although I did know once.'

'I suppose it's just a common or garden meteorite.'

'I suppose so.' They went back to the others. Mervyn was lying on his back sleeping peacefully. Lee was washing his face in the stream, and George was telling Virginia Kidd an Interesting Anecdote.

'I don't hold with all this washing,' grumbled Bruce, 'this modern behind-the-ears nonsense. What do you think, Bangsund?'

But we shall never know what John Bangsund thought, for there came a sudden squeak from Lee Harding, a splash, and a loud cry of alarm from Virginia Kidd.

'So much for washing!' said Bruce Gillespie.

'Lee's fallen in!' cried John Foyster, and he and Damien came rushing down to the rescue.

'Look at me swimming!' squeaked Lee from the middle of his pool, and was hurried down a waterfall into the next pool.

'Are you all right, Lee?' called Virginia Kidd anxiously.

'Yes!' said Lee. 'Look at me sw. . . .' and down he went over the next waterfall into another pool.

Everybody was doing something to help. Mervyn was wide awake suddenly, and was jumping up and down and making 'Oo, I say' noises; George Turner was explaining that in a case of sudden and temporary immersion the important thing was to keep the head above water; Virginia Kidd was running along the bank saying 'Are you sure you're all right, Lee?' to which Lee, from whichever pool he was in at the moment was answering 'Look at me

swimming!' Bruce had turned around and dangled his pancake over the first pool into which Lee fell, and with his back to the accident was grumbling quietly to himself, and saying

'All this washing! Catch hold of this, Harding, and you'll be all right,' and Damien and John Foyster came hurrying past Bruce and were calling out to the others in front of them.

'Get something across the stream lower down, some of you fellows,' called John Foyster.

But John Bangsund was getting something. Two pools below Lee he stood with a piece of rope, anchored by a piece of rock he'd found, and Lee Harding, still bubbling 'Look at me swimming!' was able to catch hold of it and climb out.

'Did you see me swimming?' asked Lee excitedly, while Virginia Kidd scolded him. 'Bangsund, did you see me swimming? That's called swimming, what I was doing. Foyster, did you see what I was doing? Swimming. Hallo, Mervyn! I say, Rob! What do you think I was doing? Swimming. Damien, did you see me. . .'

But Damien wasn't listening. He was looking at John Bangsund.

'Bangsund,' he said, 'where did you get the rock you tied to the rope?' John looked at the rock in his hands.

'I just found it,' he said. Damien examined it carefully, and checked it with a dingo-chewed postcard he kept in his pocket. 'Bangsund,' said Damien solemnly, 'the expedition is over. You have found the origin of Ayers Rock!'

'Oh!' said John.

Bruce Gillespie was still dangling his pancake over the water when they all got back to him.

'Tell Harding to be quick, somebody,' he said. 'All the chocolate's drained out.'

'Here I am!' squeaked Lee.

'Oh, there you are.'

'Did you see me swimming?' said Lee Harding.

DONE IN HONOUR OF DAMIEN BRODERICK'S EXPEDITION: SEPTEMBER 1981

John Foyster at ACER

MANY YEARS AGO WHEN the world was young (i.e. even before the Jimmy Carter era), a thirty-something came bounding into the Australian Council for Educational Research. Nobody was ever certain how he came by the job (rumour had it that he Knew Someone), but with its usual sense of corporate ennui and organisational inertia, ACER sort of welcomed John, gave him the worst office in the upstairs annex occupied by the Test Development section, and watched with interest as to what, if anything, might happen—drone or dynamo?

Definitely dynamo. Test writing is a gentle art (panel meetings to discuss the individual's efforts are something else again—a sort of body-contact sport, for which one had to go into training), and John was an artist, if not utterly gentle in those meetings. He started by developing a novel form of test named after something mythical: the famous 'phlogistical' units or sets of questions, which like the eponymous substance consisted of nothing at all—until he brought them into being. Whether the famous questions on the Palazzetto dello Sport formed one of these units history does not record, but *ferro-cemento* is mightily solid even in parabolic arches, so probably not. The units used neat combinations of maths and science information but (daring innovation this) also included matters pertaining to what was roughly called 'the humanities', so offering a broader, more integrated view than hitherto of what testing (and indeed education) might be about.

He survived ACER rather well—forced to sit near to someone nicknamed the Delphic Oracle (due to her addiction to something weird and arcane called the 'Delphi technique'—no, don't ask me either); pressed into panel meetings with the giant minds of his colleagues plus a scruffy group of academic mathematicians (no names—this a public document)—he survived it all. Survived even the gawking and jibing from the rest of us when he first made an office appearance in a red boiler-suit—Olyve, the secretary, shrieking, thought maybe he was the man come about the drains, but no, she found it was 'dear John' inside there after all (red was one of the colours of Scotch College, his *alma mater*, so we thought that probably explained it. . .).

His education at Scotch (pre-Kennett, we hasten to add) was also, we presumed, responsible for one of his greatest assets to ACER organisationally. Sighs of relief: at long last we had someone on the staff who, on request and from memory, could recite the names of the hills on which *Roma antiqua* was built. Not only that, but we suspect he could distinguish those that were accorded the status of *mons* from those which were nominated mere *colli*. There are degrees of connoisseurship in all things. Try him even today on Viminalis, Capitolinus, Palatinus, Quirinalis, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Pincius, Orpius, Caelius and Cispius, and you'll maybe see.

His other contribution to test-writing fame (apart from the run-of-the-mill stuff he turned out day by day, in ghastly quantity and of uniformly high quality) was a wild set of questions based on syllogisms, certain of which included the proposition: 'Bernie is greedier than John'. Since there was a certain Bernie at the time heading the section, this did not augur well for longevity of employment (or any other kind of longevity, come to think of it), but somehow he survived even that. Rumour (unconfirmed) has it that the matter was settled between them in an epic tournament involving plates of roast duck and Singapore rice vermicelli at the Rice Bowl, of blessed memory. All the test development staff repaired to this gastronomic haven from time to time, generally avoiding days when either John or Bernie was present: especially when both were, since degrees of being 'greedier', as well as connoisseurship, are sometimes fine indeed. Rumour further has it that the cook kept specially sharpened pairs of chopsticks for the two of them, but once again that cannot be confirmed since the said cook, alas, decades ago took up gardening in the interests of health and safety.

What his employment at ACER didn't survive was a wicked bit of statistical manoeuvring, whereby it was suggested that the results obtained by Aboriginal students in the first of the long succession of literacy and numeracy tests for which the place is now infamous, be suppressed. He argued that the nation needed to know, however shameful the comparisons with mainstream students' performances, and what might be therefore suggested about the relatively poor quality of education being afforded the Indigenous people of the day. A Cause, and a noble one, hard argued, but we lost him.

Graeme Withers could pretend he was Richard Bell or David Arney or any other of John's ex-colleagues at ACER, but that would be futile, so he owns up to being Graeme Withers (The One That Didn't Get Away—he still works there), or as John would say, in one of his more minatory moods: 'Ah hah, Herr Vitters'. Now (puffs up chest) a Senior Research Fellow (shows how far you can get on a pass degree and virtually no qualifications in 'education', though some experience of it—whatever it is).

FAPA and Foyster

Jack Speer: *I was a stfan seven years before John Foyster was born. I've been in FAPA since it began. I attended a sesquidozen worldcons, including the first. I wrote the first history of fandom and Fancyclopedia I. Si momentum requiris circumspice.*

I HAD KNOWN JOHN as a fellow FAPAn for several years before the 1996 LACon. There he, when asked, denied the Marxist tag that i had hung on a few Brits including him.

We continued to see each other in FAPA, and there he published an article describing what he thought was wrong with the Hyperionovels. I felt the same way he did, having tried to get started in Hyperion, but i sent a copy of the article to my son, who thinks Hyperion is the greatest thing since sliced bread. Ed wrote an answer to John, which i published in Synapse. John didn't really reply to it.

In the summer of 1999 John phoned to ask whether i was going to attend Aussiecon. Yes. At Aussiecon John made me welcome, arranging a meeting with John Bangsund et al. and taking me to the ANZaparty, where i met many fen who had been only names before that.

I appreciate his hospitality, and appreciate him even more as an interesting contributor and sometime opponent in the continuous conversation that is FAPA.



Vignette

Lee Harding is well known as a writer and editor of science fiction, and is also a professional photographer. As a contributor to this publication, he could have written pieces under misleading and unsettling titles like 'The night I slept with John Foyster', or 'John Foyster abandoned Sarah Vaughan for me'—but he was merciful.

1961: JOHN F ATTENDS a party at the home of Mervyn Barret & Jill Dudding, somewhere in Melbourne. Also present are Margaret Duce (now Helena Roberts), Lee Harding & John Baxter, the latter visiting from Sydney. Some risible colour slides of dubious artistic merit are screened, prompting equally dubious comments from Lee and loud guffawing all round. Later, John F and John B repair with Lee to the apartment in Camberwell he shares with wife Carla. Also present is Marie Baxter: she and John are honeymooning in Melbourne and temporarily residing with the Hardings. Over coffee, the two Johns consider either (a) returning to the party or (b) enduring Harding's flagging repartee. They chose the latter, John F departing at the witching hour.

When Lee & Carla flee suburban Melbourne for 'a home in the hills', John F becomes a regular weekend visitor and eventually meets John Bangsund, another regular visitor to the Hardings. This sets in motion a chain of events that produces *ASFR* and other fannish miracles. 'The die was cast,' John F. later wrote in a fanzine, 'since when the cast has been dying.' As have all. . .

Letter of comment

DEAR YVONNE,

Thank you for your letter and the Foyster Timeline, which I read with my jaw dropping lower as I went up the Foyster years. One should remember the significant birthdays of a friend, and although I was aware of John's year of birth I am probably as guilty as the next fan in forgetting it. Having witnessed John Foyster in action, off and on, for almost forty-five years, I am sure *his* memory will serve him better than mine in these later years.

Lyn has begun a new assignment now, so we are not available via e-mail; just as well you didn't use that mode of communication. By the time you receive this I will have entered hospital to have my left kidney removed, a small carcinoma having been discovered therein. A week in hospital and home care should see me recovered.

Forgive the cliché, but *The Many Faces of John Foyster* comes to mind, and both Lyn and I (and probably my first wife if she was available) almost instinctively said: this isn't the Foyster we remember! I didn't realise until John resumed contact with me in 1996 that when you are young and involved in things fannish there is the tendency to forget that individuals have private lives and all the problems that may go with them. For the John Foyster of the 'Nineties brought me up-to-date on much that had happened to him over the years, and one has to virtually read between the lines of your Timeline to understand.

So there are two images of John Foyster for me: the young man who was having great fun within science fiction fannish circles, sans beard, and as he wrote back in 1993 (for the ANZAPA Anniversary 'the larrikin element in Australian fandom was on the move. . .'; the John Foyster that I wandered the streets of Melbourne with in the 1960s, visits to the MSFC (where I recall one time John was writing something in connection with 'Tristan and Iseult' and I was flagrantly plagiarising Perelman), and the interesting people that we met. (Somewhere along the way I met his sister Myfanwy.) I forget how old Jillian was when we visited John and Elizabeth, but remember that either John or Elizabeth were reading to her from Edward Lear's nonsense book. John tells me that I also participated in the creation of *The Smallcon Smudge*, but my memory is hazy about that.

I have a letter from the late John Ryan dated 23 October 1969 in which he advises me that 'John Foyster and his family will be staying with us over the Convention (Syncon '70) period. . .' and indeed that year Lyn and I played host to John, Elizabeth, Harding, Bangsund and Edmonds at our temporary abode in Cronulla. Your timeline does not mention this. Some time after Syncon '72 John stayed with us at our Mortdale home (as did Bangsund), and displayed his lack of affection for our cats. Our son, Geoffrey, a year older than Jillian, remembers the bearded Foyster from Syncon '72: Geoffrey shoots Foyster with his raygun, Foyster obligingly fell over. (Little did we realise until much later that 'falling over' was almost becoming a way of life for John Foyster . . .) Small moments of generosity are remembered: John presents me with the US paperback edition of Durrell's *The Black Book*, having already launched me on a Durrell kick. Rather naughty to own that in Australia back then.

And so we come to the Interim Years, where Smith gradually gaffiated from mid-1970s to mid-1990s. Here begins the second image of John Foyster for the Smith household. It's the story of instant contact when he sees my name on the Net, some wonderful letters, stacks of fanzines to bring me up-to-date on the Foyster doings during my gaffiation, phone calls to tell me somebody in fandom has died, postcards from far-off exotic places, and. . . a warm feeling that seemed to say: welcome back! Fandom seemed to have gone quite pictorial with the advent of electronic convenience in my absence, and there was John Foyster all over the damn place. And so this John Foyster, older, larger, somewhat untidily bearded (*except* for the photo with his great-grandfather's portrait), has become part of my life again. In his cover series on Old Fans and their favourite pulps there is a big spot for John Foyster himself, with a loved pulp he has had to collect all over again.

If an important part of fandom in this day and age is knowing more about the *people* who inhabit our microcosm, then this indeed is the time for 'John Foyster—This Is Your Life!'

Lyn and I wish John all the best for his 60th, and may he continue to roar through the halls of fandom for many years to come!

Regards.

Bob and Lyn Smith

Bob Smith entered fandom via US sf magazines, encountered when the Australian Army sent him to Japan. As a member of the Spectator Amateur Press Society (SAPS), he introduced John Foyster (a beardless youth in Melbourne in 1961) to amateur press associations. Today, John's electronic fanzine, eFNAC, is only one of several zines that regularly receive Bob's letters of comment.

Foyster in the 'Seventies

Ron Clarke was eight when he began reading sf. In his last year at high school, in 1964, he began fanzine publishing with *The Mentor*—whose latest issue he is working on even now, after retirement from work. His first Convention was in Melbourne in 1966; he helped organise the first Syncon in 1970; and he was Treasurer of ASTREX Star Trek Club for thirteen years. He attended his first (and only) worldcon in Heidelberg in 1970, and he was the Australian representative at the Volgograd convention, organised by Russian fans, in 1991. He was on the committee helping Graham Stone to bring the Futurian Society of Sydney out of its hibernation, and he has also helped to organise the current new Sydney Freecons. Ron Clarke also publishes *What's Out*: a free current book-release magazine.

JOHN FOYSTER HAS BEEN an influence on my fanac from the first time I wrote to him, back in the 1960s, as can be seen from the extract quoted below. I consider him one of the stalwarts of Australian fandom and his influence on Australian fandom over the years is immense. Extracted from 'The Australian Fanzine Explosion' (*Penultimate Blimp* 1, January 1972) by Ron Clarke:

It is almost certain that most, if not all, of the fan activity in Australia can be traced back to the efforts of one man. Australia is lucky in that a vast majority of the active fans in this country (about ninety-five per cent) have met each other and see each other 'in the flesh' at conventions. I would say that there are fifty 'active' fans in Australia. These are fen who put out zines, write locs, gather material, and organize conventions and like fan activities. The present state of fan activities in Australia impresses me as being somewhat like that which U.S. fandom must have gone through in the 1940s—when most of the fans knew each other, at least through letters.

Up to early 1964 (when I came into fandom) there had been fanzines brought out at irregular intervals. Some in my collection are *Futurian Observer*; *Baccanalia* ('56); *Emanation* (Feb '61); *Etherline* (from '52 on) and *Woomera* (Feb '51). These were mostly published in fits and starts; by '63 most (actually I think all) were defunct. For more information, see Vol Molesworth's *History of Australian Fandom: 1935-1963*.

In January 1964 I joined the Futurian Society of Sydney, and it was by Kevin Dillon that I was given John Foyster's address. I wrote to John, and received *Satura* 6, John's fanzine. The first issue of *Satura* had come out on 1 February 1964 and was the first regular fanzine for some time. I obtained John Baxter's address from somewhere (probably John Foyster) and was thus introduced into fandom. John Baxter, who then lived in Sydney, gave me issues 7 and 8 of his *Souffle*, and helped me select a [manual office] typewriter. 1964 was my last year in high school and it was in August, 1964, that I founded an sf club there and brought out the first issue of what was to become my regular fanzine, *The Mentor*.

John Foyster published fourteen issues of *Satura/Gryphon* in 1964, and three in 1965, finishing publication with number 17. Issue 15 was the famous photographic issue, with a colour photo of Peter Ustinov on the front cover and eight full-page photos throughout the issue. I have yet to see an Australian fanzine—or even an overseas one—to rival this issue in lavishness. It was in 1964 also that Lee Harding's first (and only) fanzine, *Canto* 1, came out.

In 1965 there were only two fanzines published—*Satura/Gryphon* and *The Mentor*. The *Gryphon* was a genzine, though, with a notable lack of sf orientated material. I think it was this lack that was the impetus to bring out my own fanzine. John Foyster and Bob Smith then followed it up with advice and egoboo. I published four issues of *The Mentor* in 1964, and three in 1965. Then came a break in publication till 1968, when the 1968 Melbourne con enthused me again and I published six issues that year. In 1969 I published four, ending with number 16. I then left for overseas and when I returned in 1971 I continued with issues 17 through to 21.

Easter 1966 was probably the most important date in [recent] Australian fan history. It was then that the first Australian Science Fiction Convention for some fifteen-or-so years was held in Melbourne. It was run by John Foyster, and was the first sf con I went to. Needless to say, I was hooked. It has been beaten in popularity by only one Aussiecon since. It was directly out of this convention that *Australian Science Fiction Review* was created. *ASFR* is the most well known Australian fanzine, and it ran for four years before running into heavy seas. John Bangsund published five issues in 1966, commencing with the June 1966 issue. 1967 saw eight issues, 1968 five, and 1969 three, when it changed its name to *Scythrop*. John [Bangsund] put out numbers 22 and 23 in 1971. *ASFR* has gone down in the annals of fan publishing not only in Australia but all over the world. Mainstays were very competent reviews and the whole pub. had a literary air to it that ensured a Hugo nomination.

John Foyster and Aussiecon One

I VISITED AUSTRALIA ON several occasions in the '60s, while I was working for BOAC (the precursor of British Airways). On the last of these trips before I moved permanently back to Australia, I spent a few days in Melbourne, where I met the redoubtable Mervyn Binns. It was from him I bought my first copy of *ASFR*, and obtained the names and addresses of a few Sydney fans. As a result, I was invited to an early 1968 meeting of the Sydney SF Foundation, which at the time met in Campsie, a middling-outer suburb. Collected at Wynyard station in the city by Ron Clarke, I was driven over the Bridge, and some distance along the Pacific Highway. Noting the distance to Kempsey on a roadside sign as indicating a drive of about eight hours, I new-chummishly asked how much further to the meeting. An education in Australian vernacular pronunciation and geography followed. One of those at the meeting was Pat Terry, the group's lovable old Irish codger, bemoaning the cost of going to Melbourne for the Eastercon. The hat went round, and as a result Pat was able to attend. After his death a few years later the SSFF gave an award for humorous sf in his memory. Whatever happened to that?

