

# CHUNDER!

THE FANZINE THAT BRINGS  
IT UP FIRST!

Chunder!  
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During 1980 I began to feel, more and more, that support for, and interest in, Chunder! lay far more outside Australia than within it. I mused in other fanzines about reasons for this, and what I might do about it. I began to plan changes to correspond to the changed perception I now had of my own fanzine.

Then I produced the December Chunder!, and came to mail it out. I planned to mail in with the previous issue to readers outside Australia, who I knew had not yet been sent that one either. Then it was that I discovered a large box of fanzine-stuffed envelopes, for in fact I hadn't sent any issues of Chunder! overseas last year at all.

But I'm a slow learner. It is fairly obvious that if I didn't send any out this year I would still do quite well - perhaps even better - but I'm still determined to bring out, and mail, five issues of Chunder! this year. Please try to control your enthusiasm.

#### THE NEW DECADE

In the newsagent this morning, buying the first newspapers for the year (and noticing, while glancing around the shop, that THE JOY OF SEX had been discounted, an eventuality I was entirely unprepared for and one which will probably be a shock to the rest of the world too), I realised that no one, so far as I can recall, has ever written up a Mervyn Binns New Year's Party in a fanzine. The Binns party has become an institution of sorts in Melbourne, and probably deserves some extended consideration, but I can only give it a few paragraphs here.

I'm not sure how long ago these stoushes got going. Only since Merv and Ernie moved to their present house, I'm reasonably sure, and perhaps because of the amount of space available, inside and out, for partying. This year's ding was better attended than last year's (and the dates being what they are, perhaps you could help by deducting one year from each of those references) but Merv still complains about the poor attendance; he spent most of the day preparing for it. I refrained from drawing to Mervyn's attention the simple solution to this, which isn't to cook less food, but I'll make the suggestion now. Mervyn, your problem is that you rely a little too much on artificial, electronic entertainment. You do respect our ears by not having loud music, or indeed any music at all, but that bloody television set does get turned on and it doesn't really serve the purpose adequately. What you need to do is rely upon natural talent. Not too many people realise how great you are at whistling. Why, I'm sure that of last night's crowd only Ced Rowley and me were in the car the time we drove up to Ballarat to that meeting with Joe Czynski and his friends and you whistled classical music all the way up there, and probably on the way back too. There's latent attraction to be exploited here, Merv, and I reckon you could double the crowd just by offering to whistle for an hour or so. Maybe get in a couple of amateurs to act as a sort of backing group and you could charge admission. (By the way, have you heard from Joe Czynski lately?)

Despite Merv's obvious disappointment, and Ernie's too (though his was derived from the fact that he had spent 6 hours catching 8 fish, which doesn't go far at a party, even with Jesus Broderick, well-known author of THE DREAMING DRONGOS, available to help) the party was a glittering success, with not only all the usual old crowd, but a handful of second-generation fans, and also visitors from beyond the normal environs (the Murray River) such as Cherry and Jack Weiner, Jeff Harris, and Ken and Marea Ozanne. Not many from beyond the Yarra, though.



The New Year's Party has become the time when the pensioned-off members of Melbourne fandom get together to reminisce about the old times, and talk about how the kinder are getting along at school, mortgage repayment schemes (and probably retirement plans). Peter Kemp and I talked about the ways employers can defuse union - activity.

John Litchen is always there, usually explaining why it is that he hasn't gotten around to retiring yet. Lee Harding almost wasn't there, for he had stayed at home to tape a ballet, but he did arrive in time to join the writers' circle (which was surrounded by the writers' circle's hangers-on's circle), and I wondered whether he and Damien Broderick got around to discussing the Famous SF Writers Teachers College which I had proposed earlier in the evening to Broderick.

