

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AUSTRALIA?

A Nigh-Witless Account by John Bangsund

(XX)

What indeed? - as Ross Chamberlain's little man, Q, seemed to remark quite often in some ageing fanzines I am rather fond of. Clubs springing up everywhere, new fanzines bulging from every mailbox, vast commercial enterprises, and that supreme temerity the Australia in Seventy-Five bid.

Dear me, all this activity! Do you remember when there were only ASFR and occasional Foyster SAPSazines? (And what happened to that crispy bacon we used to get before the war?)

My assignment - and Bruce Gillespie is paying for it, so I'd better get down to the job - is to fill this page with stuff about fan activities in Australia. Page? - it should be an inch-thick one-shot! There's just too much going on. There are (would you believe it?) Australian fans who don't know who I am! - rank neos who think Bruce started it all, who've never heard of Lee Harding, John Foyster, Bob Smith, John Baxter. Why, back in '42, when Lee and I were producing our first crudzines in kindergarten... But I digress.

AUSTRALIA IN SEVENTY-FIVE

No mucking about now: this is fair dinkum (as our ancestors used to say). We're going for the Big One in 1975, and we're confident that with your support this will be a Worldcon to remember. It won't be awfully big, of course. We've cunningly planned things so that we are so far away from the main centres of fandom that only the most dedicated, most interesting fans will be present. Please yourself, but if you want to get back to those crispy Worldcons we used to get before the war, you'll vote Australia in '75.

THE SPACE AGE BOOKSHOP

is the vast commercial enterprise alluded to above. An entirely fan-orientated business (Ron Graham and Mervyn Binns are the proprietors), Space Age carries an incredible array of science fiction and fantasy, new and old, nostalgic and sickeningly with-it. Books, pulps, fanzines that you haven't seen for years - all on sale in this incredible shop. GPO Box 1267L, Melbourne 3001, for catalogues and things. Mervyn has a mailing-list approaching the thousand mark in Australia alone. The majority of these people, fortunately, aren't fans. Not yet, anyway.

CLUBS &c

There were about a dozen when I last looked, but that was about six months ago and there might be more since then. I'll just list the ones I know about.
The Melbourne Science Fiction Club (GPO Box 1267L, Melbourne 3001; secretary Mervyn Binns) started about 20-odd years ago, has existed for all that time without benefit of organization or programmes, and now has two locations - one above the Space Age Bookshop, the other in South Yarra. Associated with it is
The Melbourne Fantasy Film Group (GPO Box 4039, Melbourne 3001; Robin Johnson, secretary), which has regular screenings of sf and fantasy films in 16 and 35mm. Homeless for some months, it now has Big Secret Plans to acquire its own theatre.

The Nova Mob (PO Box 96, South Yarra, Victoria 3141; John Foyster, Bossa Nova) meets occasionally. Loosely associated with the Mob is a group of fans which meets weekly in a dimly-lit eating-place in the city. At these meetings Plots are Hatched and Destinies Decided.
The Melbourne University SF Association (Secretary, Clive Morley, 8/280 Cardigan St, Carlton, Vic 3053) and The Monash University SF Association (Secretary, Alex Gas, 75 Trevallyn St, Sth Caulfield, Vic 3162) are active in a way that I am only vaguely aware of. Other Australian groups (I'm rapidly running out of space here) are The Sydney Science Fiction Foundation (GPO Box 4593, Sydney 2001; Gary Mason, Secretary), which is hosting the 11th Australian SF Convention; the Futurian Society of Sydney (GPO Box 4440, Sydney 2001; Secretary, Mike McGuinness), the oldest club in Australia; DUSK (Secretary, Sabina Heggie, 20 Tryon Avenue, Wollstonecraft, NSW 2165), a Star Trek orientated club which has spread interstate; the Sydney University SF Association (Secretary, Leith Morton, 110 O'Connor St, Haberfield, NSW 2045); the Brisbane Fantasy & Science Fiction Association (GPO Box 2268, Brisbane 4001; Secretary Dennis Stocks); and the University of Adelaide SF Society (Secretary, Allan Sandercok, 1 Michael St, Lockleys, SA 5032); all of which deserve several pages to themselves.

CONVENTIONS

It wouldn't be too hard to prove that Australia conducted the last con of 1971 and the first of 1972, since Adventure One in Adelaide started about 3pm on 31st December, continued until 3rd January, and was great fun. Coming up are the Melbourne Eastercon (Sec: Bill Wright, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne 3001), the 11th Australian Convention, Syncon 72 (Sec: Shayne McCormack, GPO Box 4593, Sydney 2001), at which the Fan Guest of Honour will be the DUFF winner, and the 2nd Brisbane convention in January 1973.