My own first Australian Convention was the following year, after I had moved permanently to Australia. That was where I first met John Foyster, but my main memories of that Con are of the site. It was held at the top of two flights of stairs in an old warehouse building in Somerset Place. The building belonged to Mervyn Binns' employer, McGill's Newsagency, and included one of the last hydraulic lifts in the city. Despite, or possibly because of, the lift cage's use as a Star Pit at the convention, it was non-functional when I saw it. The crowning glory of the meeting-room was the pair of 35mm film projectors that enabled the Melbourne SF Club to show films.

Of the six convenors of Syncon '70 (two days at New Year, 1970), only Ron Clarke now lives in Sydney. The rest of us were John Brosnan now of London, Peter Darling now of Melbourne, myself now of Hobart, Gary Mason now of Adelaide, and John Ryan (RIP). The cover of the progress report was an Apollo capsule making a figure-8 around the earth and the Moon, a topical note at the time. I think it was by Stan Pitt (an extremely popular Australian comic-book artist, who also created some sf covers, and worked on a comic-book version of Alfred Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!*). The Foysters had come to Syncon from Melbourne, and were staying with John Ryan in Fairfield. The convention was memorable for the number of professional comic artists participating, including Stan Pitt, thanks to John Ryan's persuasion; for the catering, laid on by Peter Darling's mum, who lived across the street from the Epping Scout Hut where it was held; and for the panel discussion on holding a Worldcon in Australia in 1975: the first time the topic had been seriously discussed in public.

I had attended a couple of World SF Conventions by then: the 1965 London one, and the 1967 New York one. I was keen to get people to realise that Australia in '75 was a real possibility, but that there was no time to waste. Publicity and promotion was necessary: and at the time this would have to be achieved by distribution of Australian fanzines (already *ASFR* was well-known in the USA) and by Australians writing letters of comment to foreign fanzines. John was in favour, tempered with a degree of caution: it was decided to have a group of people (including John and myself) who were to devote some time to threshing out ideas in a round-robin and report to the Eastercon at Carnegie. I have lost track of my copies of this, but during that period lots of ideas were discussed. Suffice it to say the topic was still on the agenda at Easter. John Bangsund had a brilliant write-up and cartoons, I remember.

I was one of three Australians planning to attend Heicon '70, that year's Worldcon, in Heidelberg, Germany. This was the first ever held in a non-Anglophone country, and John Foyster and I worked on an ad to be placed in their Program Book, in German. It advocated—as far as I can ascertain at this late date—that since World Conventions and Hugo Awards were now international, the Rules should be changed to allow inclusion of work not in the English language, and lots of other warm and fuzzy stuff we thought might appeal to what we expected would be a large number of non-English speaking fans.

Ron Clarke and John Brosnan left for the Worldcon aboard an old Sydney double-decker bus, which expired in the back blocks of Greece, causing them such expense, delay, and trouble that John Brosnan did not make the Convention. I flew, and was met at Frankfurt Airport by a fan friend from earlier English Eastercons, Gary Hoff, a German fan who soon afterwards migrated to Perth and became a stalwart of the 1975 Worldcon Committee. The Australians had also propagandised the American attendees by preparing a flyer (*Hei-Jack*) which was distributed aboard the charter flight from the USA to the Convention by Fred Patten from Los Angeles, who later became our agent. John Brunner, Robert Silverberg, and Walther Ernsting were the guests of honour, and the main program of the Con in the Town Hall was largely conducted in English. There was not much discussion about changing the Worldcon Rules, but quite a lot of discussion about setting up an annual Eurocon, for which fan groups in different parts of Europe would bid. This seems to have worked: I attended Eurocon 2000 in Gdynia, Poland.

In late 1970, I moved to Melbourne. There, I boarded with John Bangsund for a few weeks,

Robin Johnson, a Tasmanian by birth, was brought up in Britain. An aircraft systems engineer by trade, he migrated successively to computer programming and to Sydney, having been a science fiction fan in Britain, attending some conventions there and in the USA. After a period in Sydney, he moved to Melbourne in late 1970, and for some years worked as a programmer for Shell. After John Foyster's resignation he became co-chair of the bidding Committee for the 1975 Worldcon, and Con Chair after the bid was won in 1973. After Aussiecon he travelled to Europe and America, spent a period on the dole, and went into the travel business in Melbourne. He organised trips for many of the Australian fans who travelled overseas and for many guests of Australian conventions over the next few years. When he realised this activity was not very profitable, he moved to Sydney again, retaining a part-time interest in travel while officially a public servant. He married Alicia Miller in 1984 in Hobart, and has settled there. Now retired from the public service, he is still interested in sf, conventions, aircraft and travel.

and was initiated into various aspects of Melbourne fandom. These included the weekly meetings at the Degraives St Tavern, a subterranean retreat presided over by the redoubtable Henry. Often these meetings were attended by John Foyster, who vainly tried to bring us to serious discussion of a sfnal topic, but usually had to be content with stealing chips off other people's plates while they were distracted. Early in 1971, my employer 'let me go' as the Americans say. As a result of the Bangsund establishment's habit of sitting up talking all night while quaffing the rough red, I had formed the habit of sleeping at work. After John Bangsund interviewed Valma Brown (in her mother's presence) as to her suitability to replace me as a boarder, I moved to Moonee Ponds, sharing a house with Leigh Edmonds.

When Bill Wright and I attended L.A.Con, the 1972 Worldcon, our heavy weapon was the John Litchen Antifan film, celebrating the cartoon strip created to publicise the bid by Gerald Carr. In this film, John Foyster, in an excess of Method acting, portrays himself, living in a huge establishment that looks remarkably like the glass-fronted Victorian Arts Centre. He is assassinated by being crushed under his bookshelves, pushed by Antifan, while researching an article on an early pulp magazine.

The film had been made by John Litchen on 16mm black-and-white film around Melbourne, and was scripted by the ubiquitous 'Minnie Hands'. It involves Antifan (Paul Stevens) maniacally mugging at the camera as he disposes of members of the Bidding Committee, in a variety of inventive ways, against a series of picturesque Melbourne backgrounds. Antifan's comeuppance ensues as his final bomb-throw is neatly returned by Aussiefan (Malcolm Hunt).

The film was made as a silent. At the last minute, Ron Graham funded a sound version, with Lee Harding doing a voice-over in breathy mid-Pacific accents. The silent version was sent over to America in advance as air freight, and the sound version, completed only the day before I left, went in my baggage. On arrival in Los Angeles, I carefully forgot to declare the accompanying copy, but found out that the earlier one had been held up in Customs hundreds of miles away in San Francisco for some reason.

Bill and I were also carrying ten thousand boxes of matches advertising the Worldcon bid, fifty give-away T-shirts, and various other promotional items. The film was sneaked on to the Convention film program after *The People*, the screen version of the Zenna Henderson series, one of the most in-demand items on the program. People, getting up to leave, sat down again as they saw Stephen Solomon sweep a path for Mervyn Binns' limo as he arrives at Space Age Books for the day's work, and the laughing was almost continuous for the rest of the movie. After that screening, it was shown at least hourly for the rest of the convention in the Wright/Johnson suite beside the hotel pool, even when the room was invaded by naked and dripping swimmers after the midnight Free-the-Pool rally. After the success at LA Con, Jack Chalker took the film on an extended tour of American regional conventions, where it was seen and enjoyed by thousands of science fiction fans across the country. More than anything else, this is what gave us the opportunity to run a World Convention in Melbourne.

It had become traditional to announce Worldcon Guests of Honour as soon as the site has been decided. A major debate among the Committee ensued, and the eventual choice was Ursula K. Le Guin, then only starting to achieve the recognition she now has. My own choice was defeated, and I suspected the hand of John Foyster in that, although he was not a member of the Committee at the time. Ursula accepted, probably because she never imagined that we would win! Later in 1973, DUFF winner Bruce Gillespie attended Torcon 2, the Worldcon in Toronto where the site ballot gave the 1975 Convention to Melbourne. He was so overcome that he got lost for six months. The following year, at Discon II, the 1974 Worldcon in Washington, our Guest of Honour, Ursula K. Le Guin, attempted (privately) to withdraw from Aussiecon. She was persuaded to stay on when John Foyster and Bruce Gillespie dreamed up a Writers' Workshop proposal, whereby her presence almost guaranteed a grant from the Australian Literature Board that would help considerably with the cost.

When Aussiecon One, the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention, actually took place, at the somewhat lamented Southern Cross Hotel in Melbourne, John Foyster was program manager and a day manager, too, I think. Pretty much the unsung hero, he was unflappable—unlike the rest of us. I had been spotted running down the middle of Bourke Street, being chased by a tram, for example.

Two years later, in 1977, Peter Darling and I helped John Foyster to move into a one-person flat in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond. Peter had a Volvo Estate at the time, a solid and reliable car, that was repeatedly loaded heavily carrying the Foyster book collection to Richmond. Despite considerable misgivings, the books were all fitted into the flat in the end. Of course, there was not much room left for John.

Aspects of critics

IT IS TRADITIONAL WITH festschrifts that they contain articles on subjects dear to the interests of the festschriftee (and none more festschriftly than ours) and I shall follow that tradition. Sf criticism is a subject John Foyster has laboured long and productively upon, and ideally someone should write a long view on his labours. Alas, I recognise I have neither the time nor the necessary materials to conduct this essential project myself, so I will leave it as an exercise for the reader. I expect, though, that what will be found are critical qualities best summarised by George Turner as 'the ubiquitous, inevitable, sometimes infuriating, but always readable John Foyster.' Such a long view would have to consider the authors and books John Foyster discussed, the reasoning he applied, and the conclusions he derived. Instead, this piece will deal with just one aspect of sf criticism.

Modestly, I am going to suggest one useful function for the critic: to provide insight into the nature of the literature being considered. (I know there are heaps more functions, but they do not come within my purview.) Most of my readers will believe that a critic provides the most useful insights by correctly diagnosing some feature or other as characteristic of the literature. This is not always so. The insight may be derived by a reader realising that the critic is wrong in his or her assertion, and with that realisation comes insight.

I will illustrate this point with two insights derived from the critical writings of James Blish. These observations were published under his William Atheling Jr pseudonym, but appeared in reviews published in regular science fiction magazines. Blish was reviewing Eugene Budrick and Harvey Wheeler's *Fail Safe* (1962) and John Boyd's *The Rakebells of Heaven* (1969). (For clarity: these books were reviewed separately and probably appeared in different magazines many years apart.)

Blish diagnosed as a fault in *Fail Safe* that the book did not end with the outbreak of nuclear war. Instead it was concerned with averting a nuclear war, and the Blish critical finger wagged at its failure to depict nuclear war as an inevitable given. As a child of the Cold War years, I perhaps naively harboured the belief that nuclear peace was more important than the waging of nuclear war. Silly old me! Blish's comment highlights the fact that sf writers were happy to show nuclear wars waged or, more usually, their post-catastrophic consequences, and how we got along after the Bomb.

As for Boyd's *Rakebells of Heaven*, this was an amusing but otherwise quite minor sf novel, whose value lies in the insightful but wrongheaded comment it produced in Blish's review, which reveals something about the structure of the science fiction universe and the ways it was explored by writers of modern science fiction. The events of Boyd's mildly racy space-exploration sex comedy took place on another planet in another galaxy. This should not be so, grumbled Jim Blish: modern science fiction properly confines itself to planets in our galaxy. There was no obvious or contingent reason in the story why the planet needed to be in another galaxy. Logically, this was correct enough, but why prohibit extragalactic activity?

Science fiction in its halcyon pre-Campbellian Revolution days reveled in roaming from galaxy to galaxy and usually laying waste to them in the process. Those were days when the super-scientific sagas of E E 'Doc' Smith, Edmond Hamilton, and even pre-Campbellian John Wood Campbell Jr himself had galaxies that were, to paraphrase Dave Langford, armed and armoured as only galaxies can be armed and armoured. Here is the puzzlement: modern science fiction has pulled in its wide-ranging horns from intergalactic vastness and deepness and has confined itself to closer to home. Even the far future isn't visited as regularly as your bus timetable would allow.

Although these insights were derived from two occasions when Blish's critical acuity dimmed, James Blish was nonetheless one of this field's most important critics. I am merely pointing out that even when a critic errs, insight can sometimes be extracted. I don't pretend to understand what these two insights fully portend, but I apprehend that they provide valuable clues into the ways science fiction has organised itself into tackling certain kinds of subjects. Beyond this I have a faint sense of a project where science fiction may be better understood by generating almost random statements about it and seeing how they differ from what science fiction is actually like. That is a project for a future at present veiled in mists.

While critics may not like it, some of their more insightful illuminations may occur when they are plain wrong. All literature is an interaction between authors and readers and that in itself is one reason why we have critics to plague our peace of mind.

Jeff Harris is a defrocked biophysicist, a wage slave in thrall to the public service, a resident of the Deep North of metropolitan Adelaide, and having reached his third decade as an sf fan (a sin that weighs heavily on his conscience) feels mortified to realise he doesn't know any hilariously funny stories about John Foyster. A few wryly humorous ones, but nothing mirthfully hilarious.

Merv's memories

Merv Binns helped to found the Melbourne SF Group (precursor of the Melbourne SF Club) in 1952. Employed by booksellers McGill's Newsagency from 1951 to 1970, Merv went on to become co-proprietor with Ron Graham of Space Age Books (the base for the making of the first 'Aussiefan' film and the first Australian World Convention bid). Merv has earned a prominent place in Australian fandom, and was awarded the Ditmar for his zine *Australian SF News* in 1983 and the Chandler Award for Outstanding Achievement in Science Fiction in 1994.

I FIRST REMEMBER JOHN Foyster coming into McGill's Newsagency when I worked there, it must have been in the late 'fifties at least, and buying copies of the Melbourne SF Club magazine *Etherline*. Like my memories now about everything else I cannot recall when he started coming to club meetings, but I certainly do remember his great efforts to get Melbourne fandom back on the rails, along with other Melbourne fans, in the 1960s. I was surprised to learn at Aussiecon Three Historicon Panels that John had been in touch with fans interstate and all over, apparently when I first started seeing him in McGill's. This indicates to me perhaps, why he was keen to get the club operating in a better way than it had been, in the early 1960s. He roped in other fans around here then and put on the 6th National Australian SF Convention in the old clubroom in McGill's store. And that was not all. He was involved with later conventions in Melbourne, started producing fanzines and I think encouraging other people like John Bangsund and Bruce Gillespie to do the same. John became one of the most active fans in Melbourne for years to come. But the detail on this period I will have to rely on others to write.

I have always found John a level-headed and easy guy to get on with and always pleased to talk with me about SF, fandom or whatever. When it comes to times that I *can* remember him in particular, I cannot forget his role as Joe Phaust in the play we put on at the 1973 convention in Melbourne, at the Victoria Hotel, his 'acting' debut with all of us in the publicity movie we made for Aussiecon One, and the tableau at Seacon in England in 1979, with George Turner and the rest of us. He and I had been talking briefly to Donald Wollheim and C. J. Cherryh at a party in the Prince Regent's folly in Brighton, when we had to race off to get into costumes. The little incident that somehow has really stuck in my mind, however, was going into the clubroom when we were renting an office in McKillop Street, Melbourne city, one day, to find John using the duplicator. Things apparently had not been going smoothly: there was a bit of ink being spread around and it was not all on the stencils or the duplicator's drum. It was on John! Despite his problems he seemed to be taking it all quite philosophically (though he may remember it differently), but with me in the same circumstances, I would have been raving and ranting.

Then there was the football match at Elizabeth's farm at Kyneton. We all had a great time that day and I have some great photos of him in the thick of it and ordering Bill Wright off the field. There were the parties at Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda, and all the other get-togethers and conventions. Bruce Gillespie praised me too much, to my embarrassment, though I really did appreciate it, at Aussiecon Three, for my efforts in keeping the Melbourne SF Club going in the early years, but I believe that John is responsible as much as anybody, maybe more so, for the growth of Melbourne SF Fandom from the 1960s on and our efforts to run the World Convention in 1975.

I have enjoyed John's company over the years greatly and I wish him all the best for his 60th birthday and I hope he has many more.



For John Foyster—in admiration of this gentle, fierce noble man

I FIRST MET JOHN at John Bangsund's, in 1965 at a meeting about *ASFR* (also present was Lee Harding), and through that happy magazine I got to know him. Somehow or other Bangsund appointed me Assistant Editor, but John and Lee were the real supports to JB then.

At Monash, in 1970, John and I decided to bid together to gain the co-editorship of the Monash University Magazine, *Ancora*—which we did. As we were funded by the Student Union, we were actually able to pay contributors, so we termed it a prozine. It had as cover a poem by Jon Puckridge:

'Open up
your rubbish bin,
baby.
Here comes
another load
of rubbish.'

John was instrumental in getting contributions from Redd Boggs and Gershon Legman.

These were years of conflict in Australia about the war in Vietnam, and I knew that John, like me, hated the US and Australian involvement in that essentially civil war.

Rob Gerrard was one-third of *Norstrilia Press*, and wrote stories published in *The Altered I*, *Envisaged Worlds* and *Alien Worlds*. He edited *Transmutations* (1979), a collection of original Australian sf, and in 1993 his novel *Fortress*, based on the film, was published by Bookman Press. His non-fiction book, *Scripts for Success*, co-written with Eve Ash, will appear in May 2002 from Penguin Books. Rob has also had a corporate life in public relations and marketing, and is Adjunct Professor at Deakin University. He was founding president of the Monash Alumni Association.

Foyster's origins unmasked

LEIGH EDMONDS POSTED THIS to the Australian fanhistory mailing list. 'A little footnote to Lfannish history. Last weekend Valma and I were at a conference about the history of local newspapers in Chiltern. Not a bad event in its way, but if you've published a newszine none of the problems of publishing local newspapers are new to you. I happened to mention this to one of the other speakers during lunch and to my amazement he used the term fanzine as though everyone knew it well.

"You'd know Max Foyster then," he said. I looked blank for a second and then recalled that the fine fellow we know as John Foyster is aka Max Foyster to many family and friends.

"Indeed, I replied, "We've published the occasional fanzine."

"Well, I'm responsible for him. . .for him being involved in science fiction."

The story unfolds that in 195[6] when John Foyster was sick in bed he wanted something to read and my informant supplied him with the hard stuff, some copies of sf magazines. And the rest is history, as they say.

'I have the informant's card. He's Dr Thomas Darragh, Senior Curator in Invertebrate Palaeontology at the Museum of Victoria.'

[Why am I not suprised that someone with details of John Foyster's pre-history would have something to do with palaeontology?] [Marc Ortlieb]

Bullsheets 128, 15 October 1999

To remember John Foyster at Preshil

Doug McCurry is a researcher at the Australian Council for Educational Research. At the end of the 1980s he was firmly ensconced at Preshil and liked to say it was good to know where he would be working at the end of the century.