The Author Himself (as they call him in the fruitologists' shops in Brunswick) was in fine form. He referred warmly to John Bangsund's speech in BOY'S OWN FANZINE 2 - I thought of writing you a letter-of-comment about it, he said. He implied that the speech as printed might not have accurately reflected the performance by the man he referred to as 'the drunken loon'. I replied that the printed version had been approved by the author. Broderick then went on to excoriate me for my piece on THE LONG TOMORROW in the December Chunder! in the most dastardly fashion. 'I thought it went well until about halfway through...' he said, allowing the sentence to trail off, leaving one certain in the knowledge that the second half was a failure, but otherwise unilluminated. An uncomfortable attack, it was, especially when followed up by a general and somewhat unspecific attack upon the Foyster writing style. 'For someone so alert to the defects of others, your own writing leaves ' and I trail off here to protect the eyes of my readers. I should never have mentioned that rotten book of Gerrand's.

The drunken loon was there, too, pestering people with questions such as 'who wrote Mozart's 39th symphony?' It seems that he is quite determined to win a newspaper quiz, even at the cost of losing all his friends. He is also determined to lose the 'drunken loon' image. 'My New Year resolution is to give up wine', he said, 'oh, except there's tomorrow - and then Sunday. Well, perhaps next week I'll give up wine.' Noel Kerr and I were able to distract him with talk about duplicators and in particular the marvellous RONEO 750. Noel finds it hard to believe that we still operate these antique machines, especially with the pressure which seems to be coming from RONEO to shift to offset (Noel's hobby and source of income), but was still anxious to talk about old times and listen in stark amaze to facts like Leigh Edmonds' use of bond paper with a 750. Okay, Edmonds, we all give up - how do you do it?

Ken Ozanne was his usual girthful self - perhaps even slightly more girthful than usual, and in this he was joined by tired old Bill Wright, who seemed to be perversely aggravating the problem by drinking large quantities of milk. Some would deny that anything Bill Wright did could be perverse, and some of the real oldtimers claimed to be able to remember when Bill's hair was not grey. I find this most unlikely.

The winner of the youthful stakes was, for the nth year in succession, Kelvin Roberts, who maintains his record of not taking holidays. But I think he lies about his age.

Parties wind down, some drift off to other, even mundane, celebrations, but the Mervyn Binns NYP goes on and on. (And there's no way I'm going to mention Tiny Daryl in this context, Merv, he's much too young - how did he get invited?)

15 February 1981

The six weeks which have passed represent a gap which is rather long in the production schedule for a fanzine due out in March. There is a reason, as a few of the fans in Melbourne know, and I want to go into it briefly, but perhaps not as briefly as some would like.

On January 23 Jennifer Bryce gave birth to our son, Christopher, 15 weeks prematurely.

Late in the afternoon of January 22 she had had a slight showing of blood, and came home early. She rang her gynaecologist, whom she was due to visit on the 23rd anyway, but he suggested that since it wasn't arterial there was probably no cause for alarm.

During the night she developed slight cramps but, although I thought it likely this was the onset of labour, we didn't take any particularly hasty action, since they were very mild. (I didn't suggest to Jennifer that I thought labour had commenced - that wasn't going to help anyone, and her appointment was at 10 am, which would be 6 or 7 hours after the cramps started. I thought that was an ample margin.)

As it turned out, after I left for work the cramps quickly became bad and Jennifer began to feel uncomfortable about getting to the appointment, as she had to take frequent rests while getting ready. Traffic was heavy, and she arrived a little late. The gynaecologist was running late anyway, and she had to sit (more or less, with plenty of wandering around) for over half an hour before getting in to see him, surrounded by lots of pregnant women who probably wouldn't terribly enjoy seeing one of their colleagues in labour.

At work I was getting worried, because I had expected that Bruce Warton, the gynaecologist, would ring me very soon after Jennifer arrived to ask me to get her to hospital. Lateness implied problems (rather than just medical tardiness). But at ten to eleven he rang me. I checked that he had warned the hospital (he had done so) and said I'd be right over.