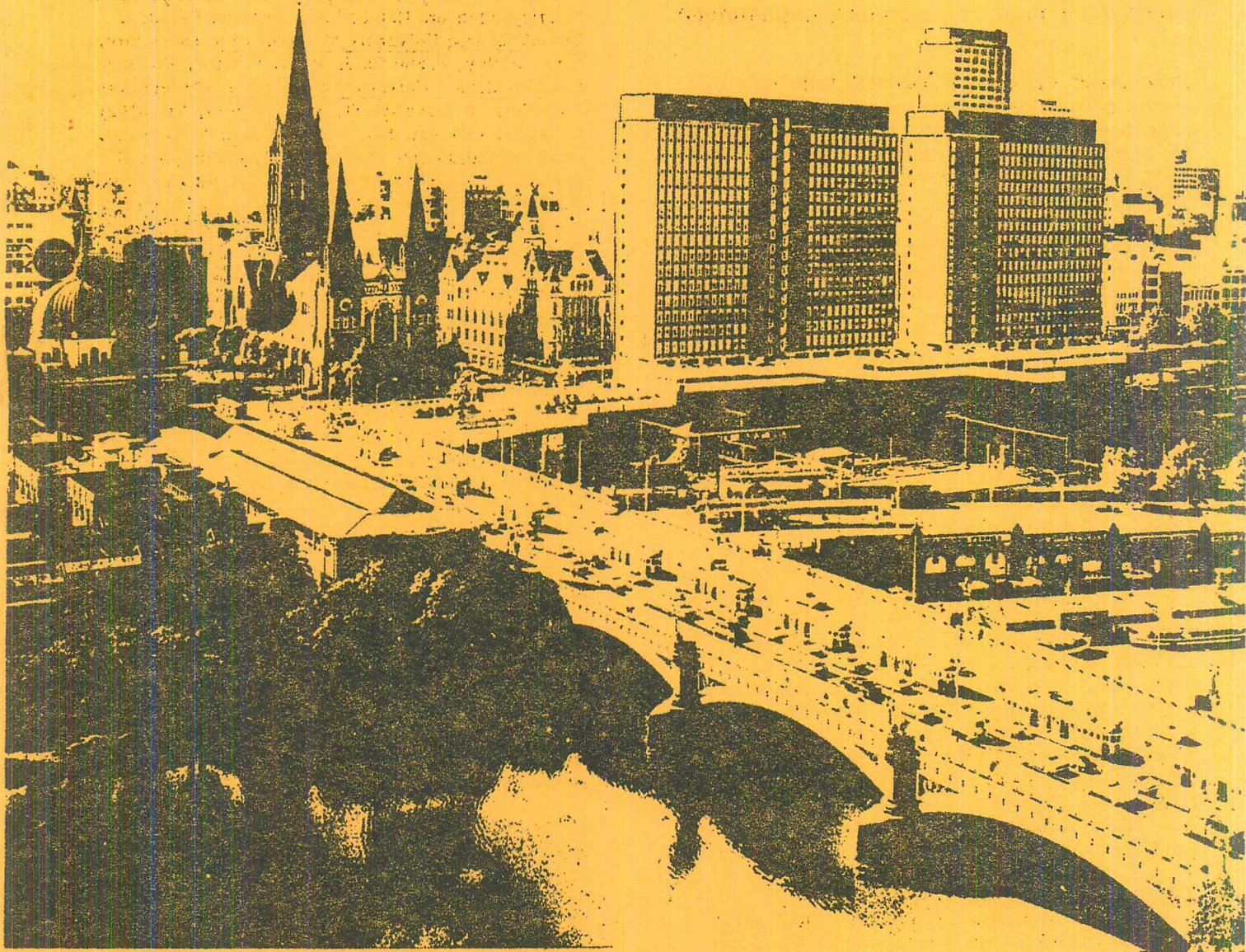
DUFF

is the Down Under Fan Fund. Similar to TAFF, but the winner will be Fan GoH at Syncon 72 in August. Candidates are Lesleigh Luttrell and Andy Porter. Information and voting forms from Fred Patten, 11863 W. Jefferson Blvd, Culver City, California 90230, or John Foyster, PO Box 96, South Yarra, Vic 3141.

FANZINES

So many these days that I will just mention titles and publishers. Bill Wright, GPO Box 4039, Melbourne 3001, will send you a detailed list if you ask nicely. SF Commentary (Bruce Gillespie) is Hugo-class; so is Scythrop (me) but I wouldn't say so myself; Chao (John Alderson); Cor Serpentis (Monash USFA); Gegen-schein (Eric Lindsay); Norstrilian News (John Foyster); Boys Own Fanzine (Foyster & Edmonds); Rataplan (Leigh Edmonds); Terran Times (DUSK); The Fanarchist (David Grigg); The Mentor and Wombat (Ron Clarke); The Somerset Gazette (Melbourne SFC); Tolkien Bulletin (Michael O'Brien); Yggdrasil (Melbourne USFA); all very readable. The big project this year is Kangaroo Feathers (Bob Smith), which will concentrate on re-printing the best from Australian fanzines, past and present. Then there's ANZAPA (retiring OE, Dennis Stocks): current membership includes 4 Americans, one Briton, the rest Australians; a few vacancies if you're quick. And, finally, might I just mention a book called JOHN W. CAMPBELL: AN AUSTRALIAN TRIBUTE? To be published by myself and Ron Graham about June, price \$2.00 (US\$2.50) from Space Age Books.

This is the place...



- IN 1835 JOHN BATMAN LOOKED AT THE VIRGIN GRASSLANDS AND FORESTS TENANTED BY THE JIKA JIKA TRIBE AND SAID "THIS IS THE PLACE FOR A VILLAGE".
- TODAY BATMAN'S VILLAGE IS A MEMORY, THE JIKA JIKA HAVE LONG SINCE GONE WALKABOUT, AND THERE'S NOT MUCH VIRGINITY LEFT EITHER. MELBOURNE IS (WHAT THEY CALL) A THRIVING CITY OF TWO MILLION MYRMIDONS AND AN ELITE CLASS CALLED "SCIENCE FICTION FANS". THE TWO MILLION HAVE CREATED A CITY OF CONSIDERABLE CHARM AND CONVENIENCE, EVEN A LITTLE CULTURE, WHICH THE ELITE CONDESCEND TO ENJOY AS THE WHIM TAKES THEM AND THE EXIGENCIES OF FANZINE-PUBLISHING AND CONVENTION-ORGANIZING ALLOW.
- IN 1975 THE FANOCRACY OF MELBOURNE, IN ASSOCIATION WITH SIMILAR ELITE GROUPS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, WOULD TAKE MUCH PLEASURE IN YOUR COMPANY AT A WORLD CONVENTION. FOR AN OFFICIAL INVITATION, CONTACT

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