He was offered a job at ACER which he refused a number of times but which he eventually could not refuse. On the day he resigned from Preshil Margaret rang him and said her curse would pursue him down the generations. On the day he was to attend his last staff meeting he had his first and only migraine and was unable to go anywhere or do anything.

Doug has written tests and done research in assessment for thirteen years at ACER. He works with Jennifer Bryce who met John Foyster during her first period as a test writer at ACER. Doug first met Jenny (John and Jenny were then an item, as they say) when at Preshil.

Doug has had the pleasure of intermittently meeting John F with other Blackhall staff (at the Rice Bowl, of course) when John is in Melbourne. John and Doug worked at Preshil together, both worked at different times in test development at ACER, and they have both more recently been involved in educational projects in SE Asia.

PRESHIL, THE MARGARET LYTTLE Memorial School, is the oldest and the best alternative school in Australia.

It began in the 1920s as a kind of 'Dame School' for primary students in a large Federation house on a couple of acres in the bourgeois suburb of Kew. A secondary school was developed in the 1970s. It is currently housed in two nineteenth century mansions on a couple of acres a few of blocks away from the primary school.

The school was begun by Margaret Lyttle the first, and was run from the 1940s until the mid 1990s by the niece of the Margaret Lyttle the first, Margaret Lyttle the second. This second Margaret Lyttle is the real life and history of the school. She is a charismatic and formidable educator. She is a person of extraordinary strength and subtlety.

I have always thought of Margaret Lyttle as Queen Lear because of her towering energy, magnanimous spirit and her monarchic foibles. Margaret Lyttle inspired a kind of feudal loyalty from me, and I think even John Foyster (the libertarian anarchist?) might also own to something of that feeling for Margaret.

When asked some years ago to remember my time at Preshil I called up the following.

Preshil Impressions: After A Decade

No bells, no asphalt, no lino.
Teaching and learning in graceful rooms of another era.

Naturalness and informality.

A sense of direct contact with the young people with little role-playing pretence.
No struggle to hold on to the role of teacher.

Not legalistic and rule driven.
No codified rules.

Not one rule for all. Different rules for different individuals.
And when things went wrong, saying to the students., 'That is not acceptable! You know that, you know the rules'.

A love of the arts.
A sense of artistic impulses at the centre of things.

A new understanding given to me of art as a respect for beauty.
A sense that it was better to do without than to suffer something that is ugly.

The only school staff meeting that stretched from Prep to Year 12.
A meeting where Prep teachers would discuss their experience, a dozen years before, with a student you were currently teaching in Year 12.
A meeting that was not run to an agenda, and that grew out of memories and stories.

People were not driven.
There was no mad striving.
An easefulness.
A sense of sanity and health.
It was good to be oneself.

No effort to see the whole person. People were people.
Preshil was a world not an institution with a function.

Individuality among the young people.
A sense of personal grace without conscious pursuit of style.

A sense of respect and admiration for individuality.

A sense of high expectations for the young people.
A sense of opportunity, energy and initiative that would lead them into the future, and would not betray them into apathy or passivity.

I have never laughed so much.
There was an ease and gaiety in the ethos.
Blackhall staff meetings were opportunities for irony and wit.
The staff were different individuals, and all were strong in their different ways.
I never felt so comfortable or so at home.

A small, manageable and intelligible world.
Diverse individuals.

Not large enough for a tyrannical norm to be established.

A school that could ask young people for loyalty and love.
A school that could gain loyalty and love from young people,
And loyalty and love from me.

When I joined the Preshil senior school (called Blackhall) John Foyster was a kind of de facto leader of the senior school. Perhaps he was the designated leader, but things never seemed formal enough for that to become clear. In any case, John was a member of the school council and our intermediary with Margaret.

As I recall, John had visited Preshil as part of some project when working for VISE. He was so impressed by the school that he decided he would like to teach there. Even though he was evidently an intellectual and Margaret was ambivalent about intellectuals, she could see that he had a great deal to offer young people.

John was an excellent teacher. He was able to run individual maths programs for a whole range of students. This is very difficult to do and he managed it marvellously.

The teachers John and I worked with at Blackhall were an excellent group. They were all different and each made a distinctive contribution. Without effort we got on very well together.

There was a kind of irony in the way the Blackhall staff viewed the world, and this tone was most evident in John F. This tone was not cynical or superior. It did not aspire to elegant or mannered wit. It was convivial and inclusive. It did not tell jokes, but it was humorously playful. It seemed to presume that there were incongruities and even inanities in the world, but we could view them with good humour, and we would certainly not be made hysterical or bitter by them.

Blackhall staff meetings were very funny. There always seemed to be something that we had to contemplate that elicited un-cynical bemusement. This tone seemed best represented by John. In his apparent role as leader of the group he would have a piece of paper before him which was supposed to be the agenda of the meeting. It was often a blank piece of paper or some student's work. A matter would be raised and discussed. Commonly the discussion would conclude with John ostentatiously expressing while miming a minute of our deliberations.

Two of these minutes come readily to mind. The first was that staff were exhorted (in the true peroration of the three-quarter time coach's address) to 'lift their games'. The second was that staff were exhorted, more particularly, to stop fiddling around with the ball in the back line and to go for 'long driving drop kicks'. The incongruity of the metaphors for the matter at hand and the people involved did not disconcert anyone. On the recording of these conclusions by John in the mock minutes Blackhall staff has a pleasant sense of closure and could move on the next matter.

John Foyster was at one with and effortlessly expressed the tone and the culture of Preshil.

John Foyster at Preshil

Eva Strasser, born in a dead secret year, which is, regrettably, not too hard to guess at, since she was part of a family escape from Vienna after the Anschluss. Grew up in a German-speaking household and made use of this natural advantage to study German at tertiary level and include it with English in a teaching career largely at Preshil, and now at Trinity Grammar School. Shares with JF a love of reading (albeit slowly), classical music and Vienna. Oh, and there are four children and (presently) seven grandchildren, who probably merit a mention.

I FIRST MET JOHN when he was doing a survey for VISE and came to Preshil to interview staff. I don't remember what the survey was about, but I do remember my first impressions of the large, hirsute, colourfully dressed individual, whose sharp wit and intelligence sparked irresistibly through the questions. John's immediate empathy with the school was instantly exploited by Dermot Lytle, who persuaded John to forsake the hallowed halls of VISE for the more modest, but doubtless equally challenging environment of the Preshil classroom. My son was one of the students lucky enough to have JF for physics, and learned, not only more about physics than Melbourne University had to offer in the following years, but also a great deal about the process of teaching itself. Humour, whimsy and wit were an integral part of the lessons. John also had a particular skill in reaching some students at a personal level: students who might find ready communication difficult, and who had idiosyncrasies which marked them as unusual, sometimes extremely talented people. John was able to reach these young men and encourage them to allow their talents to flourish, often in a remarkable way. While we were at Preshil together, there were many evenings of fascinating conversations and arguments in among the unbelievable stacks of books and papers in Shakespeare Grove. These discussions were punctuated by the clatter and screams coming from the Big Dipper at Luna Park, which was across the road, but often felt as if it were in the living room with us. John's astoundingly voracious reading habits were characterised for me by a ride we took in an elevator, during which he read about ten pages in whichever enormous book he was carrying with him, as he always did. A slow reader myself, I have always been very envious of anyone who can power through a number of books in a week, and, what's more, actually absorb their content.

My warmest, if saddest memories of John in the Preshil time, are of the period of James' short life. It was clearly almost unbearable to be torn between hope and desperation in the way that he and Jenny were at that time. He found teaching children, while his own child lay in hospital fighting for every breath, almost intolerably difficult, but it seemed to me to make his perception of other children's needs even more acute. I have a picture with me which remains vivid after some sixteen years: a tender giant in a red boiler suit, leaning over a small cot in a hospital ward, singing nursery songs to the tiny son, who will certainly have heard him and felt the love radiating over him. Preshil's—and Melbourne's—loss were Adelaide's, and as it seems, Malaysia's gain, when John decided to follow the call of the South and leave. Fortunately he is drawn back periodically by fatherly duties often enough for the old (I use the term figuratively) gang to go ricebowling occasionally. Happy 60th, John, and do tell me what it feels like!

John Foyster at Preshil

I'D FIRST LIKE TO relate an anecdote which gives some insight into Preshil, the school where I worked with John 1983–1987.

I was invited to meet all the staff before I began teaching there, so I arrived just on morning tea (known as 'fruit', even in the senior school). I was introduced to Bill, Eva, Claudia, John, Jean, etc., all sitting in the staff room having morning tea. One by one they drifted off to class, leaving me chatting to Claudia over our coffee. After a time, I asked (uncharacteristically diplomatically) where she fitted into the scheme of things? 'I'm a Year 11 student' was the unassuming reply.

John Foyster—a T-shirt for every occasion. A red boiler suit for formal occasions (e.g. the school's valedictory dinner). John caught public transport everywhere, which included bringing two full shopping bags of bagels to school every Tuesday and Thursday as a treat for students at fruit.

John's advice was born of a knowledge of people. He used to frustrate Margaret Lyttle, the head mistress, because his logic was as good as her rhetoric—a stalemate between two powerful people with two completely different but complementary strengths.

I took over as the go-between after John left Preshil, passing messages and ideas between Margaret and the Preshil senior school staff. John explained to me carefully the way to tackle Margaret, to have some hope of having my agenda considered, not just Margaret's. When I stuck to his advice, I made progress, when I didn't, I didn't.

And his advice? See Margaret when she is at her most vulnerable—preparing vegetables at lunchtime for her German Shepherd, Seamus. Corner her in her own kitchen, take a list of items you need dealt with, and don't leave until you've dealt with them.

Margaret showed me by example how to understand people's background and motives. John explained to me what was happening. I changed from a committed behaviourist to a committed Freud/Jung/Tavistockian in the ten years I was there. John understood students, understood life. He showed great tolerance of, and sympathy for, their antics. Above all, he explained his position when he wanted to make a point, so that it was not possible to misunderstand his position. This to me is the mark of a true intellectual.

John was a keen table tennis player, and there was always a great rush to the table during period breaks to play 'round the table'. Thirty people could be lined up playing. Anyone could play, and we laughed with people, not at them. John was probably the most consistent winner, and would practically scrape his bat on the ground as he reached for a powerful forehand chop that would loop onto the table and viciously spin out of reach. But for that, I would have said that he didn't have a competitive bone in his body.

John's standard introduction to a serious conversation was 'let's go to the shop'. On the way, we would have the peace to say what was on our minds, junk food fuelling our thoughts.

No task was too small or insignificant for John. Nothing too hard to do despite mock tiredness, a hanging of the head, picking up a battered old bag weighed down with books, and trudging off to the ephemeral promise of a tram going home. Then back again for another dose the next day. The consummate teacher.

After a science degree from Monash, John Pinniger taught for fifteen years in Government schools before moving to Preshil. Discovered life after Preshil did exist as co-ordinator of an Evening School, Rural Placements Co-ordinator for two Medical Schools, and now Courses officer in Nursing at La Trobe University, where he could happily see out his working days. A long-term interest in politics has recently run out of steam, but radicalism continues in attempting to live on Permacultural principles in a big city. Two wonderful kids, and seven daughters hosted from around the world make for a great family life. Voluntary work in an exchange organisation and in co-ordinating a group interested in conserving old varieties of fruit trees. He has varied academic interests and has partially completed Masters in Environmental Science, Bachelor of Business and Certificate in Renewable Energy Technology. He has just completed a Diploma in Management and has started on a Bachelor of Economics.

A message from our founder

Chris Priest is the author of ten novels and three collections of short stories. He lives in Hastings with his wife, the novelist Leigh Kennedy, and their twin children, Simon and Elizabeth. He visited Melbourne and Adelaide in 1977 and 1982, and has many happy memories of his adventures, most of which seem inextricably involved with the unpredictable amusements of John Foyster's company.

ONCE UPON A TIME I was met at an airport by a rabbi, and the rabbi was wearing a track-suit, and the track-suit had paint stains all over it. This was the earliest impression I had of our great former colony south-east of India, namely, Australia. During the summer of 1977 I began to wonder why people were yawning whenever I talked about Australia. Why did doors slam in my face when they saw my bush-hat and boomerang? Was I *really* going on about it as much as my friends were claiming? Well, maybe. In the end, I found I was boring even myself. . .so perhaps there was some truth in it all.

The fact is I had a terrific time in Australia, and I'm proud to be one of the small but growing band of Yanks and Pommies in the sf world who have made the long journey south. Bob Tucker, William Rotsler, Ursula Le Guin, Terry Carr, Bob Silverberg, Vonda McIntyre, Brian Aldiss are a few of the others. As far as I know, we all retain much the same sort of happy impression of the place. . .I had what I think of as the best time of my life down under. It's hard to say why, exactly. . .because at first glance it seems unlikely that Australia can offer little more than is readily available in Britain or the States, except perhaps the novelty of a different accent, and awe-inspiring scenery. I think that one of the strongest feelings I had out there was one of reassurance. When you fly from London, you pass through most of southern Asia, with the countries you visit briefly becoming progressively more alien and confusing: in the case of the flight I was on, Iran, India and Malaysia. Then, when you are least expecting it, you land in a place that looks like a cross between Torquay and Oxford Street, where the natives speak English (OK, a garbled form of English, I know, I know), and where they play cricket and watch *Star Trek* and drive on the left and collect old runs of *Astounding* and generally act in more or less comprehensible ways. There was also reassurance in the feeling that Australia is a *long way* from everywhere else, that if nuclear war broke out no one would get around to bombing the place until you'd had time to dig a nice safe hole. And reassurance in the fact that it is so culturally old-fashioned; Melbourne in 1977 felt to me like London used to feel in 1967, a sense of things beginning to open up, and general health and prosperity. . .and girls wearing *mini-skirts* (which alone brought a few nostalgic tears to the eye).

And why should the science fiction world be interested in Australia? They've got nothing there we can't supply for ourselves. They've a few sf writers, and they've run a Worldcon, and they've got fandom, and they have feuds and alliances and monthly meetings, just like us. I must confess (and indeed, have hitherto made no secret of it) that before I made the trip I shared this feeling in some measure. Australia, in prospect, felt as if it was a cultural and social suburb, one where the only possible difference would be that strangers in pubs would call you a Pommy bastard.

I was wrong, and I grovel in abject apology for ever letting the notion occur to me. Not only did no one ever call me a Pommy bastard (and they didn't call me 'cobber', either), but the whole time I was there I experienced a quite indescribable and intangible sense of *difference*, one which was all the more confusing for being overlaid with apparent similarities. Whatever the cause, I felt energized by the visit in ways I hadn't felt since I first encountered fandom in 1962. Because they *are* just like us, in the sense that they read *New Worlds* and *Astounding* and *Hyphen* and *Vector*, and they have cons where boring people drone on about boring things on boring panels, and they have the other sort of cons where interesting people drink too much and become indiscreet and highly entertaining. Ok, they haven't got the Astral League, but they've got a Magic Pudding Club (or at least they had one while I was there), and they've got the Paul Stevens Show and the Golden Caterpillar Awards. . .and what amounts to a sort of parallel fannish tradition, where the differences became apparent because I was not part of them, but where the similarities also were apparent, because it was all unmistakably fannish.

(And in case anyone's interested, the art of sf writing has the same quality of difference/similarity. There is a certain amount of Australian sf which is derivative of Anglo-American writing. . .but there is also a new kind of Australian sf, practised most by the newer writers, naturally enough, where there is a new inwardness, a new sense of response to their own cultural/literary environment.)

Anyway, if you look back at those names I listed of visitors to Australia, you'll see that most of them are of writers, not fans. (Though some of the writers do have fannish links.) During the first weekend I was in Australia there was a con, and during this I was struck by one of my occasional IDEAS. We've had TAFF for years, in which, as everyone in fandom knows, a fannish visit from or to Britain or America is paid for by fannish charity. . .and more recently DUFF has been in existence, in which fannish visits between America and Australia are arranged. It suddenly occurred to me that it was high time the third side of the triangle was closed, and after a few minutes of reflection in the bar, GUFF was created by unanimous consent.

The Get Up and over Fan Fund was created with the specific intention of bringing an Australian fan to Britain for Seacon '79. After a few early hiccups, GUFF came into formal being, and, mostly because of the hard work and dedication of the two Administrators, Dave

Langford in Britain and Leigh Edmonds in Australia, not only was sufficient money raised, but a clear winner was found.

That winner was John Foyster, who is here at Seacon. Foyster was my own nomination for GUFF (based on the entirely unprejudiced fact that I have met neither of the other two candidates, Eric Lindsay and John Alderson), which gives me special pleasure in the fact of his win.

Which brings me back to the rabbi in the paint-smeared track-suit, for it was none other than he.

I'm at a loss to describe John objectively, because my knowledge of him before my Australian visit was minimal. I knew his writing through his work in *Australian Science Fiction Review*, where he went in for intelligent if idiosyncratic criticism of sf. Later, I read *JOE (The Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology)*, which was a sort of round-letter discussion fanzine about sf. I had heard he edited something called *BOF (Boy's Own Fanzine)*, in collaboration with Leigh Edmonds. And I knew he had been on the committees of various cons in Australia. What I didn't know was he looked like a rabbi.

Later, I heard him in action at the con. . . he goes in for a sort of sly fannish troublemaking that gladdens the heart; he is a witty extempore speaker. After the con, while I was drifting around on the fringes of Melbourne fandom, I began to get to know him a little better. There are three things about him, events really, that I remember.

Firstly, he had the pleasant habit of taking me to bookshops; not the glossy, obvious bookshops, but the sort of hidden-away secondhand shops I wouldn't have been able to find without either a much longer stay in Melbourne or a native to show the way. Secondly, he introduced me to friends of his outside the fannish world; although this perhaps sounds like an anti-fannish sentiment, it was actually something I appreciated a lot at the time. Thirdly, he showed me the true essence of Australia.

We were waiting for a tram one hot evening in Swanston Street, a long straight road that runs through the centre of Melbourne on a roughly north-south line. Suddenly, John looked solemn. 'This street,' he said, 'contains the very essence of All That Is Australia.' I glanced around at the numerous Chinese restaurants (one of which we had just left), and said something smart, cynical, and unoriginal. 'Listen you Pommy bastard,' he said, contradicting what I said earlier, 'I'm being serious. This street is symbolic of The Essence of Australia. There we have the Symbol of Australia's Past' . . . and he pointed towards the south, where on a small hill stands the Shrine of Remembrance, all Corinthian pillars and steadfast architecture. Duly sobered, I nodded with appropriate solemnity. 'And there,' said John, pointing towards the north, 'we have the Symbol of Australia's Future.' I looked, and at the other end of Swanston Street, almost as impressive in its own way, was the Carlton & United brewery. . .