Although I'd been preparing myself for all this, I was nevertheless quite upset by the actuality. Naturally the baby had almost no chance of survival, and even less of a normal existence if he/she survived the birth trauma. Jennifer knew this too, of course, but Bruce had talked to her optimistically about possible survival, which was of course vital in terms of her own health in the next hour or two. I rang a taxi company, but managed to get one of those which operates by recording calls. By the time the recorder got around to asking me how soon I needed the cab I was just about ready to suggest that the company have sexual intercourse with its chapeau, but I just hung up the telephone. I then asked my research assistant, Barbara Cramer, if she could drive me.

She had been quite excited about Jennifer's pregnancy, and seeing my agitated state was very anxious to help. We left immediately - well, after I left messages cancelling three meetings.

Barbara talked to me quite a lot as we drove across to Richmond, and this helped me to be reasonably in control of myself by the time we arrived at Bruce Warton's in Richmond. Barbara waited with the car while I went in to collect Jennifer.

Bruce Warton was attending another patient when I arrived. Jennifer was lying on the floor in one surgery, reasonably sure she was now in the second stage of labour. Bruce came in, and we helped Jennifer to stand. He was fairly confident that we would make it to the hospital, and in fact didn't bother to follow us immediately, even though it was his intention to supervise the delivery. We got Jennifer into the car. Already she was really only half-conscious,



in the sense that she wasn't always quite sure of where she was, and what was happening to her.

Barbara drove as fast as she could which, under Melbourne traffic conditions at the time, wasn't too fast. Things speeded up as we neared the city and Jennifer felt the waters break and wasn't sure at all about what was happening. We were all rather busy, since Barbara had to follow my instructions and ignore my talking with Jennifer. We had to pass the patients' (walking) entrance to get to the car entrance, so I gave Barbara a quick direction and bounced out to get things ready (I thought) at the reception desk. Barbara drove past the guard without stopping, which cheered him a little, while I found out that yes, they were expecting Jennifer, but it would take a while for the sister to arrive.

Eventually she arrived and we got Jennifer into a wheelchair and then, up a floor or so, to the labour ward. When we got there, two things had to be done - get Bruce Warton, and find out what the hell was happening. The first was easy, but the second wasn't.

All through the pregnancy Jennifer had seemed to Bruce a little large for the length of the pregnancy. If possible, it would be useful to know the reason for this before things got out of hand. By this time there were about half a dozen medical personnel in the ward. The doctor who was standing in for Bruce hoped that he wouldn't be handling the delivery, and concentrated on having everything ready. While the bed was being organized Jennifer had her blood pressure taken, blood type taken, and a drip fitted - this last being a precaution in case things got complicated later on and no one wanted to waste time on that stuff then. I was able to pass pieces to and fro as they were needed, and to continue talking to Jennifer, who seemed much happier now that she was in the hospital. Under the circumstances I think I would have felt that same way.

Now, the question of what was going on. A real-time ultrasound machine was on the premises, but it would take some time to wheel it around. While it was coming, an amplifying stethoscope was used to see if twins were involved. It was charming to learn that these pick up taxi signals, and there was a bit of interference. While the nurse was checking around Jennifer's stomach Bruce Warton arrived, and we began to hear Christopher's heart-beat. There seemed to be only one.

Now the number of medical staff was up to a dozen. Half of these were preparing a humidicrib. Jennifer's contractions were now having effect, and Christopher began to come out, one arm first. This was quickly stopped: his arm was pushed back in to ensure a head-first delivery. And then, tiny and unbreathing, he was thrust into the world.

I could see that his head was slightly discoloured, but otherwise seemed fine. He was whizzed away to the humidicrib. The ultrasound had now arrived, and perhaps the mystery could begin to be solved. We already knew that there was a lot of blood around - but was there a twin? (Christopher's label said 'twin 1') The ultrasound, whose cathode picture was awfully difficult to interpret for a novice like me, showed nothing. There was only Christopher.