GUFF doesn't, or shouldn't, end with John Foyster's visit to SEACON. I'd like to think that his is the inaugural fannish trip between Australia and Britain, and that many more will follow in years to come. Don't let us allow it to wither away in indifference! It strikes me that the next opportunity for a GUFF trip could be in 1983, when Australia is bidding for the Worldcon. Then it will be our turn to send a British fan on a visit which, I can promise sincerely, will be highly enjoyable and eternally memorable. Here's what we have to do:

Support GUFF with cash. Treat it as a fannish charity on a par with TAFF and DUFF. Give freely. . . or donate auction-material whenever possible. Support the *Australia in '83* campaign. Join the Worldcon of 1981, and vote for Australia in '83. When the GUFF campaign begins, lobby for the chosen candidates, vote for your choice. . . and give freely.

And if Australia doesn't win the '83 bid, support GUFF anyway. . . because after all, a Worldcon is just a slightly better excuse for a trip, and there are numerous regional and national Australian cons which will do almost as well.

Meanwhile, make the effort to seek out John Foyster and make him feel at home. If he calls you a Pommy bastard, what you have to do is call *him* a drongo (Australians don't like this), or alternatively, if you're the peace-loving type, buy him a drink (and we'll send out a gunboat later). Incidentally, if he doesn't look like a rabbi these days, don't blame me.¹¹

¹¹Reprinted, with the permission of the author and the assistance of Dave Langford, from Dave Langford (ed.), *Wrath of the Fanglord*, April 1998: earlier versions in *The Northern Giffblower* 5 and *Anstible* 1, 1979.

John Foyster's winning GUFF platform

Reprinted from a version supplied in electronic form by Dave Langford, who explained in 'Blowing the GUFF' (GUFFaw 2, August 1999): 'GUFF, luckily, had only to transport a mass of fannish matter across about 12,000 miles and back again. In May 1979 the fourth Northern GUFFblower was able to announce the precise nature of this agglomeration. It was John Foyster, who won the vote by a simple majority over rival candidates John Alderson and Eric Lindsay. For statistics fans: 127 ballots were cast, being 65 for Foyster, 44 for Alderson, and 18 for Lindsay—who'd taken the trouble to publish an issue of *Gegenschein* asking fans not to vote for him.' Dave Langford also supplies the information that John Foyster's nominators were Christopher Priest, Peter Nicholls, John Bangsund, Carey Handfield and Robin Johnson.

ATTENDED AUSTRALIAN CONVENTIONS SINCE 1958; chairman of 1966 and 1971 conventions. Published many fanzines since 1961 including *The Wild Colonial Boy*, *Satura/The Gryphon*, *exploding madonna/The Journal of Ompbalistic Epistemology*. Co-edited (with Edmonds) *Norstrilian News* and *Boys' Own Fanzine*. Guest edited *Australian SF Review* and *SF Commentary*. Member of SAPS (1962-1972), FAPA (1969-1972, 1976-), OMPA (1969), ANZAPA (on and off since 1968). Won Ditmar for best fanzine (1970) and best Australian SF (1973). Initiated DUFF (1972). Twice founded the Nova Mob. When backed into a corner about his sf criticism pleads guilty but insane. Dislikes motor cars.



Janice Gelb blew into fandom at the appropriately nicknamed HurriCon (SunCon, the 1977 worldcon). Since then, she has been a participant in numerous apas (including a string of over fourteen years in SFPA, the Southern Fandom Press Alliance), spends way too much time posting to Usenet newsgroups, and has worked on many conventions, notably running Program Ops at MagiCon (the 1992 worldcon), serving as Assistant Division Head of Events at ConFrancisco (the 1993 worldcon), and running the Hugo ceremony at LAcon III (the 1996 worldcon). She was the 1999 DUFF (Down Under Fan Fund) North American representative at Aussiecon 3 where, in a fit of madness, she also volunteered to run Program Ops. In the Real World, she is a senior developmental editor at Sun Microsystems in Silicon Valley.

Untitled

MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE, I have a special feeling of gratitude regarding John Foyster's accomplishments in fandom. I directly benefited from one of his more inspired ideas: the creation of the Down Under Fan Fund. Based on TAFF, the Transatlantic Fan Fund, DUFF exchanges delegates of fannish good will between Australia and North America.

I was lucky enough to be the North American DUFF delegate in 1999 and one of the treats of my trip was spending some time with John and Yvonne (and my Adelaide host Damien Warman) in Port Adelaide. John not only knew that there were very good bookstalls at the local flea market, he also took us to a seeming hole-in-the-wall that served wonderful fish and chips.

One of my fondest memories of John is his chortling with glee as he threw one tough question after another at a panel at Aussiecon Three that he invented to test the knowledge of Australian and North American DUFF winners, past and present, about each other's countries.

Felicitations to John on achieving this milestone birthday, and best wishes for many more!

View from Airlie Beach

IN THE LATE '70s, when I was a neofan (at the relatively advanced age of thirty-something), I felt intimidated by John Foyster, or rather by his reputation as a very knowledgeable person who didn't suffer fools, who actually Got Things Done, who shredded the deserving-of-shredding in his fanzines, and who wrote intelligent criticism of science fiction. (Indeed, a frightening number of Melbourne fans write intelligent criticism; is it something in the air?)

Because of John's reputation, and the heard, for many years I thought he was at least ten years older than I. Imagine my surprise, then, when I discovered that John is, in fact, less than two years older than I am, and that he's a really nice person, as well as being interesting to talk with and not at all intimidating.

Of course, by then I had a reputation as well, having been a flaming feminist and then taking up with the notorious Eric Lindsay, and I too Got Things Done. But I still can't write intelligent criticism of science fiction. Fortunately that doesn't seem to be a criterion for being a fan, or a fan-fund winner, despite the precedent set by John as the first GUFF winner.

I can't think of any specific anecdotes, though I do have a most pleasant memory of a few days' visit at John and Yvonne's in Adelaide a few years ago, during which we toured the town, saw some other fans, ate good food, and had long and enjoyable chats. Too bad for me that I hadn't been living in Melbourne years before, when I could have been involved in the action there and got to know John much earlier.

Jean Weber was introduced to fandom at Aussiecon One by two American friends who conned her into attending. There she discovered that a professional colleague, John Bangsund, was also a fan. Jean was soon devouring fanzines by John B, Leigh Edmonds, John Foyster, Bruce Gillespie, and other well-known Aussiefen of the day. She then tapped into feminist fandom, joined apas, and began pubbing her own zine. Jean thanks John Foyster for contributing to the progression that led her to meeting Eric Lindsay at the 1980 Easter convention in Melbourne, to start of our long and prosperous partnership.

John was first

IT COMES AS NO surprise to see John entered this world well before I did, nor that he won a scholarship almost before I got into school. What does come as a surprise is learning he discovered science fiction in hospital when fourteen or fifteen. I somehow had the impression he would have discovered it almost as he learnt to read. But perhaps I am misunderstanding the course of events: perhaps he, too, has early memories of Kemlo books from the library, and Dan Dare comics, and *Simon Black in Space*. But perhaps he did indeed see these, and even at an early age, dismissed them as not worthy.

First fanzine at about age twenty. I was much later. Indeed, if it was John who persuaded John Bangsund to produce a fanzine, then he is responsible for my joining fandom, as it was a copy of a John Bangsund fanzine (via the Mary Martin Booklist) that showed me the path, long after I started working.

Running a convention. Again, John was first. I didn't even know conventions existed when he was running his first one. He was co-chairing the first Aussiecon bid, when all I was doing was helping run bid parties in my shared but suspiciously large room at Torcon.

As founder of DUFF, John was first to support a local fan fund. When GUFF was formed, we all pretty much thought John was the right person to be the first winner and visit the UK as a representative of Australian fandom. So why was I running against him as a candidate? My recollection was that John was so obviously the right person to go, that essentially there was no opposition. However GUFF was supposed to be a race. I think I became the first of the 'loyal opposition' because I had been to the UK briefly about three years before, and thus could legitimately tell people they needed to vote for someone who hadn't been. As I recall, I spent most of my campaigning efforts telling everyone who would listen to vote for John.

It is wonderful to be following in John's footsteps in our GUFF trip, but I am very pleased that John was there first. He deserved it, way back then when he was first.

Eric Lindsay recently embarked on his GUFF-winner's trip to the 2001 British National Convention—Eastercon—with Jean Weber. They launched themselves from the following GUFF platform: Secret masters of getting someone else to run a WorldCon after we've successfully bid for it, Eric (Party Animal) and Jean (Project Manager) want to visit UK and other European fans in their native habitat. Jean has never been to the UK, and Eric hasn't visited since 1972. Now retired from the paid workforce, we have lots of time to travel, party, and produce fanzines and websites, but little income to support our habits. You probably know our fanzines Gegenschein and WeberWoman's Wrevenge. Our sf websites are at <http://www.wrevenge.com.au/wrevenge/> and <http://www.avalook.com.au>

John Foyster in constant motion

Paul Kincaid & Maureen Kincaid Speller are married, which came as a surprise to them but hey it was an excuse for a great party. In their constant war for supremacy, Maureen won TAFF, so Paul immediately went out and won GUFF. Which is how they got to Australia in the first place, and how they ended up enjoying John Foyster's cooking.

PK: JOHN FOYSTER IS big and shaggy and dishevelled and in constant motion. He barely has time to say 'Hello. Welcome to Australia,' before he's off, marching determinedly across the arrivals lounge with a bemused Dave Langford trailing in his wake. We turn to examine Damien Warman and Juliette Woods, and I suspect one of us is on the point of saying something to the other when John hoves into sight once more. 'No luck!' he proclaims, then mutters something abusive but otherwise incomprehensible about the Australian telephone system. Dave puffs up behind him and manages to explain that he wanted to phone Hazel to let her know he'd arrived safely and so he was looking for a phone that took credit cards. 'Ah ha!' John declares at this point—honestly, if you were going to feature him in a film he would have to be played by someone larger than life like Robert Newton—and heads off boldly in another direction. Dave winces slightly and follows more slowly.

MKS: Bear in mind that at this point it's early morning, Adelaide time, and that we hapless Brits are still on BA/Qantas time, imposed on us somewhere around Singapore, to ensure that there is a corner of the world that is relentlessly 'home', no matter how inappropriate it might be. We are still quivering with travel nerves, having somehow got ourselves, Paul's medication, Dave's quince jam and my suddenly suspect electronic visa past immigration and customs back in Melbourne and now we are in another strange airport, confronted by... well, I don't know who Robert Newton is, but John reminds me of a shipwrecked version of James Robertson Justice. 'Larger than life' hardly does justice to him. I tend to find large, ebullient, bearded men tremendously intimidating and I'm about to spend a week in this one's house. Gulp. How am I going to cope?

PK: John returns. Still no luck. When he finally catches up, Dave shrugs. 'Oh well—' All of a sudden we realise we're standing around an airport with mountains of baggage spilling around our feet, and it's time to move on. We lumber our bags outside and find a taxi. John climbs into the front and proceeds to give detailed directions. Thereupon the driver gets out the Adelaide equivalent of the A-Z. It turns out that this is standard operating procedure for every Australian taxi driver we are to encounter, but right now it is a little disturbing. At length he starts the engine, and as he drives away John leans back, spreads an arm expansively across the back of the seat, and proceeds to regale us with his patented tourist spiel. I think I learn more about what is wrong with Australia, how Adelaide is falling to bits in comparison to the rest of South Australia, how South Australia is falling to bits in comparison to the rest of Australia, in the half-hour or so of that taxi journey than in all of what remains of my GUFF trip.

MKS: I guess you could call it a firm grounding in the realities of Australian politics, city planning, architecture, concrete-cored lamp posts and the crapness of some Adelaide drivers, though there were moments when it sounded suspiciously like my patented tourist spiel about Folkestone and the iniquities visited upon us by our local council. I was warming to this man, who told it like it was, no concessions, though I was a bit worried that some of his comments about Adelaide drivers might end up with an irate taxi driver dumping us at the side of the road. On the other hand, if you were the driver, would you argue with John Foyster?

Clearly, John felt it was important that we get our trip to Australia off to a good start, so having survived this memorable pick-up at the airport, no quarter asked and certainly none offered, having been fed tea and toast by Yvonne, and having sorted out the news and gossip from the UK, it was time to go out and do if not Australia then at least a small portion of Adelaide, and in particular a bookshop. Was this a test of our stamina? Dave Langford had already ducked out so the honour of Acnestis and British fandom needed to be upheld.

PK: We are in the heart of what was once, probably, a little township in its own right before it was swallowed by the city: a busy main road with a mixture of domestic and commercial streets leading off it. John, typically, ignores the traffic and walks straight across the road. We realise he has spotted a little rack of books outside one of the shops and is even now examining them while Maureen and I, a bit more nervous, dither interminably on the wrong side of the road. When we finally make it across, John has dismissed the books and we start down one of the side streets. A zig-zag route brings us to a bijou little shopping mall full of clothing boutiques, up-market food shops and a café that advertises 'doorstops'. These turn out to be open sandwiches in which a variety of fillings are piled upon slices of bread at least one inch thick. Is this a typical introduction to Australian culture—or even an introduction to typical Australian culture? Who knows, but it certainly sets us up for the next item on the agenda: the inevitable second-hand bookshop.

MKS: I think it was as I watched John cross the road, that I realised he and Paul were in fact kindred spirits. It was surely only jetlag and a slight unfamiliarity with Australian road crossings that had prevented Paul being out there in the traffic alongside John, homing in on the books, while Yvonne and I did the sensible thing and crossed the road properly. This was a suspicion to be confirmed later as the gap between Paul and myself perceptibly widened as we walked while that between John and Paul narrowed, and I knew my nerves were going to be shattered all over again at every road crossing. Yvonne seemed to take it with total

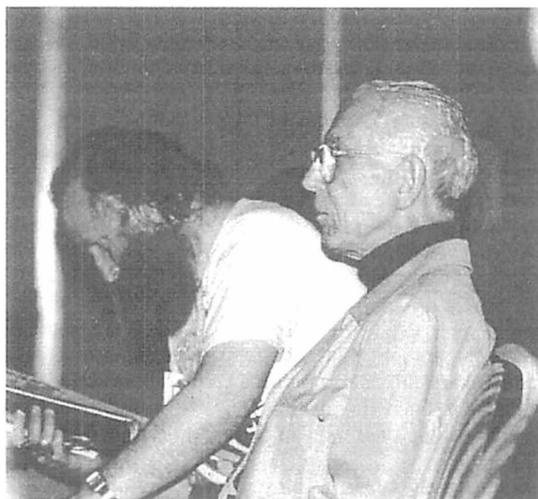
unflappability.

PK: This, we are told, one of John and Yvonne's favourite places, and I can understand why. It is a long room with shelves running floor to ceiling down either side, and a clutter of free-standing shelves and tables along the middle of the room all piled with books. The visit goes as all such visits invariably do, lots of exclamations and 'You must read this' and 'Christ, is this a Thomas McMahon novel we've never heard of? Oh, damn, no, it's just a retitling of his first book' and 'Hey, look what they've got' and 'What have you found?' and 'You're not getting all those, are you?' and 'How exactly are we supposed to get this lot home?' and we probably miss loads of bargains, but that's the way of things and the bulging bag with which we emerge from the shop is eminently satisfactory.

MKS: The second-hand bookshop is clearly John Foyster's natural habitat. He inspects it like a big cat surveying its particular chunk of the Serengeti, and you just know the bargains are going to surrender without much of a struggle, because while they might run, they can't hide and he will find them. So instead, they lined up to fall off the shelf into his hand, and while us lesser mortals, especially those of us not yet familiar with Australian bookshops, wandered up and down and compared prices and took recommendations from Yvonne, John had swept through magnificently, and was deep in conversation with the bookshop owner.

In fact, as I came to realise, John does everything magnificently, whether it be introducing you to the delights of Adelaide bookshops, explaining the intricacies of his garden's irrigation system or being extravagantly rude and funny about some aspect of daily life that isn't quite as it should be, before proceeding to skewer you with a devastatingly literary aperçu about a book or an author you thought you knew. You need a nimble intellect to keep up with John, so I always appreciated the way he slowed down once in a while to let me catch up.

PK: It was at breakfast a day or so later, as John, swathed in a fetching apron, prepared bacon and eggs, that I got first hand experience of another aspect of our host. He started talking about what he was doing at the upcoming Worldcon. 'Oh, and I'm going to demolish Samuel R. Delany,' he said in passing. My response, as I remember it, was a deeply intellectual 'Huh?!' He went on to explain that he was giving a talk on Delany during the course of which he going to give chapter and verse explaining Delany's failings or intellectual weakness or some such. Daring stuff, Delany knows his business and you need to marshal your resources pretty carefully to score any hits against him. We tossed back and forth the outlines of his idea, and finally I said: 'Sounds interesting, could I see what you're going to be reading?' 'Oh I'm not reading anything,' he replied, 'I haven't even finished making it up yet. It'll just be off the top of my head. Now, how did you say you wanted your egg?' I think that will be my abiding image of John, in his apron, blackened frying pan in hand, unaware of the consternation around him as he charges at everything, physically and intellectually, with such tremendous gusto.



Pursued by Foysters: JF in *Ansible*

Dave Langford now remembers only dimly how the Foysterian feet in ancient times (1979) walked upon England's mountains green, whenever this was the shortest route to the next fannish party. He has since published ever so many issues of the scurrilous *sf* newsletter *Ansible* (#165 is dated April 2001), where despite all this long editorial experience the name of John Foyster still occasionally creeps in.

Ansible 8, April 1980 John Foyster reports with glee that *War in 2080* has been remaindered in Melbourne. I hate you, John.

Ansible 19, July 1981

Joseph Nicholas reporting on his GUFF trip and listing fans met at Adventon John Foyster (new shorter-haired model), Adventon's Fan GoH, recovering from the recent flooding of his house but as droll and witty as ever. . .

Ansible 20, August 1981

Joseph adds footnotes Never mind the link between Sally Underwood and Chris Evans, or that between Chris Priest and John Foyster, or—but who is the Secret Master of GUFF, and what other hidden dirt does he have on too many people to conveniently name? Rush only LOTS OF MONEY to Joseph Nicholas under the clock at Waterloo Station, and even less will be revealed.

Ansible 27, July 1982 Hugo Nominations: 'interesting to note in which categories it is most difficult to get on the ballot: 1) Pro Editor; 2) Best Fanzine; 3) Dramatic Presentation. So much for that old SF stuff, eh!' (John Foyster). . .

Ansible 30, November 1982

Joyce Scrivner on that year's Worldcon I found Chicon exhausting—collapsed during the Hugos and wasn't seen again 'til Monday. On the 'Two Ocean Fanzine Panel' (J. Foyster, K. Smith, T. White, I & J.H. Finder) we played 'keep the mike from Jan', shouted 'DIM, DIM, DIM' while holding a JLAS sign, and with Kevin's help were absurd.

Ansible 40, October 1984 Aussiecon II: Chairman John Foyster has fled (family problems), replaced by David Grigg, with Carey Handfield as the Deputy Chair. . .

Ansible 57, April 1992 John Foyster has learned how to be GoH at Australian cons in complete safety, by arranging a remote-control presence from Malaysia. 'John delivered his Guest-of-Honour speech from Kuala Lumpur by telephone, linked to a public address system in the "Contract" convention hotel in Adelaide¹²: Greg Hills reports that the convention crowd of thirteen responded to this speech (which credited the previous night's outbreak of purse-snatching in Kuala Lumpur as a compliment to John's "Godfather" presence) very favourably. . . [YR]

Ansible 65, December 1992 Damien Broderick, almost famous Aussie *sf* author, 'has published *The Lotto Effect: Towards a Technology of the Paranormal*. ("Lotto" is the favourite ordinary-person's method of gambling here, with a success probability of 1 in 8.5 million or so.) Damien has been working on this book for very many years, and the blurb explains: "Dr Damien Broderick has studied a vast computerized trove of data—three-quarters of a billion guesses—from many draws of Tattsлото. The database is provided—tables and graphs of the way players voted in 23 consecutive draws. This invaluable information for Lotto punters has never before been published anywhere. / Does ESP affect Lotto players? It seems to. The results are startling, statistically significant, and inexplicable." . . . Bruce Gillespie complains that Damien has left out all the Scientific Explanation of how his conclusions follow from the data. John Foyster wrote a letter (enclosing graph) to point out another and simpler explanation for an effect which Damien claimed could only be paranormal. Damien's response appeared to miss the point. Then, on 17 Nov, we discovered that three Crop Circles had formed in the crop of 33" grass that we are growing in our back yard. I regret to say that John sent Damien a circulation-of-one newsheet about Pre-Cognitive Crop Circles—*Weekly Wild News*, November 1992—headlined CROP CIRCLES PREDICT LOTTO RESULTS. . . [YR] (To be discontinued—Ed.)

Ansible 68, March 1993 Psychic Vibes: Damien Broderick of *The Lotto Effect* fame (A65) mutters about incurring 'the predictable derision of all great minds' with this psi study, and complains that our informant Yvonne Rousseau failed to mention having helped by reading an early draft, or that her hubby John Foyster, 'who now sees right through it all, originally suggested that I look at the Lotto data as a natural experiment on psi claims. . . Foyster, who does know a lot of stats, suggested a non-psi explanation for part of my results but got very sour around the bile-emitting organ when I mentioned that his terrific insight actually seems to support a paranormal interpretation.'

Ansible 69, April 1993 Bumper Stickers. Good taste exemplar John Foyster trumps the [I ♡ New York] and [I ♠ My Cat] versions with 'I ♣ Baby Seals'. Thank you, John.

Ansible 82, May 1994 General Manuel Noriega, interviewed by film-maker Oliver Stone, proves to be a fan. OS: 'What books do you read?' MN: 'I like science fiction very much.' OS: 'Any favourites?' MN: 'No, whatever, whatever.' John Foyster adds: 'Ya gotta admire Stone's dead sophisticated interviewing techniques, but what is Noriega trying to hide? A passion for Lois McMaster Bujold? David Drake? Etc? Is this worth a competition?' (No—Ed.)

Ansible 111, October 1996 Random Fandom. John Foyster caused mighty consternation among past GUFF winners by publishing the fund's first-ever trip report, *Stranger in Stranger Lands*, covering his own 1979 odyssey.

Cloud Chamber 52, August 1994 Lillian Hellman. Two or three copies of *Cloud Chamber* tend to escape the gravitational pull of Acnestis and hurtle off through interliterary space. . . .

¹²Actually held in Hahndorf. [JW]

Following my mention of Hellmann, John Foyster in Australia claimed to be annoyed by my abject failure to cite her chief claim to fame. "Surely Hellman is most famous for being at the receiving end of Mary McCarthy's all-time heavyweight champion demolition: "Every word she writes is a lie, including 'and' and 'the'." ' Yvonne Rousseau continued the tale by explaining that this denunciation (based on old feuds in the US Left: McCarthy regarded Hellmann as too pro-Stalin) didn't merely appear in some crabbed review but was made with great vigour on a late-night nationwide TV talk show—and that Hellman retaliated by suing McCarthy for \$2 million, with hordes of people lining up as witnesses on either side until, just as the suit was coming to trial, Hellman died.

Cloud Chamber 69, August 1996 Judith Hanna confirms that Acnestis is invited en masse to her and Joseph Nicholas's party for Yvonne Rousseau and John Foyster, from 3pm on Sat 14 September at 15 Jansons Rd, Tottenham, London, N15 4JU. The nearest tube is Seven Sisters (Victoria Line). Bring a bottle, I imagine. Following regrettable doings at a previous party in the wake of a discussion of Plastic Spacemen, visitors to this house are now required to swear a solemn oath that they will not mock Joseph's obsessive tidiness by moving ornaments, swapping around books and CDs on the shelves, etc. (Seriously, now.)

Cloud Chamber 98, September 1999 Australia. Been there, done that, got the t-shirt... well, the two Hugos which as I'd predicted (meaning it as a joke) have bases that are lifelike models of Ayers Rock. Oh what fun, hauling these sinister rocket shapes through Melbourne Airport, where customs staff giggled uncontrollably over their x-ray machine. In brief: I had a wonderful time, with lots of splendid hospitality, especially from Yvonne Rousseau, John Foyster and the Aussiecon committee. Must write about it at length, but not just now, since fearful deadlines loom; time's winged chariot is once again parked outside the door and blowing the horn.

Cloud Chamber¹³ 102, January 2000

Mailing comment Bruce [Gillespie] Much guilt as I compare your longish and spiffy Aussiecon report with my not very much at all (although I still have lots of notes made en route and on the flight home). Paul Starr's notion that you personally 'put a spell of graciousness and civilization over the convention', and thereby banished all rudeness from the event, certainly seems awfully convincing. A spell like that did indeed appear to be in force, though perhaps not quite extending to John Foyster. (Er, only joking, honest.)



¹³ *Cloud Chamber* is Dave Langford's apazine for Acnestis—where Yvonne Rousseau had an apazine entitled *Pursued by Oysters, armed with oyster knives*.

John Foyster: fan à la mode

Roman Orszanski is an Adelaide fan, an environmentalist, and resident of a two-storey straw bale house near the centre of town. He's fond of high technology, so he rides a bicycle. And, although he can't prove it, he suspects the twisted mind of John Foyster is behind many of the fannish pranks in Australia.

It's all John Foyster's fault', I thought as I sat in a sidewalk cafe in Paris, sipping a hot chocolate, just down from the Metropolitan metro station. It was his suggestion that I run for GUFF, and piggy-backing *doxa!* on mailings of his scandal sheet, *Doxy*, helped attract attention. (Then, as now, gossip rules!) Without his urging, this young fan might never have gone overseas.

His encouragement of young fans and foystering of talent continues to this day. He's been responsible for many fannish affairs, including the creation of Nova Mob West (a.k.a. Critical Mass¹⁴) when he moved to Adelaide. His *eFNAC* is an excellent model of a screen-based fanzine.

John, for those of you who haven't met him, is the very model of an aussie fan—give or take a couple of standard deviations—widely read, intensely curious (!) and full of various enthusiasms. Like all fans, he also has his quirks.

While some may be aware of his fondness for outré neck-ties and T-shirts, visible in many candid snaps, not all will realise his fondness for *electric* shoelaces.

Once, on return from Malaysia, he proudly displayed his latest acquisition: pairs of fluorescent pink and green shoelaces. He wore them frequently: pink on the left shoe, green on the right. I can just imagine him telling Yvonne 'Of course these socks are a pair: same size, same texture, same pattern, same brand, one left and one right—why do they have to be the same colour?'

In many ways, John is the quintessential aussie *stirrer*; if you're lucky, you might have had the pleasure of seeing him in action, delivering a talk to Nova Mob, or Critical Mass, or—to many, the highlight of Aussiecon Three—deconstructing Samuel Delany in a piece of performance art from his *ad hoc* lectern.

I recall a convention in Melbourne in the mid 'seventies, where Mandy (Herriot) had baked a marble cake for then spouse Dave Hodgson's birthday. The lovely chocolate icing disguised the intensive use of food colouring. I offered a piece to a passing John Foyster. He looked aghast at the intense blue colour of the segment and said 'That's blue! You can't eat that, it's unnatural! Everyone knows blue food is poison!' He was, of course, correct. For years I've tried to think of a single food that is naturally blue¹⁵. Blueberries are purple, blue-ring octopuses are lethal, and everything else I've encountered (blue pikelets, blue eggs) has been heavily dosed with blue food colouring.

John is very fond of food. In Adelaide, he has a weakness for a Russian restaurant, The Volga, and many fannish guests would have eaten there during their visit.

His enthusiastic invitation to join him for brunch one Sunday in Melbourne ('fresh bagels from Acland St') saw me boarding a number 96 tram to St Kilda. I had never seen bagels, and was looking forward to finally trying one. Unfortunately, this Sunday happened to be the morning of the 'Big M' city-to-St-Kilda run. My tram was stopped by a huge stream of runners, joggers and cyclists. Luckily, 'brunch' is a vague enough time that John and Jenny still had some bagels when I arrived. It may have been the salt air near Shakespeare Grove, or the nearness of the legendary Luna Park, but never have bagels tasted so good as at the Foyster residence.

When next in Melbourne, John might like to dine at the Isthmus of Kra in Park St, South Melbourne. He will find, there on the menu, *Blue Pea Chicken Dumplings*, a dish both tasty and blue¹⁶.

¹⁴Nothing to do with the global mass bicycle coincidence.

¹⁵Blue-vein cheese is excluded because its blue bits are the bits that are 'off' and, anyway, they're more green than blue.

¹⁶I have also discovered the existence of *blue* muntries: while the seed is blue, I'm unsure about the fruit.

John Foyster: the knowledge

I have yet to see any problem, however complicated, which, when you looked at it in the right way, did not become more complicated.

Poul Anderson

I have always wanted the excuse to use this quote somewhere. In this case, as a means of saying that John Foyster has always proven to be the antithesis of this. He is a simplifier whose communication skills belie the veracity of Anderson's words.

Last year he forwarded me some diary notes on one of his Malaysian trips and amongst my response were the words 'I had forgotten how fine a writer you are.' John has an amazing ability to produce clarity from the complex. I well remember attending the Volga (Russian) restaurant in Adelaide some ten years ago, with John, Yvonne Rousseau and her daughter Vida when John explained the distinction between analogue and digital to Vida. Naturally, I nodded at his explanation as if it should have been obvious to anyone with an IQ in double figures. However, not being of a scientific bent, until then I couldn't have provided the same response. I have since used his explanation as my own. I have often borrowed his original thoughts.

To provide some balance to these jottings, John's explanations of traffic light operations being an illustration of true anarchism was interesting but failed to convert me to his cause. I think it was around that time that I first queried how someone as intelligent as John could proffer anarchism as a viable political solution.

The beginning: in July 1971 a slightly rotund figure with a long unkempt beard—some things don't change—and unfashionably unfashionable clothes (as opposed to most of us, who wore fashionably unfashionable clothes) wandered into the office of the Monash university newspaper *Lots Wife* of which I was editor. He asked if there was any typing to be done. Being a student 'radical' who had recently been released from jail for not registering for conscription, I was too preoccupied with my own self-importance to even wonder who he was and simply gave him some work to do. It was months later, after several such episodes, that I learnt that John was editor of the Monash Research Students' Association magazine, had recently co-organised the tenth Australian SF Convention, and was doing postgraduate research into something arcane like black hole theory. Our friendship grew from this period and has resulted in the sharing of many experiences.

One of John's more bizarre phases was a period when he eschewed travelling by automobile. This coincided with a regular social tennis match at Jennifer Bryce's parents' property at Eltham, an outlying suburb of Melbourne. Jennifer would drive from their St Kilda residence, while John walked to St Kilda station, took a train to the city, another train to Eltham, and then walked several kilometres to where the rest of us had driven. Then, at the conclusion of the tennis, he would reverse this exercise whilst again Jennifer drove home alone. This went on for several months. Despite all participants' lack of tennis finesse, I do remember that John was the only one of us who knew the rules for playing—albeit rarely—a tie-breaker.

John has always suffered my alcohol intake far exceeding his Dr Pepper/Pepsi/Coca Cola intake. Maybe that is why I never did understand his explanation of black-hole theory. He also endured for several years my more anathematic drug intake of nicotine as well as other complementary substances, yet again another example of his tolerance.

I have dined with John at all his many residences and the Foyster/Darling farm near Kyne-ton and at numerous (usually Asian) restaurants. I almost dined with him at the aforementioned Volga restaurant but I managed to contract food poisoning arising from orange juice provided on the plane. I had recently completed work on what was to be the last Labor government for eight years and was desperate for a holiday. Australian readers will understand my belief that this was one of the first examples of Jeff Kennett's ability to exact revenge on those who opposed him. I spent five days in bed at the Klemzig residence of John and Yvonne and in gratitude for their hospitality took them to the Volga and enviously/queasily watched them eat a sumptuous meal.

Unlike many of the contributors to this compendium, my contacts with John over the thirty years of our friendship have had nothing to do with science fiction (despite my famous namesake), and have been almost purely social, with peripheral overlap due to both of us working in the education business. Occasionally I have read some report John has written and been surprised to find my name amongst the list of acknowledgments. I have never known why. I also remember John inviting me to a two-day workshop, during his Australian Council of Education Research days, where a group of us were to write multiple-choice social science questions. I think I managed a grand total of two. Neither, I suspect, reached publication stage.

I do hope one of the other contributors answers one question for me. Given the quality of his educational writings, his reviews of other authors' works, his fanzine productions and his autobiographical diary-type missives, why has he written so little fiction?

To conclude, let me share a fantasy I have had for a long time. Both of us would be appearing on a Mastermind type program. When asked 'what is your special subject?' I would

John Varley (not the science fiction writer) has known John Foyster for thirty years. He has been a teacher, social worker and union official, and is currently a middle-level public servant with the Victorian Government Education Department. Recovering from a recent spinal operation was deemed insufficient excuse to avoid this contribution. Yvonne Rousseau's nagging will not readily be forgotten. The following was dictated to his partner, and its quality is to be blamed on legally prescribed drugs.

respond, 'the relationship between Robert Zimmerman's views on Judaeo-Christianity and his lyrics.' When it was time for John's gig, he would answer the same question with 'knowledge'. And, what's more, the bastard would outscore me!

Despite knowing John for all this time I actually learnt things about him from reading the accompanying timeline. John's skills, energy, knowledge and commitment have never ceased to astonish me. I fondly value our friendship.

Happy birthday.

For the Foystschrift

Robert Lichtman lives in Glen Ellen, California, where he's resided since 1980. Robert is married to Carol Carr, and has four grown sons (by a previous wife). He's been an active member of the science-fiction fan subculture since 1958 with a pause during the '70s to live the communal life in Tennessee. He publishes *Trap Door*, an infrequent general-circulation fanzine that's been appearing since 1983. John Foyster appeared in a 1995 issue with an article entitled 'When I Was A Science-Fiction Fan', a memoir of his contracting polio and discovering science fiction.

JOHAN FOYSTER AND I first encountered fandom in the seminal year of 1958, although in very different ways. He attended his first convention that spring, a feat I wouldn't attain until 1962, while I read Robert Bloch's fanzine review column in the final issue of an American sf magazine, *Imagination*, that summer and sent off a batch of sticky quarters for my first fanzines. My own first fanzine, *Psi-Pbi* No. 1, followed before the end of the year, while John waited discreetly until 1961 to issue his own first issue.

Our fannish paths probably first crossed in January 1963 when his first publication for SAPS (the Spectator Amateur Press Society, the second oldest American apa) appeared in that month's mailing. I'd been a member since 1959—my first of many apa memberships—and, having bare months earlier finally attained my long sought-after FAPA (Fantasy Amateur Press Association, fandom's oldest apa) membership, would leave SAPS late the following year. John stayed on much longer than me, finally resigning in 1972.

While my memory is a bit (okay, a lot) hazy on the details, it seems to me that during the same general time frame, John began appearing as a contributor to various fanzines, which served to deepen my knowledge and appreciation of his personality and writing ability. I'm reasonably sure that I probably sent him copies of my fanzine of that era, *Frap*, and he in turn no doubt favored me with *Gryphon* and/or *Satura*.

Then as now, relatively few Australian fans were active in the international English-speaking fanzine fandom, and since those halcyon days I've always regarded John as one of the primary representatives from Oz.

I left fannish activity behind in the early '70s when I moved from California to Tennessee to become a founding member of a hippie/beatnik spiritual community, The Farm, Stephen Gaskin, guru-in-residence. When I returned to California and to fannish activity in the early '80s, I wasn't particularly surprised to find that John was still around. He was on the roster when I rejoined FAPA in 1984.

Since then, we've enjoyed a sporadic but steady correspondence, traded fanzines, and even finally met in the flesh (albeit all too briefly) at the Worldcon in Southern California in 1996. I continue to regard him as one of the pre-eminent members of Australian fandom and hope that this state of affairs will continue into the far future.

Meanwhile, here's to John on his 60th birthday. May the day be a lively one.

Some painful intimacies, O yes, and an apology

I'VE NEVER REALLY GOT to know John particularly well in person, which I regret, but tenuous personal contact is common in fandom. He hasn't been around Melbourne much in the thirteen years since I returned there from England in 1988 after twenty years overseas. John had gone to live in Adelaide the previous year. Since then, when our paths occasionally crossed, at the Blackfords' or Race Mathews' or at conventions, the conversation tended to be in large groups rather than one-on-one, and though we share some fannish friends, there are many fannish friends of John I hardly know, so often when I glimpsed him at conventions with this (from my point of view) anonymous crowd I did not join him. The very real intimacy I continue to feel with John comes almost entirely from reading his fanzines, and the occasional exchange of letters. This typifies quite a few friendships in science fiction.

My memories of John begin with fanzines, which as I recall I began receiving from him when I was Administrator of the Science Fiction Foundation in east London, probably circa 1972, I think. We did, however, meet at Aussiecon in 1975, and then in England in 1979 when John was travelling in the UK and Europe with Jennifer. I recall him as seeming astonishingly hairy and spectacularly sober, and I'm a bit on the hirsute but boozy side myself, and was more so back then.

I especially recall as a dreadful milestone in my knowledge of and friendship with John the terrible story of the deaths in the early 1980s of his three premature children. Was the first report in *Cbunder?* This, which many people would have kept as a painful secret, was revealed, valuably, for the most part with devastating directness and honesty, in several fanzines. Another report later on was in *Wild Colonial Boy*, August 1987. John's bafflement and pain created a bond I would just as soon not have felt, for in 1985 Clare and I almost lost our older son Jack at birth (a result of the disease listeria with which Clare had become infected) when he stopped breathing for more than fifteen minutes. We underwent a subsequent trauma on being told that Jack was irreparably brain damaged. Which miraculously proved not to be the case. The reading of John's comparable (but more grievous) account was in itself supportive—it woke us up a bit—for we were stunned with grief about Jack and his supposed vegetable state. Additionally, when John learned what had happened, he wrote to us very understandingly. John is gruff, but also kind, and I'll always remember his kindness.