By now they had taped the tubes to his nose, through which he would be induced to breathe. They brought him over to Jennifer for her to hold, before he was to be taken up to the intensive care ward on the fifth floor.

Then he was taken back to the crib and with breathing being maintained by manual pumping of a bladder, we went up to the fifth floor. There he was placed in a fancier crib and attached to a mountain of computer-monitoring gear.

The catastrophe of being born had naturally affected Christopher immensely; his heartbeat was around 140, his breathing 80. Of course that breathing was artificially maintained, but even there there was hope, for the expectation was that his breathing would have to be wholly maintained but in fact he was able to hold up his end to the extent of about 15%. The fancier crib maintained a correct temperature by direct monitoring of a thermometer strapped to Christopher's stomach, and to the remains of the umbilical cord (cut rather longer than usual) was attached a tube which would be used to feed him and remove waste.

The pediatrician wasn't optimistic. He weighed only 560 gram, and although he had emerged almost undamaged (apart from bruising on that leading arm) his condition was already deteriorating faster than anyone liked. He had to get over a crisis in about 12 hours, and if he survived that there'd be another hurdle in a couple of weeks. The pediatrician said she would arrange a Polaroid, and suggested that Jennifer should be brought up to see Christopher in about an hour and a half.

I went back down to Jennifer and we talked. There was now some added information: the placenta had detached and there was a blood clot. The order of these events was not known. We talked, and Jennifer was brought some tea and biscuits. In case you are wondering, Christopher was born at noon.

By 1.45 we were expecting to be going up to see Christopher. Jennifer was still on the drip (intended to contract the uterus, now). The sister indicated that waiting to 2.00 pm would be a good idea because new staff came on duty then and would be able to help. They were having occasional crises in the labour ward, two more babies having arrived in various stages of prematurity while all this other stuff was going on.

At 2.30pm the medical staff suddenly got very anxious to get Jennifer up to see Christopher. It seemed to me that things must be going badly. Jennifer had no clothing, of course, and the drip was still in her arm. The sister was not minded to worry about these things, so Jennifer was pushed in her wheelchair, drip in her arm (bottle supported by a nursing aide), up to the intensive care ward.

This is a remarkable place, full of babies with problems. But the one with problems was Christopher. Jennifer wasn't really in shape to make comparisons, but it was clear to me that he was far worse. His colour was poor, and whereas before it had been worthwhile to force oxygen into his lungs with such power that his whole body was distorted, there was now only a token maintenance. His breathing and pulse were right down. We left him, and returned to the labour ward, where the drip was removed and Jennifer was shifted to another ward. I now had the task of making the telephone calls.

I had already tried to call Barbara, but she was not at work and I asked the other staff I talked to to give her the news. Just before we left the labour ward she rang from home and I was able to talk to her and thank her.

But the grandparents had to be told. I telephoned both families who naturally received the news with mixed feelings.

I returned to see Jennifer, who was being served a meal. Bruce Marton had been in to see her, and he had indicated that he wasn't optimistic. The other doctor had also called in. We agreed that I would go out and have something to eat. I had already been home to collect some clothes for Jennifer when I did the telephoning, so I didn't really have any other major tasks.

When I returned at 6.30pm, Jennifer told me that the pediatrician, Di Hookham, had just left. Christopher was dead.



Since that morning we had not expected much else, but the shock was still great. Indeed, today is the first day I've been able to look at the photo of Christopher. We had built (or at least planned) our lives around Christopher for at least the next four years. We would have to start again.

It wasn't over, of course. Many more people had to be told. There was the matter of recovering physically and mentally for Jennifer, which wasn't easy.