Oddly enough, I don't remember John at all from the school that we both attended. You'd think since we were both scholarship boys we might have known one another, but I don't remember him, and wouldn't, because when do Year 12 kids have anything to do with Year 9 kids? (I was a Year 12 schoolboy in 1955, the year John began Year 9.) Incidentally, Scotch College, the oldest school in Victoria, recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. Part of the festivities was a torch relay which set out from the site of the original school, via the second school site (now the Peter MacCallum Cancer Clinic, as I have good reason to know), ending at the present Scotch College in Hawthorn, the one John and I ruefully attended at different times. At the end the torch was carried by the youngest student in the senior school, one Luke Nicholls, Jack's younger brother and at age eleven the youngest of my five children.

John and I have something else in common, I think: a short fuse which once ignited can lead to explosion, or at least a very bad temper. Or maybe, as one does, I'm merely attributing my own failings to another. But I do wince a bit when I re-read, as I just have, a tub-thumping letter by me, that was published in *ASFR (Second Series)*, Winter 1990. In this I simultaneously abused (is this a record?) George Turner, Norman Talbot and John Foyster, in such phrases as 'three old farts pompously and endlessly regurgitating pedestrian bees from their shrunken bonnets', 'their combination of malice and self importance', 'degrading', 'puffed up and squirting poison like toads', 'self-aggrandizing', 'petulant'. And so on. Geez, isn't ours a great (and sunburnt) country, that allows true mateship to be expressed in such robust terminology? John's crime had been to express a withering contempt, somewhat colloquially expressed, for the literary ability of my old friend William Gibson. O all right, I apologise. Yes, and he contributed to the first (1979) edition of my *Encyclopædia*, as I very much wanted him to do, for John has a good critical brain. So as well as being mates, of a sort, we're colleagues.

Peter Nicholls,—writes his wife *Clare Coney*—is a two-time Hugo-winning encyclopædist, for *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Further awards include *the Pilgrim, Locus, British Science Fiction Association, Eaton Grand Master, European Science Fiction and Atheling*. His other books include *Fantastic Cinema*, shortlisted for the *British Film Institute cinema book of year award*. *Man of the world*, he returned to his Melbourne roots some thirteen years ago, and has taken up the mantle of a libellous pamphleteer.

Foyster in the 'Nineties

Cherry Wilder was born in New Zealand, and has not only written of humanoid marsupials on the planet Torin—of equally fascinating creatures on the planet Rhomary and in the kingdom of Hylor—and of Jugendstil horrid hauntings (in Cruel Designs) on the planet Earth. In addition, she enlivened ASFR (Second Series) with an entertaining regular column reporting on West German phenomena (such as 'Circus Belly'). A UK Press is planning to bring out 'Wilder's Aliens' soon, as part of a collection. [YR]

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1996 John Maxwell Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau came to visit me in Bierstadt, a suburb of Wiesbaden, Hessen, West Germany. I was meeting for the first time my biographer and dear friend Yvonne. The visitors stayed in a local hostelry with first class food and wine. They were full of energy and came galloping round to my nearby flat every day. So what to do? Of course we began a one-shot fanzine. We paid tribute to Al Fitzpatrick, international fan, who coined the title Fan-de-Siècle. It was described in the intro as Decadent, Post Modern, and mentioned our friends Lucinda Sussex, Jane Pandemonia Routley and Paul Gauguin Collins. The authors of the Zine were Yvonne de Rossignol, Charlotte Von Wilde, and Jean-Jacques Forrétier There is a splendid photo of Foyster standing proudly while I sit at the printer which I hope can be found for the *Festschrift*. And looking back I think this was one of the happiest times of my life.



About John Foyster

I FIRST MET JOHN Foyster at Christmas 1973 when John Bangsund and I visited Melbourne and had a very memorable evening at the Degraives Tavern with John, Leigh and Valma, Lee and Irene and others. I had heard a lot about Foyster, Edmonds and Harding from JB, so looked forward to meeting them all in person. It was a very entertaining night. I don't remember engaging John in much by way of conversation but do remember meeting many of the other fans. John came to stay with us at Turner in Canberra in 1974, and later in Adelaide, but still I didn't really talk to him much but listened, mainly because I had absolutely no idea what to talk to him about.

At this stage I had heard a lot about John more by way of reputation and was quite scared of him, in much the same way that younger fans are with the older ones these days. I also had a misguided idea that all John ate was Asian food, so inflicted on him my first attempts at stir fry, which ended up as a gluggy mess, but John very kindly tolerated it.

We didn't really get to see John regularly until we moved to Melbourne in June 1978. JB and I often visited John and Jennifer Bryce at Marine Parade and then at Shakespeare Grove. We all talked and laughed a lot, shared many meals and games of tennis, which was all great fun. I particularly remember Anzapacon in October 1978, held in John and Jenny's conservatory at the back of their flat at Marine Parade. The flat was quite an amazing size, perfect for a small convention, so everything was very relaxed and great fun was had by all.

By then I had got to know John's brother Graeme, who became my hairdresser for some years, and it would have been about this time that I met Myfanwy Thomas, John's sister. I was more than a little confused initially that John's siblings seemed to alternate between using their first and second names, so that Graeme was Ross to his family, Myfanwy was Jill and John was Max.

Browsing through early issues of ANZAPA I note that John's contributions before the tenth anniversary mailing in October 1978 had names like *Vomit*, *Balls* and *Cbunder!* ('the fanzine that reaches out to its readers'). These names certainly say a lot about John, his cheeky irreverence, and the role he seems to have assumed as devil's advocate to provoke fans into some kind of spirited discussion, or to getting something going.

Something that has always amused me about John is his lack of any affinity towards the feline population. It could always be guaranteed when John visited us that Dylan and Donovan would make a beeline for him, much to his dismay! It is only in more recent years that I have found the explanation for this. Most non-cat-lovers do not make any eye contact with cats. Cats are incredibly curious creatures (less polite would be to say that they're incorrigible stickybeaks), and of course they want to investigate anyone who doesn't look at them or talk to them or make a fuss of them, as they do love being the centre of attention. So poor John has always had to put up with being mobbed by resident cats at most fannish homes that he has visited.

When John moved to Adelaide we kept in touch more through Yvonne. By this stage I had become much more aware of the many parts of John Foyster: his willingness to help anyone with anything, no matter how small or big the task or problem was, and his willingness to always be there with advice and time, as is Yvonne. John has always been generous to a fault, and never let his friends down with his continued support and encouragement. But he also has a very sharp wit and an absolutely wicked sense of fun and humour. He has always had tremendous enthusiasm and commitment for anything that he is involved in, and has the ability to encourage everyone to develop their talents as far as possible, while being absolutely honest with his opinions and advice.

This is starting to sound like a character reference! Maybe, in a way, that's what it is.

Happy 60th birthday, John!

Sally Yeoland lived with John Bangsund for twenty-five years, did not get a medal, and now lives with Lolly, Molly and Tia. Since 1993 she has written extensively on the arts, current affairs and cats for ANZAPA, a bimonthly review of everything. Tia is a purebred lilac Burmese; Lolly and Molly are mostly Burmese and bigger than Tia, who is Bottom Cat, not that she cares much. [Sally freely admits that this biographical note was entirely composed by John Bangsund.]

The young fen

Juliette Woods stumbled upon fandom in her late teens and is yet to regret it. Raised in Scotland, she has spent the last dozen years in South Australia and will shortly be leaving for Austin, Texas. She works in computational mathematics and environmental modelling, and lives with the delightful Damien Warman.

I THINK THAT WE WERE first invited over to John and Yvonne's place in 1994¹⁷. I must have been twenty-one, a fannish fringe-dweller, only halfway transformed from a Scot into a South Australian. I was still learning that there was more to food than the fishfingers and tinned spaghetti of my youth, and that wine did not necessarily come out of a cardboard box.

Perhaps it was because I was served wine from a bottle that I now only dimly remember the occasion, although it's only seven years' past. I recall settling down onto the carpet of the living-room floor, which is brown, like much of the rest of the Foyster-Rousseau residence. (What is not brown is book.) I was trying to work out why Damien and I had been invited. Sure, we'd known John and Yvonne for a few years by then; I met Yvonne at my first sf convention and John a little later, at Critical Mass—he'd been fun to watch, bearded and arm-waving, readily dismembering *Hyperion* in a sometimes objectionable way ('Ebony?' he demanded, 'an *ebony* spacecraft? Are we to believe it's made of wood?'). But I sincerely doubted that such an erudite and fearsomely intellectual couple could have any interest whatsoever in what Damien and I might say. Perhaps no-one else had been on hand, though, to meet this Blackford person.

I was comforted to note on arrival that we were not the only Young People in the house. There was a woman of about our own age there whom we recognised, as she'd come to a few meetings of the Adelaide University Science Fiction Association. I took this as a sign that John and Yvonne frequently adopted stray young fen and that Damien and I were not there purely to provide some comic relief. For confirmation of this, I asked Vida how she knew Yvonne. 'Oh, she's my mother,' was the unexpected reply.

Until I joined fandom, I was uncomfortable with the idea that you only had friends about your own age, perhaps as much as a year on either side. By all rights I should have been friends with Vida and not John and Yvonne. Vida did Honours in mathematics the same time that we did, after all. But it was not so.

I'm still not sure why John and Yvonne have put up with us for so long. They read our (extremely sporadic) fanzines, go out to dinner with us, attend our birthday parties. They sit extremely politely in our living room while half-a-dozen crazed computer professionals play *MarioCart 64* on our Nintendo. They introduce us to fannish friends, relatives, workmates, and the occasional ex-spouse. Yvonne sends us little email notes saying 'Much enjoyed your fine company last night!' Er, we sat on your floor eating pizza, telling you how wonderful \LaTeX is a typesetting system.

I had not meant to dwell on the age gap—instead I wished to dwell on John's energy, formidable beardedness, and kindness to new fen, without which I might not have stayed in fandom—but as we were compiling this *festschrift* for John, I realised that our youngest contributor, John's daughter Miranda, is a few years older than we are. The balance of the fannish contributions dwell upon the Good Old Days of Fandom (as is only natural), so I wish to point out that these are the Good Less Old Days of Fandom, in which John is still playing his rôle of maverick and stirrer: during the Hugo Awards at Aussiecon Three, John alone could be heard booing Gernsback's name, in defence of good sfnal taste.

Indeed, if we are to believe the conclusions of Dr Broderick's *The Spike* then we shall soon reach the Age of Medical Marvels in which we shall all live for ever, and Damien (Warman) and I may one day compile a 600th birthday *festschrift* for John, while we are still neophytes of 568 or so. And perhaps by then John will have grown bored with heckling Hugos, but I doubt it.

¹⁷Actually, I reckon we'd been around before, to a party for Judith Hanna—DMW

A Foyster timeline

FOR THEIR INVALUABLE CORRECTIONS and additions to this timeline, acknowledgments and thanks go to: John Bangsund [JB], Jennifer Bryce [JB?], Damien Broderick [DB], Elizabeth Darling [ED], Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown [LE, VB], Rob Gerrard [RG], Bruce Gillespie [BG], Jeff Harris [JH], Irwin Hirsh [IH], Dave Langford [DL], Sean McMullen [SM], Perry Middlemiss [PM], Peter Nicholls [PN], Bob Smith [BS], Myfanwy Thomas [MT], and Tony Thomas [AT].

- 13 Apr 1941** birth of John Maxwell Foyster: mother, Agnes Emilene, née Perry; father, John Causton Foyster, who is a scholar and a minister of the Presbyterian Church (later, the Uniting Church).
- 20 July 1943** birth of John's sister Myfanwy Jill Foyster.
- 1945** dust-storms in the Mallee persuade the Foysters to leave Berriwillick, Victoria, and move to Dromana, Victoria, on the Mornington Peninsula^[MT].
- 30 Mar 1946** birth of John's brother Douglas James Foyster^[AT].
- 27 Aug 1949** birth of John's second brother Graeme Ross Foyster^[AT].
- 1950** the Foyster family moves from Dromana to the Melbourne suburb of Preston^[MT].
- 1954** at the end of Year 8 at Northcote High School, John Foyster wins a scholarship to Scotch College (a prestigious Melbourne boarding school, founded on 6 October 1851, with the motto: *Deo Patriae Litteris*)^[PN].
- 1955** John begins Year 9 as a scholarship day boy at Scotch College, in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn, and discovers the numerous books of the Scotch College library. He also begins playing Rugby Union Football.
- 1956** John Foyster contracts poliomyelitis. During his two months in hospital, he discovers science fiction, aided by Thomas Darragh (later Senior Curator in Invertebrate Palaeontology at the Museum of Victoria).
- 13 Apr 1956** John Foyster is discharged from hospital, but is still on crutches until September 1956.
- 1957** in Year 11, John has moved up, as rugby player, to the Scotch College first XV by the end of the season, playing in the front row as prop to a hooker. He travels in an aeroplane for the first time, to Sydney, where the Victorian schoolboy rugby thirds team that he is part of is defeated by a New South Wales team.
- Dec 1957** John Foyster begins running with the Preston Harriers.
- late 1957** John decides that science fiction isn't, after all, the best thing since transistor radios.
- 5–6 Apr 1958** John Foyster attends his first science fiction convention, the 6th Australian SF Convention (Richmond Town Hall, Melbourne).
- 1958** in Year 12, John is one of Scotch College's best debaters. He studies Science subjects and qualifies for matriculation^[MT].
- 1959** John returns to Scotch College to study Year 12 Humanities subjects, including English Literature^[MT]. The Scotch College rugby team is undefeated, but in summer John ceases competitive running for a while.
- 1960** John Foyster becomes a first-year student in the Science faculty at the University of Melbourne, and plays in the University's rugby junior team.
- 1961** John Foyster is promoted to a higher-grade Melbourne University rugby team, where he is wing forward: as a result of muscle damage from polio, he is not heavy enough for prop. A right-ankle injury in the first game prevents him from playing, this season and next.
- Feb 1961** John Foyster publishes his first fanzine: *Emanation*.
- Mar 1961** as one of the five attenders of Smallcon in Melbourne, John Foyster participates in a oneshot: *The Smallcon Smudge*.
- 1962** no rugby and no running for John Foyster, because of his injured right ankle.
- Oct 1962** John Foyster is eligible to join SAPS (Spectator Amateur Press Society), but his first apazine *The Wild Colonial Boy* misses the USA mailing deadline.
- End of 1962** John Foyster ends his studies at the University of Melbourne with a Trained Secondary Teachers Certificate from the Secondary Teachers College, Carlton.
- Jan 1963** John Foyster's *The Wild Colonial Boy 2* is his first official contribution to his first apa: SAPS.
- Jan 1963** from the Melbourne suburb of Chadstone, John Foyster moves to Drouin (about ninety kilometres south-east of Melbourne) where he is employed by the Victorian Education Department as a secondary school teacher at Drouin High School. He begins running again, as part of training the school track teams.

Yvonne Rousseau first met John Foyster in Melbourne two years after her 'collector's item' *The Murders at Hanging Rock* was published. Her subsequent commentary on Joan Lindsay's posthumously published final chapter to *Picnic at Hanging Rock* appeared when Yvonne and John were both editing *Australian Science Fiction Review*; one edited in Melbourne, the other in Adelaide.

- Feb 1964** John Foyster begins publishing a genzine 'called either *Satura* or *The Gryphon*, depending on the time of day', twice a month at first.
- May 1964** John Foyster's *Satura/Gryphon* changes to a monthly schedule with *Satura* 7.
- Mar and June 1965** John Foyster produces issues 16 and 17 of *Satura/Gryphon*. Issue 16 includes a tribute by Mervyn Barrett to the jazz musician (equally esteemed by John Foyster) Charles Christopher ('Bird') Parker (1920–55).
- late 1965** John Foyster is running for the Box Hill Athletic Club, but develops glandular fever.
- 10 Mar 1966** John Foyster and Claire Elizabeth Naomi Pike marry^[ED].
1966 the house that John and Elizabeth are renting in Drouin burns down, destroying most of their library^[ED].
- Easter 1966** John Foyster organises and chairs the 7th Australian SF Convention (the first Natcon since 1958), held at the Melbourne Science Fiction Club (MSFC) rooms. John Bangsund maintains that it's all Lee Harding's fault that when the proposal for an *Australian Science Fiction Review* (*ASFR*) has been approved, John Bangsund is manoeuvred into being its editor^[JB]. In his guest editorial to the first issue of the second series of *ASFR*, he describes *ASFR* as being Lee Harding's and John Foyster's first. John Bangsund characterises the collaboration as John Foyster 'on bass, Lee on oboe d'amore and [John Bangsund] on continuo.'
- June 1966** in the first issue of John Bangsund's *ASFR*, John Foyster (a regular contributor to the magazine) has unpseudonymously tackled the memorable subject: 'Sucking Air with Dwight V. Swain'. To review R. C. Fitzpatrick, however, he uses the pseudonym K. U. F. Widdershins, and comments: 'And if my name was R. C. Fitzpatrick, I'd change it.'
- July 1966** 17th issue of John Foyster's SAPSzine *The Wild Colonial Boy*.
Sep 1966 in *ASFR* 3, September 1966, John Foyster reviews Damien Broderick's short-story collection *A Man Returned*, and notoriously likens Broderick to 'an illiterate child who has gotten hold of a thesaurus.'
- Oct 1966** *The Wild Colonial Boy/The Gryphon* 35 appears (its number derived from adding 1 to the independent issues already published, which amount to twice 17).
- Oct 1966** in *ASFR* 4, October 1966, John Foyster reviews J. G. Ballard's *Terminal Beach* and remarks: 'Ballard supposedly writes about inner space, a term which I have heard much used (usually while the user has a mystic or maybe slightly bemused look upon his face) and less frequently abused.'
- Dec 1966** John Foyster visits Arthur Burns in Canberra to interview him about Paul Linebarger ('Cordwainer Smith'), who died in August 1966. As a memorial to Cordwainer Smith, *ASFR* 11, August 1967, publishes 'Paul Linebarger' by Arthur Burns, John Foyster's 'Cordwainer Smith', and extracts from John Foyster's interview with Arthur Burns. These articles are reprinted in Andrew Porter's *Algol* 20, May 1973, and in the anthology *Exploring Cordwainer Smith*, ed. John Bangsund and Andrew Porter, in 1975. They are translated into French as the introduction to the first of three volumes of Cordwainer Smith's stories, *Les Seigneurs de l'Instrumentalité* (1974). Under the title 'Cordwainer Smith Revisited', the *ASFR* material is then reprinted, with additional essays by Bruce Gillespie, Marc Ortlieb and Norman Talbot, in *ASFR* (*Second Series*) 21, Spring 1989^[BG].
- Jan 1967** John Foyster's contribution to the 78th SAPS mailing is entitled, *How to Vote in Australian*.
- Mar 1967** in *ASFR* 7, for the UK Bristol Easter Convention, John Foyster contributes the long article 'A Note on J. G. Ballard' (reprinted in *ASFR* 8, March 1967), and mentions his uncertainty about the meaning of Ballard's question, "'at what point does the plane of intersection of two cones become sexually more stimulating than Elizabeth Taylor's cleavage?" The immediate problem is, of course, that there is no plane of intersection of two cones (which makes it easy to answer the question, of course, but which somehow seems to avoid Ballard's point), but the one evolving from this is more complex: it presupposes that this point is common to all men—it reduces men to common denominators.'

- Apr 1967** in *ASFR* 9, April 1967, John Foyster continues his Ballard critique with 'A Note on J. G. Ballard: Three Novels'. In the same issue, Keith Roberts responds to a review, in *ASFR* 5, December 1966, of his novel *Pavane*. Unimpressed by the pseudonymous K. U. F. Widdershins ('who really should have his head immersed in a vat of treacle, or sheepdip, or whatever bizarre fluid comes most readily to hand Down Under'), Roberts refers to him as 'Mr Widdlethin', 'Mr Ditherspin', 'Mr Withershin', 'Mr Diddlethin', 'Mr Hitherthin', and 'Mr Sniddlepin'—of whom he inquires: 'But didn't you ever believe in fairies? Not even when you were a *little* moron?' With weird prescience, Roberts attributes to the man behind the pseudonym a deerstalker hat, such as John Foyster even now possesses, and an affinity with residents of Kuala Lumpur.
- June 1967** in *ASFR* 10, June 1967, the first anniversary issue, John Foyster reviews Samuel R. Delany's *Babel-17* under the heading 'The Legion of Nathaniel' and admits having 'formed the habit of not reading every single word in order to follow the plot of a novel.'
- 16 June 1967** birth of Jillian Miranda Foyster, daughter of Elizabeth and John.
- 1967** John Foyster resigns from the full-time teaching service—a career service—and becomes a temporary teacher, losing all benefits, in order to undertake part-time undergraduate studies at Monash University, while teaching part-time at Westall High School, near Monash University. After brief maternity leave, Elizabeth returns to teaching^[ED].
- 1968** John's subjects at Monash University in the second year of his Bachelor of Science course are: Topology; Linear Spaces; Groups and Rings; Analysis; Mathematical Logic; Lattice Theory; Dynamics and Celestial Mechanics; Differential Equations and Applications; Hydrodynamics and Vector Fields; Vibrations and Waves; Complex Variables and Potential Flow; Introduction to Numerical Methods; Discrete Probability; and Continuous Probability.
- Feb 1968** in *ASFR* 14, February 1968, Samuel R. Delany responds to John Foyster's criticism (in *ASFR* 10, June 1967) of the solution to a scientific problem in *Babel-17*: Delany credits this solution to Frederick Kantor, and reports that 'months after publication, I was receiving congratulatory letters from physicists who, upon recognizing this well-known problem, assumed the solution was my own!'
- 1968** John's right ankle collapses again in his first rugby training match for the university club.
- Apr 1968** *Half a Cough* 3 is John Foyster's contribution to the 83rd SAPS mailing.
- Apr 1968** John Foyster publishes the first issue of *exploding madonna* (a critical production)^[BG].
- June 1968** In *ASFR* 16, June 1968, the second-anniversary issue, John Foyster dramatises 'The True History of the Origin of *ASFR*'.
- 1968** *ASFR* is nominated for a Hugo award.
- Oct 1968** ANZAPA begins—suggested by Ron Clarke; founded by Leigh Edmonds; and called, for its first two mailings, the Amateur Press Association of Australasia (APA-A). Its first eleven includes John Foyster, contributing *Ecchb-toplasm* (*The ghost-writer's gazette*) 1, 'Occtober' 1968.
- Dec 1968** in *ASFR* 18, December 1968, John Bangsund defines 'John Foyster' as: 'Pen-name of Kelvin Widdershins (one of the most closely-guarded secrets in Australian fandom); secondary school teacher, polymath and king of Australian fanac.'
- Jan 1969** *Send Out for Two More Reams, Merton; that Incomparable Genius F. M. Busby Has Done it Again* 1 is John Foyster's contribution to the 86th SAPS mailing.
- 4–6 Apr 1969** John Foyster and Lee Harding are Guests of Honour at the 8th Australian SF Convention (at the MSFC rooms). John Foyster's Fan Guest of Honour speech is printed in *SF Commentary* 3, December 1969^[BG].
- March 1969** John Foyster is Guest (or 'Abnormal') Editor of *ASFR* 19.
- June 1969** 20th and final issue of the first series of *ASFR*.
- 1969** *ASFR* is again nominated for a Hugo award.
- June 1969** John Foyster begins producing *The Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology* (*JOE*) ('normally' edited with Franz Rottensteiner), a quarterly.
- June 1969–Aug 1970** John Foyster reviews books for *Vision of Tomorrow* (UK), a professional magazine.

- New Year, 1970** John, Elizabeth and Miranda Foyster attend Syncon '70 (in the Sydney suburb of Epping), staying with John Ryan in Fairfield^{[ED][BS]}. In April 1971, John Bangsund's *Scythrop* 22 publishes John Foyster's report of this convention, with illustrations by Elizabeth^[BG].
- Jan 1970** *I Can Page-Count Anyone in the House (Hic)* 1, is John Foyster's contribution to the 90th SAPS mailing.
- Jan–May 1970** John Foyster publishes fifty-nine fanzines, sixteen of them in May.
John Foyster has a Commonwealth Scholarship, and is studying Applied Maths Honours at Monash University. He is co-editor with Rob Gerrand of *Aucora*, the Monash University literary magazine^[RG].
- 1970** John Foyster and Leigh Edmonds begin publishing *Norstrilian News*.
- Feb 1970** John Foyster rejoins ANZAPA. In this year, he also joins OMPA (Off-Trail Magazine Publishers' Association) and APA-L, apa of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS).
- 27–30 Mar 1970** 9th Australian SF Convention (Capri Theatre, Murrumbidgee) is convened by John Foyster, John Bangsund and Lee Harding: John Foyster wins the 'Best Fanzine' Australian Science Fiction Achievement Award, or Ditmar, for *JOE* (while Italo Calvino's *Cosmicomics*, which has been equally little seen by Australian fans, wins the International Fiction Ditmar)^[BG]. He also wins the Paul Stevens Show's Golden Caterpillar Award for Fan with the Biggest Beard.
- Mar–Apr 1970** Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* 10 is guest-edited by John Foyster^[BG].
- July 1970** John Foyster's proposal that Australia should bid for the 1975 World Convention (to be known as 'Aussiecon') appears in *SF Commentary* 13, July 1970.
- Aug 1970** John Foyster's *The Wild Colonial Boy* 36, for OMPA, consists largely of tables of interstellar distances and stellar magnitudes.
- Sep 1970** John Foyster's 'A Critic of Science Fiction', dealing with James Blish's writings as 'William Atheling Jr', appears in the Monash University Association (MONSFA) magazine, *Cor Serpents*, September 1970.
- Nov 1970** John Foyster utters his first *Dirty Joke*, for the Australia in '75 committee.
1970 John achieves a First Class Honours degree in Science from Monash University.
- 1971–2** John Foyster has a Commonwealth Postgraduate Research Award from Monash University's Department of Mathematics. He is editor of the *The Monash Researcher*, magazine of the Monash Research Students Association, producing his 5th and final issue in April 1972.
- 1–2 Jan 1971** 10th Australian SF Convention (University of Melbourne, Parkville) is organised by John Foyster, Leigh Edmonds and Lee Harding. At the business section, the Australia-in-'75 committee is formally instructed to bid for the 1975 World Convention. John Foyster receives the Paul Stevens Show's Golden Caterpillar Award for Best Fannish Beard.
- Mar 1971** Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* 19, Jan/Feb/Mar 1971, is guest-edited by John Foyster and reprints the first six issues of *exploding madonna* (April 1968–April 1969) and the first three issues of *JOE* (July 1969–Jan 1970)^[BG].
- Mar 1971** first issue of *Boy's Own Fanzine*, edited by John Foyster and Leigh Edmonds.
1971 John Foyster founds DUFF (the Down-Under Fan Fund, for transporting fans between North America and Australia).
- July 1971** John Foyster resigns from OMPA and ANZAPA because of piled-up work and moving into a flat.
- Feb 1972** John Foyster and John Bangsund take over from Leigh Edmonds and Robin Johnson as co-chairs of the Australia-in-'75 bid.
- Autumn 1972** in John Bangsund's *Scythrop* 26, George Turner's article, 'The Phenomenon That Is Bruce Gillespie' (reprinted in Bruce Gillespie's *A Solitary Man*, October 1972), refers to 'the ubiquitous, inevitable, sometimes infuriating, but always readable John Foyster.'
- May 1972** in protest at President Nixon's announcement of the mining of Haiphong harbour, John Foyster resigns from his United States apas, FAPA and SAPS, and also from the Australia-in-'75 committee. (Consequence noticed by Damien Broderick: August 1974, news of this crushing blow reaches Nixon and he resigns his Presidency.^[DB])
- 1 June 1972** John Foyster begins employment with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)^[Br.].
- June 1972** John Foyster's *JOE* 5 is published as a guest-edited *SF Commentary* 27, June 1972, and includes Foyster on J. G. Ballard^[BG].

- 11–13 Aug 1972 11th Australian SF Convention, Syncon '72 (Squire Motor Inn, Bondi): John Foyster exerts a decisive influence in the 1973 site selection.
- Aug 1972 John Foyster discusses William Atheling Jr in *SF Commentary* 29, August 1972^[BG].
- late 1972 to Feb 1973 John Foyster produces 6 issues of *Chunder!* (volume 1).
- 26–29 Dec 1972 a 'carefully unplanned' BYOcon, beginning at Bruce Gillespie's abode, includes a barbecue and a cricket match at the Foyster-Pike farm near Kyneton on 27 December 1972^[JB].
- Feb 1973 John Foyster's *JOE* 6, November 1972, is published as a guest-edited *SF Commentary* 32, February 1973: the first part of a survey of opinions on sf from other critics, ordered alphabetically^[BG].
- Easter 1973 Eastercon (Victoria Hotel, Melbourne) involves public singing by John Foyster, among others, in the smash-hit one-act fan opera *Joe Phaust* written by Leigh Edmonds and David Grigg (in collaboration with 'Minnie Hands')^{[JB][LE, VB][BG]}.
- May 1973 John Foyster's *JOE* 6, part 2, February 1972 is published as a guest-edited *SF Commentary* 34, May 1973: the second part of John's survey of critical opinion^[BG].
- 17–19 Aug 1973 John Foyster is Guest of Honour at the 12th Australian SF Convention, Adventon 2 (Lincoln College, Adelaide), and wins the Australian Fiction Ditmar for 'Let it Ring' (short story by 'John Ossian').
- 1973–75 Under a Federal Labor government, John Foyster broadcasts six radio programs per year for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).
- Sep 1974 John Foyster is guest-editor of Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* 38, featuring George Turner and John Foyster versus Stanislaw Lem's 'SF: a Hopeless Case: with Exceptions'^[BG].
- 1975 John Foyster is editor of *Vinculum*, for the Council of the Mathematical Association of Victoria.
- mid-Aug 1975 John Foyster is program manager at the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention, Aussiecon One (Southern Cross Hotel, Melbourne).
- 1976 *Boy's Own Fanzine* 3, published by John Foyster and Leigh Edmonds.
- 31 May 1976 John Foyster resigns from his job with ACER as a matter of principle, disagreeing with the withholding from an educational report of the statistics for Aboriginal students.
- 1976 John Foyster and Elizabeth Foyster separate^[ED].
- 1976–77 John Foyster founds the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australia, with Dr M. A. Clements, running the first conference and editing its proceedings in 1977.
- Feb 1977 John Foyster returns to FAPA with *Quantum Sufficit* 1.
- 1977 John Foyster moves (by himself) to a flat in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond^[JB_r].
- 1977 John Foyster does 'backgrounding' for the maiden speech in Federal Parliament of Australian Labor Party Member, Barry Jones (who later becomes Federal Minister for Science, 1983–90).
- 1978–81 John Foyster is employed as officer (and later as Head) of the Research Services Sector of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE).
- 24–27 Mar 1978 the 17th Australian SF Convention is Unicon IV (Melbourne Townhouse, Melbourne), with two overseas Guests of Honour: Brian Aldiss (whose visit includes staying with John Foyster and Jennifer Bryce at Marine Parade, St Kilda) and Roger Zelazny (accompanied by his family)^{[JB_r][BG]}.
- Oct 1978 ANZAPacon, in the large upstairs flat occupied by John Foyster and Jennifer Bryce at Marine Parade, St Kilda, is a relaxacon involving chess and darts, as well as the collating of the Tenth Anniversary ANZAPA mailing.
- 1978–82 John Foyster publishes occasional book reviews in the Melbourne *Age* newspaper.
- 1979 John Foyster wins the inaugural GUFF race (Australasia to Europe) against John Alderson and Eric Lindsay.
- 10–13 Aug 1979 John Foyster attends Syncon 1979, the 18th Australian SF Convention (at Kings Cross, Sydney) where he is presented with the 1979 Australian Fanzine Ditmar for *Chunder!*; and where Jeff Harris, Paul Stokes, John McPharlin and Helen Swift (all ostentatiously bearded) masquerade as the Four Foysters. In these disguises, they advertise the 1981 Natcon, where John Foyster will be a triple Guest of Honour^[PM].

- 19 Aug 1979 John Foyster and Jennifer Bryce fly to London for the 37th World Science Fiction Convention, Seacon '79 (Metropole Hotel, Brighton), and afterwards spend time with Cherry Wilder and her husband Horst Grimm in Langen, Germany, and with Franz Rottensteiner in Vienna. John and Jennifer visit Switzerland (Basel), Italy (Florence) and France (Nice and Paris). John then visits extensively among British fandom.
- Dec 1979 in *Ansible* 5, Dave Langford reports: 'John Foyster has "achieved real, scientific immortality—a reference in a hardcover book! On the other hand, I'd probably choose to be remembered by a grateful posterity for something other than 'A Class of Solutions of Einstein's Equations which admit a 3-parameter Group of Isometries'." ^[DL]
- 29 Feb 1980 John Foyster and Jennifer Louise Bryce marry ^[BBr].
- 23 Jan 1981 Christopher Foyster, son of Jennifer Bryce and John Foyster, is born at noon, fifteen weeks prematurely, and dies six hours later in intensive care: events described by both John and Jennifer in *Chunder!* vol. 5, no. 1, Mar 1981. This issue (and Andrew Brown's indispensable consent to join him as co-editor ^[H]) inspires Irwin Hirsh to begin publishing *Thyme* on 1 July 1981, in the belief that there are no longer any Australian fannish newszines.
- 6–8 June 1981 at the 20th Australian SF Convention, Adventon '81 (Oberoi Hotel, Adelaide ^[H]), John Foyster is Guest of Honour three times over: as one of his *alter egos*, 'John Ossian', he is Australian 'Pro' Guest of Honour; as, 'K. U. F. Widdershins', 'Critic'; and as 'John Foyster' himself, 'Fan' ^{[PM][B]}.
- mid-1981 John Foyster chairs the Australia-in-'85 bidding committee.
- Nov 1981 John Foyster and two other authors publish a paper in the American Institute of Physics *Journal of Mathematical Physics*, vol. 22, no. 11, November 1981: C. B. G. McIntosh, J. M. Foyster and A. W.-C. Lun, 'The Classification of the Ricci and Plehanski tensors in general relativity using Newman-Penrose formalism'.
- 20 Dec 1981–30 Jan 1982 John Foyster and Jennifer Bryce travel in Canada and Europe. In Langen, Germany, while waiting in a Chinese restaurant for John Foyster and Horst Grimm to arrive, Cherry Wilder and Jennifer Bryce count fourteen beards preceding John's, and Cherry wonders whether John's presence invariably engenders such an epidemic of beards.
- End of 1981 John Foyster changes jobs.
- Feb 1982 John Foyster begins work as teacher and manager of the senior secondary section of Preshil: the Margaret Lyttle Memorial School, which is an alternative school in the Melbourne suburb of Kew ^[H].
- Mar 1982 Angus Foyster, son of Jennifer and John, is born prematurely and dies.
- 5 May 1982 Yvonne Rousseau and John Foyster meet for the first time when Yvonne attends the May meeting of the Nova Mob (Melbourne's monthly sf discussion group), in John's house at 21 Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda: the topic is Damien Broderick's novel *The Dreaming Dragons*.
- 6–8 June 1982 in Melbourne at Tschaicon, the 21st Australian SF Convention, Bruce Gillespie receives ironic 'congratulations' for swift promotion from the waiting list back into ANZAPA. His congratulators are some of the ten or so fans who were suddenly dropped from ANZAPA when John Foyster, as Official Bloody Editor (OBE), applied the ANZAPA membership rules strictly: the first and only time that this has been done ^[BG].
- 20 Aug 1982 John Foyster and Jennifer Bryce meet up with Cherry Wilder in Mönchengladbach at Eurocon, John having left Australia on 12 August and Jennifer having followed on 19 August. They travel onward to Chicago for Chicon IV (the 40th Worldcon) where John attends the business meeting and is admired for the extreme succinctness and persuasiveness of his bid for an Australian Worldcon in 1985.
- 1983–85 John Foyster is consultant to the Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.
- 29 Oct 1983 Colin James Henry Foyster, son of Jennifer and John, is born prematurely.
- 6 Aug 1984 John Foyster stands down from the Aussiecon Two committee because of family problems.
- 24 Feb 1985 John and Jennifer's son James Foyster dies, having spent his life hospitalised.
- 1985 this year, the Nova Mob no longer assembles at the familiar Foyster abode at 21 Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda (after dinner at the Danube restaurant in nearby Acland Street). The Mob meetings are hosted instead by Jenny and Russell Blackford in Port Melbourne.