At the back of my mind was a fine piece of writing by Goodman Ace, which is hard to get the hang of if you aren't too familiar with the lives and work of GA and Jane (which I assume is the case for 90% of the readers of this item), but which is worth quoting anyway, from the issue of SATURDAY REVIEW for 3 May 1975:

'On a personal note, this if-ful thinker quotes in part a letter dated December 6, received and read with some anguish. A letter which, if the writer had shown more concern and some slight regard, would never have been sent. It's signed by the president of one of New York's most prestigious hospitals. I quote:

December 6, 1974

Dear Mrs. Ace:

As a recent patient you have seen how our hospital serves its community by providing a full range of medical services,... offering a high level of nursing service together with physical amenities, enabling the hospital to treat the patient as a person, rather than a number.... We are appealing to former patients like yourself to contribute to the hospital's Capital Improvements Fund.... Your contribution will be fully tax deductible.

If he hadn't sent the letter, I wouldn't have felt obliged to send this reply:

December 8, 1974

Dear Sir:

As a former patient I did notice your high-level nursing service together with its other amenities, and I would dearly like to contribute to your hospital fund. But, you see, on November 11 I died in your hospital.

Maybe we can get together later.

Sincerely, Jane Ace'

Would something like this happen to us? I wondered. Yep. Twice. The first one I managed to fend off - a middle-aged/elderly lady claiming to be from the local Baby Health Centre came to the door one day while Jennifer was asleep and I was at home. She said she understood that a baby had been born in the household and the Baby Health Centre wanted to ... I cut her off rather bluntly with the observation that the baby had died and there didn't seem to be much the Baby Health Centre could do about that. She didn't seem to have anything to add. Later, a letter from the hospital which Jennifer received muttered about some aspect of what baby was going to do. We tore that up.

Neither of us is in very good shape yet. I suspect that in another month or so we'll have adjusted to it. But right at the moment we are jumpy, and even shorter with fools than usual. With a bit of luck some of that will emerge in the pages which follow, just to get rid of that bland, fanziney taste you used to get before the war.

(by Jennifer Bryce)

As this has been a closely-shared experience I have only a few things to add to John's description.

I think that my initial reactions to the labour were completely irrational. I wanted to deny it. Perhaps if I went about my usual early morning tasks it would stop. On the other hand, it was blatantly obvious that I was in labour, and I knew it. I didn't actually time the contractions but, as I pottered around doing the ironing, cutting my lunch, eating a hearty high-protein breakfast, I knew that they were far less than ten minutes apart.

I packed my books and papers for work - not the night-clothes and sponge-bag that I really needed - and drove myself to the doctor's, some small wishful part of me still believing that the contractions would be stopped, the baby would be unharmed, and I would proceed to work. I cannot think of any other time in my life when I have so clearly refused to accept reality.

I suspect that I would have coped with problems in early pregnancy far better. I had been delighted and amazed at every event that had confirmed the pregnancy, but people close to me had had problems in conceiving, ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages - so I had half-expected that one of these sad events might befall me. When I reached 20 weeks, and everything was going well, I considered myself to be an extremely fortunate person. I was very contented and happier than I can ever remember myself being. Perhaps it was because I had only recently dared to let myself (and others) believe that I was really going to have a baby that I could not properly adjust to this sudden reversal of events.

My final rational act was the car drive. I was well aware of the contractions as I drove (in fact it was fairly difficult to sit on the seat at the height of a contraction) but all my energies and concentration were focused on getting to the doctor's safely and quickly and I believe that I drove with all my wits about me.

I am inclined to understatement at the best of times - at work I am often accused of keeping a low profile. So when I arrived at the doctor's I calmly mentioned to the secretary that I thought I might be in labour as I'd been in a bit of pain. I am sure that my face reflected nothing of the turmoil in my body, so she ushered me into the waiting room: 'Just take a seat'. By this stage sitting was quite impossible. I perched on the edge of a chair and pretended to read VOGUE and made several sorties to the loo where I could squat in privacy without alarming the other pregnant women. When I ultimately got in to see Bruce Barton my cervix was fully dilated.