- 5–8 Apr 1985 at Adventon 85 (debatable Adelaide Natcon: the 1985 Australian Natcon bid was won by Spawcon, Seattle), John Foyster receives a special award for past work in fandom.
- 22–26 Aug 1985 K. U. F. Widdershins is advertised in the Aussiecon Two program^[H], but John Foyster's paid employment has actually called him away to Sydney during the Worldcon.
- Nov 1985 John Foyster, Jenny and Russell Blackford, Lucy Sussex and Yvonne Rousseau combine to form the Science Fiction Collective, editors and publishers of the second series of *Australian Science Fiction Review (ASFR)*.
- late 1985 Sean McMullen (in the early stages of preparing his bibliography of Australian sf) carries out research in John Foyster's 'rather extensive' sf collection^[SM].
- Jan 1986 John Foyster, *Looking Forward: Rites of Passage* is published by TAFE (Technical and Further Education) National Centre for Research and Development.
- 5 Mar 1986 the first issue of *ASFR (Second Series)* is collated at the Blackford abode (198 Nott Street, Port Melbourne), not only before but also somewhat during the evening's Nova Mob meeting, with John Foyster in charge of stapling. It includes the first instalment (dealing with 1943) of John Foyster's serial critique of popular sf magazines, 'The Long View'.
- 25 Oct 1986 ABC Radio broadcasts John Foyster's adaptation of Homer Nearing Jr's *The Cerebrative Psittacoid*.
- Oct 1986 John Foyster's 'Science Fiction: A Trivial Pursuit—with Exceptions' appears in *Thyme* 57.
- Nov 1986 John Foyster's 'The Triumph of the Swill' appears in *Thyme* 58.
- 14 Dec 1986 in the inaugural performance of Melbourne's human orrery, with Roger Weddall narrating, John Foyster (as the planet Neptune) refuses to be captured by Phil Ware (as Black Hole).
- Dec 1986 John Foyster resigns his posts at Preshil.
- 1986–1987 John Foyster receives two appreciative caricatures of himself. In 'Preshil bids John Farewell. . .' (with tributes from students written on the back), he is shown darkly bearded, and booted out the door, whereas 'Staff Member and Bird of Freedom Enthusing Over 1987 Fee Rises' is essentially Max Beerbohm's 'Walt Whitman, inciting the bird of freedom to soar', deftly transfigured by a pair of spectacles.
- 13 Jan 1987 with three or four days' notice that John is leaving Melbourne, fan-nish friends arrange a farewell dinner at La Paella, 217 Sydney Road, Brunswick, where George Turner proposes a farewell toast.
- 1987 John moves to Adelaide (42 Elizabeth Street, Norwood) to work at the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) as Co-ordinator (Evaluation and Curriculum Development).
- Mar 1987 John Foyster publishes the first of a new series of *Chunder!*
- 11 Apr 1987 incautiously rearranging books, John Foyster narrowly misses being killed by the fall of 'a couple of metres of bookshelf and embedded books': his right arm is hurt. (Considering a similar event in an Aussiecon promotional 'Antifan' film, Yvonne Rousseau wonders whether this is the work of the Poltergeist of Paul Stevens Past).
- 17–20 Apr 1987 during Eastercon 1987 (at the Diplomat Motor Inn in Acland Street, St Kilda, Melbourne, John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau for the first time declare to one another their affection for one another.
- Sep 1987 Janeen Webb joins the Science Fiction Collective, entailing six-editor production of *ASFR (Second Series)* for September and November 1987. Lucy Sussex then resigns, thus restoring five-member Collectivity.
- 28 Oct 1987 Nova Mob West's first meeting occurs, at John Foyster's house in Norwood: a name-change to 'Critical Mass' is agreed upon.
- 25 Nov 1987 John Foyster is speaker at the first formal meeting of Critical Mass (where people grumble ineffectually about the name).
- Oct and Dec 1987 John Foyster travels to Melbourne for Preshil gatherings. Other visits to Melbourne in 1987 have involved collective editorial meetings and the collating of *ASFR (Second Series)*.
- 9 Dec 1987 Roger Weddall telephones John Foyster in Adelaide and Yvonne Rousseau in Melbourne, and extracts from each of them an encomium on the write-in DUFF candidate, the Rogers Street Laundry Door. These and other fans' commendations appear in *Thyme* 65, December 1987, as part of the platform for the Rogers Street Laundry Door.
- 1988 John Foyster, *Mathematics Beyond the Classroom* (Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra).

- 23 Jan–1 Feb 1988 John Foyster, Yvonne Rousseau and Yvonne's daughter Vida Weiss holiday together in Auckland, New Zealand, before returning to John's house in the Adelaide suburb of Norwood. Thus, they boycott the bicentennial celebration of the invasion of Aboriginal Australia on 26 January.
- Feb 1988 John Foyster, Yvonne Rousseau and Vida Weiss move into a bigger house, at 284 Magill Road, in the Adelaide suburb of Beulah Park.
- May 1988 *Thyme* 68 prints 'The Door Goes East', the first instalment of a DUFF trip report from the Rogers Street Laundry Door, as told to John Foyster.
- July 1988 *ASFR (Second Series)* 15 contains the 6th instalment of John Foyster's 'The Long View'.
- 1 Jan 1989 John Foyster reviews *Waiting for the Moon* (a film evoking Gertrude Stein) for the Adelaide radio station 5MMM (later renamed 'THREE D RADIO'). This is one of a series of his broadcast film reviews.
- 25 Feb 1989 auction-day for John Foyster's former Melbourne home, 21 Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda and also for Yvonne and Vida's former Melbourne home, 162 Amess Street, North Carlton (whose other known sf connection is that George Turner used to visit it when his friend from Wangaratta years, the writer Frank Kellaway, was living there).
- 1 Apr 1989 John Foyster (as co-host^[Br.]) attends the Wake for Shakespeare Grove, a party in Art-Deco mood, organised by Jennifer Bryce and John's brother Graeme Ross Foyster. (Afterwards, Bruce Gillespie reports from this gathering a dialogue between himself and Myfanwy Thomas (née Foyster). *Bruce to Myfanwy*: 'Where's your husband?'; *Myfanwy to Bruce*: 'Where's your wife?' John comments, with family pride: 'Never feed a Foyster a straight line'.)
- 14 June 1989 John Foyster, Yvonne Rousseau and Vida Weiss move into a house with more space for books: 28 First Avenue, Klemzig, close to the Adelaide O-Bahn (a guided bus track for high-speed travel).
- 14–25 Oct 1989 John Foyster visits Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Georgetown) as part of his SSABSA employment.
- Jan 1990 first issue of John Foyster's monthly *Doxy: The Sheet of Shame* (an accompaniment to Roman Orszanski's *doxa!: An Incurable RomanTic Production*).
- May 1990 *Doxy* 5, May 1990, features an interview with the write-in candidate for the 1988 DUFF race, the Rogers Street Laundry Door, who subsequently contributes regular news columns.
- 1990 John Foyster, *Getting to Grips with Competency-Based Training and Assessment* (TAFE National Centre for Research and Development DEET).
- 8–17 June 1990 John Foyster is in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore, working for SSABSA.
- 17 Feb 1991 John's mother Agnes Emilene Perry Foyster dies.
- 1 Apr 1991 at the 30th Australian SF Convention, Suncon (Brisbane Gateway Hotel, Queensland), the Best fanzine Ditmar is awarded to *ASFR (Second Series)*, which has ceased publication with issue 27, Autumn 1991.
- June 1991 John Foyster is appointed Manager of the Statistics Division of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER), formerly the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development. He publishes *Selected Vocational and Training Statistics* annually and *Australian Training Statistics* quarterly.
- 1991 John Foyster, *Getting to Grips with On-the-Job Competencies* (TAFE National Centre for Research and Development DEET).
- 13–23 Feb 1992 John Foyster, Yvonne Rousseau, John's daughter Miranda and Yvonne's daughter Vida holiday together in Malaysia (staying in Kuala Lumpur and in Adelaide's Sister City, Georgetown).
- 14 Feb 1992 using the telephone of his hotel room in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, John Foyster (as ConTract's overseas Guest of Honour) delivers his speech to convention members in Hahndorf, South Australia.
- 17 Feb 1993 on the ABC Radio National 'Education Report' program, John Foyster is interviewed about the problems involved in answering statistics questions about the TAFE sector.
- 1993 John Foyster is identified as an 'Old Polio': someone suffering from post-polio syndrome (late effects of the muscle-nerve damage inflicted by polio in 1956). He becomes active in South Australia's Post Polio Support Group and also in its Neurological Resource Centre.

- 2 Oct 1993 John arrives at Manila in the Philippines, for a fortnight as Australian visiting specialist for an 11-nation South East Asian Regional Conference on Electronic Management Information Systems. One afternoon, he and some colleagues narrowly avoid a shoot-out described by the local newspaper's front-page headline as a 'Bloodbath at the Mega Mall'.
- 1-4 Apr 1994 at the 33rd Australian SF Convention, Constantinople (Southern Cross Hotel, Melbourne), Yvonne Rousseau observes George Turner responding with a very impish grin to John Foyster's comment (after a particularly waspish rejoinder from George): 'Oh, I see: now you're setting up to be a Sweet Little Old Man!'
- June 1994 John Foyster publishes his first issue of *FNAC* ('Fanac on the cheap').
- Nov 1994 John Foyster contributes an issue of *Candiru* to FAPA.
- 16 June 1995 John Foyster speaks on the topic 'Science Fiction after Tolkien' at the Mythopoeic Society's monthly 'Round Table' (chaired by Michael Tolley, Associate Professor of English at the University of Adelaide); his academic audience is delighted that John concentrates on the work of the poet and artist David Jones (1895-1974).
- 1 Feb 1996 John Foyster becomes Director of the National Training Markets Research Centre (NTMRC).
- Apr 1996 first issue of John Foyster's international genealogical newszine, *Foyster Update: News for Foysters, about Foysters*.
- 29 Aug 1996 John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau travel to Los Angeles to attend LA-Con III, where John is a Program Participant, and where he dramatically identifies himself to LASFS members by taking up their invitation to buy a clubroom chair. In addition, at LACon III he publishes his long-awaited GUFF trip report, *Stranger in Stranger Lands*, thus destroying his former solidarity with all other GUFF winners at that time.
- Sep-Oct 1996 John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau continue their travels, visiting Ursula K. Le Guin in Portland, Oregon, and John D. Berry and Eileen Gunn in Seattle, Washington (where Jon Singer persuades them to visit the Pitt Rivers Museum when they reach Oxford). In the UK, both of them meet with Dave and Hazel Langford, Paul Barnett, Chris Priest, Leigh Kennedy, Judith Hanna, Joseph Nicholas, Cherith Baldry, Tanya Brown, Liam Proven, Mark Plummer, Paul Kincaid, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Pat McMurray, Tony Cullen, Eve and John Harvey, Avedon Carol, Rob Hansen, and Pam Wells; Yvonne alone travels to Edinburgh and meets with Jane Carnall, Jenny Glover and Lilian Edwards, while John researches Foyster genealogies in London. Onward to Paris and John Baxter; then to Wiesbaden and Cherry Wilder; then to Vienna and Franz Rottensteiner. Then back to Klemzig, where their house has been burgled in their absence.
- Jan 1997 John Foyster is Manager of Core Research at NCVER.
- 15 Mar 1997 John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau attend the wedding of Jennifer Bryce and Graeme Ross Foyster at Woodend, Victoria.
- 5-20 July 1997 John Foyster is in Malaysia working for IDP (Australian Ministry of Education) as team leader of research projects concerning Malaysia's World-Bank funded expansion of its polytechnic system.
- 4 Oct 1997 John's brother Graeme Ross Foyster dies: John is with him and Jennifer Bryce at Woodend, having been warned to cut short his current three-week IDP research visit to Malaysia.
- 17 Nov 1997 at the annual general meeting of the Board of the Neurological Resource Centre, John Foyster agrees to be Secretary.
- 26 Dec 1997 John's father John Causton Foyster dies.
- 18 Feb-12 Mar 1998 John Foyster is in Malaysia, continuing the IDP research projects.
- 14 Apr-9 May 1998 John Foyster is in Malaysia, continuing the IDP research projects.
- 31 May-29 June 1998 John Foyster is in Malaysia, continuing the IDP research projects.
- 3-8 July 1998 John Foyster attends the 21st conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia (founded by himself and Dr M. A. Clements in 1976-77) at Broadbeach on the Queensland Gold Coast; he and Yvonne return from this excursion a few hours after a small Adelaide tornado.
- 10 July 1998 a farewell lunch at the Volga restaurant (Flinders Street, Adelaide) marks John's retirement from NCVER to become a free-lance Consultancy: 'Foyster Fact and Fiction'.
- 11 July-30 Aug 1998 John Foyster is in Malaysia, continuing the IDP research projects.
- 21 Oct-14 Dec 1998 John Foyster is in Malaysia, continuing the IDP research projects.
- 9 Jan-11 Feb 1999 John Foyster is in Malaysia completing a 1050-page report for the Malaysian Ministry of Education: Yvonne Rousseau joins him in Kuala Lumpur on 31 Jan for the last days of his visit.

- 12–29 June 1999 John Foyster is working at Shah Alam, Malaysia.
- 2–6 Sep 1999 at the 57th World Science Fiction Convention, Aussiecon Three (Melbourne Convention Centre, Melbourne), John Foyster and Joyce Scrivner organise the FanHistoricon program. John also gives academic papers, including 'Samuel R. Delany and the Yackademy: An Evolution in Style', where his audience appreciates both his opening gambit of converting a chair into a chrome-and-fabric lectern (in fact, an Old Polio needs a lectern) and his finale of palpably deconstructing his speech.
- 11 Sep–18 Nov 1999 John Foyster is working in Malaysia.
- Feb 2000 John Foyster produces his first issue of *eFNAC*, electronic fanzine.
- 13 May–11 June 2000 John Foyster is employed as a consultant in Pretoria, South Africa, setting up the first stage of a Ministry of Education/AusAID project: Further Education and Training Management Information System Implementation.
- 16 Jan 2001 at the Volga restaurant, Juliette Woods and Damien Warman secretly invite Yvonne Rousseau to collaborate on this Sixtieth-Birthday festschrift/tribute to John Foyster.
- 24 Jan 2001 John Foyster's *Candiru*, February 2001, is ready for the 254th FAPA mailing.
- 27 Jan 2001 John Foyster departs for three months working for IDP in Kuala Lumpur.
- 13 Apr 2001 in Kuala Lumpur, John Foyster celebrates his sixtieth birthday.

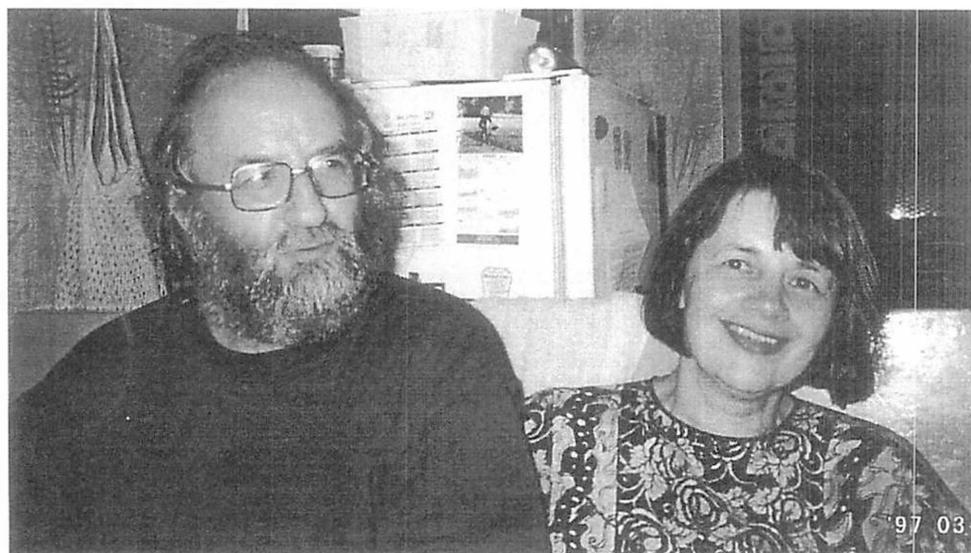


Photo credits

Front cover

Bearded Foyster c. 1970 by Lee Harding; provided by John Bangsund. The Foyster behind the beard, photo by Lee Harding, provided by Ditmar.

p. 4

Back row, from left: Merv Binns, Dick Jenssen. Front row, from left: Bruce Gillespie, Bill Wright, Race Matthews. Photo provided by Ditmar.

p. 9

Three generations of university graduates: John Causton Foyster, Miranda Foyster, John Foyster; provided by Miranda Foyster.

p. 11

John Foyster and Valma Brown (from *Joe Phaust*), photo by Leigh Edmonds.

p. 17

John Bangsund; photo provided by Ditmar.

p. 19

John Foyster, Franz and Hanna Rottensteiner, Vienna, October 1996; photo by Yvonne Rousseau.

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Photographs of John Foyster with Computer and Saw, 1988; photos by Jenny Blackford.

p. 30

John Foyster and Lee Harding; photo provided by John Bangsund.

p. 36

Photo of John Foyster on The Bridge (with characteristic McGill's bag) by Yvonne Rousseau.

p. 47

John Foyster and George Turner at *Constantinople*, Melbourne, 1994; photo by Damien Warman.

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Hazel and Dave Langford, John Foyster, Reading September 1996; photo by Yvonne Rousseau.

p. 54

John Foyster, Cherry Wilder and ailing computer, Wiesbaden, September 1996; photo by Yvonne Rousseau.

p. 66

John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau at Klemzig, November 2000; photo by Caroline Buckle, provided by Yvonne Rousseau.

About the artists

Elizabeth Darling taught with John Foyster at Drouin from 1963 to 1966. She married John Foyster in March 1966, and gave birth to Jillian Miranda Foyster in June 1967. She and John separated in 1976, and she is now married to Peter Darling.

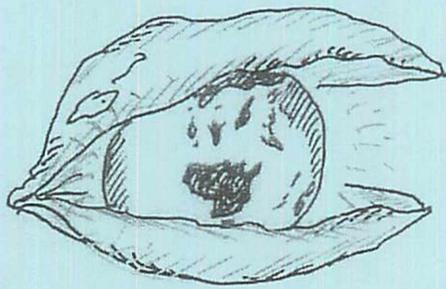
Ian Gunn (1952-1998) won the Hugo for Fan Artist in 1999. In 1995, he and Karen Pender-Gunn travelled to Glasgow as GUFF winners, to attend the 53rd Worldcon, popularly known as 'the Scottish Convention'. Karen Pender-Gunn published their GUFF report, *Oh, to be in England, In the summertime, With my love*, in 1999 at Aussiecon Three.

Martin James Ditmar Jenssen (always known as Dick Jenssen) was a founding member of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club in the 1950s. In 1969, he lent his name to the 'Ditmars': the annual Australian Science Fiction Achievement Awards. Thirty years later, at Aussiecon Three, his distinctive style of wit enlivened FanHistoricon panels. Dick's widely admired computer graphics—by Ditmar—have inspired a continuing campaign: 'Vote Ditmar for a Ditmar'. We are very grateful for the photographs (far more than we could use) Ditmar provided.

Ursula K. Le Guin is the winner of numerous sf and mainstream awards for her fiction. In addition, her 1969 novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* is prophetically listed in Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* (1994). Australians feel an especially strong enthusiasm for Ursula because of the writers' workshop she conducted in 1975 (documented in *The Altered I* (1976), edited by Lee Harding), when she was Guest of Honour at Aussiecon One. More recently, Ursula and her husband Charles have voyaged down to Tierra del Fuego, in boats. [YR]

Bill Rotsler (1926-97), US writer and artist, wrote several sf novels but is better known for his cartoons which won him three Fan Artist Hugos, plus a Retro-Hugo in 1996. The Rotsler Memorial Fanzine Artist Award was first presented in 1998.

To
John-at-Sixty Foyster -
May the World



Be Your Oyster!

With love

from Charles + Ursula