John suggests that on the way to the hospital I was in a state of semi-consciousness. I was in fact totally absorbed in the frequent and fairly long contractions. If one became totally immersed in the pain it was not unpleasant. By this time I had been told that there was a chance that the baby would survive. This was very important to me. Now, rather than deny what was happening, I wanted to do all that I possibly could for the baby. I therefore didn't take any of the drugs offered in the labour ward and although I had not yet attended any Physio classes I somehow managed to push and breathe in a reasonably helpful manner. When I realised that Christopher was alive, a boy, and not deformed in any way, I was indeed filled with wonder - a twelve-inch, perfectly-formed bundle (wrapped in paper towels) with

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I wanted to mention a couple of other things before getting on with the business of the fanzine.

When, at the last minute, the return of the US hostages was being delayed by negotiations over details, one such detail attracted my attention immediately - and struck me as being wrong. It didn't seem to me a negotiating point available to the Iranians. But I checked and checked the news items and the answer always came out the same way - the Iranians were negotiating over the interest to be paid on funds held by the USA.

What was striking about this was, of course, that I was pretty sure that the Koran was fairly strong on the subject of usury. I checked my copy, and yes, indeed, Mahomet had written strong words on the subject. Maybe I have the wrong edition, or maybe the ~~sense~~ of this aspect of The Word is treated in modern-day Islam as it is treated in its sister religions.

Changing the subject rather dramatically, please allow me to report that since September of last year I've been keeping a list of the books I buy (and noting that I've read them, if that comes about - I've not done too badly, actually).

One of the more interesting of the (read) books is Nikitenko's DIARY OF A RUSSIAN CENSOR. Nikitenko was involved in the censorship biz for about fifty years in Czarist Russia, roughly from the 1820s. Many diaries can be boring, but this edited version preserves a sense of frustrated humour throughout. The role of the censor was a difficult one - especially for someone like Nikitenko, whose sensitivity was such that the daring authors sought him to act for their works. The censorship system of the time, while strict, had certain features which make it attractive, if you have to have censorship (i.e. precensorship). In particular, while an author might be, in very extreme cases, in hot water if his/her book is published and turns out to offend the government, in the front line, and in trouble for minor infractions, is the censor. The government took the sensible view that authors can't really be expected to know every detail of government policy but that censors are paid to know and interpret that policy; if something goes wrong, get the censor, not the author. Nikitenko had a couple of spells in jug early in his career, but was later sought out by writers like Turgenev because of his skill in getting around government policy.

But one learns a great deal about one's own times from books like this (which is why I have so many diaries and exchanges of letters in my library). For example, the Russia described by Nikitenko differs from the present-day USSR in that there was a Czar and now there is a Communist Party but, politically, there are few other differences. Many of the things we decry (if we do) about the Soviet system originate not with Lenin and Trotsky (much less Marx) but with Czarist Russia. It's all rather sad.

But it isn't as sad as reading about two battles Nikitenko fought in his old age. His diary reveals his genuine anger at proposals for tightening government regulations which, even within the restrictive regime to which he became accustomed, seemed outrageous.

These two proposals were as follows:

1. That the government could proclaim certain subjects which were not to be discussed in the press at all.
2. That newspapers were to be forced to divulge their sources for printed rumours (read 'stories').

The first of these is now enshrined in the Commonwealth in the form of the D-Notice. And the second has been operative in the USA since about 1972 and recently, so I'm informed, became effectively the case in the UK.

Roll on, '84.

## THE YOUNG AUSTRALIAN SF WRITER

George Turner

While at the recent very excellent SF convention in Perth I listened to a panel of fans and experts discussing the writing and publishing of SF in Australia, for the most part bemoaning the problems. One of the speakers was Tony Peacey and like the rest he was pessimistic about the number, nature, and quality of local outlets for indigenous SF. He stays in mind - when I have forgotten the others - because he spoke, though quietly, with the submerged passion recognizable in one who is suffering the conditions he describes. While the others took the obligatory stances of protest, Tony spoke from the desperation of one trapped in a no-solution problem.

At question time I was tempted to point out a considerable number of outlets, and am now glad that I did not; a closer look at the situation leaves little to be happy about.

(These notes are not concerned with novels, for the writers of which a world market will satisfy most needs, but with the short stories which represent the first efforts of most of our young writers. He who is self-confident enough to start off with a novel needs nobody's sympathy or advice; he's a tough baby who knows where he is going and to hell with the difficulties.)

My 'pointing out' in Perth would probably have been along the lines that a number of local 'little' magazines exist, though on an erratic basis, that they offer at least a measure of public exposure and response, that mighty oaks from little acorns grow, and similar nonsense. . . .

At the moment of writing I have in front of me copies of NEXUS, CRUX, and FUTURISTIC TALES. I have read them, grimly, from cover to cover, and now know frustration's very form and feature. These are not outlets for young writers but collections of trivia. Briefly, among twenty-one stories there are only a very few which might survive the selection process for a beginner's Workshop and those few would suffer drastic changes before the class allowed them a grudging approval.

There are stories wherein good ideas die undeveloped, stories so silly that nothing could save them, stories so ill-constructed as to be nearly incomprehensible, and over all a level of literacy that is at best totally imitative in conception and detail, at worst insufficient for the writing of a useful letter.

There are also (and this hurts) indications in at least four cases that inside the box of nonsense a writer is struggling to get out - if only someone will show him where the way out is. These four will succeed if they have courage and perseverance, but the road will be twice as long for them as it need be because there is no one available to pinpoint their failings, uncover their areas of insufficiency, steer them away from stylistic dead ends, and urge their special values into the light.

This is an editor's job, if it is anybody's, and most good editors foster talent by refusing to print the inadmissible, by returning stories for rehandling until they are qualitatively admissible, by spotting a writer's weaknesses for elimination and his skills for growth and shaping, and advising accordingly.

The editor-writer relationship, properly developed, is a very valuable one. First, however, you need good editors, and with the best will in the world I can detect no sign that Michael Hailstone, Keith Rex, Ray Maultsaid, and Elizabeth Close have any sense of quality whatsoever (if they had, these three issues would not have been printed) let alone the essential ability to assess weakness and advise writers.



One cannot doubt their love of SF or the intensity of their desire to foster local SF literature, but enthusiasm is not enough. These magazines may struggle along in small success - which makes one wonder about the standards demanded by their readers - or may fade away as finance or reader interest give out. For the editors it will mean disappointment and probably the loss of some money. For most of the writers it will mean an avenue of pleasant ego-tripping closed. For the few who want to be writers it will be one more deep ache because their experience of publication has taught them nothing, there being no editor with the ability to guide or teach; they will have had only the meretricious encouragement of public print, misplaced because there was no one to tell them that the work was not good enough to be printed - that there is a vast gap between 'printed' and 'deserving of publication' and a vaster one between that and quality writing.

The young writer has a lonely row to hoe. If he is to improve, he must have standards to rise to, and these three magazines cannot provide them. It is true that Gerrard, Harding, and Broderick have put together respectable anthologies of local work but there is a narrow financial limit to the viability of such publications, though these editors do have the necessary senses of taste and style and the intellectual toughness to demand and get improvements. Beyond such occasional outlets the future would seem bleak for helpful professional criticism.

One obvious comment might be that it won't matter a damn if most of these writers sink without trace, but it is one I cannot agree with; quality breakthroughs occur in the least likely places. More insistently, I wonder about the writing futures of Robert Clements, Marilyn Fate, Albert Vann, and David King, in each of whom an unreleased talent shows through their unrealized stories. The obvious suggestion is that they attempt the American market (as Leanne Frahm has successfully done) where the competition is keen, not to say vicious. The obvious answer is that this should not be necessary, and the probability is that if a writer can assemble a body of quality work, some Australian firm will publish it. The smaller publishers, in particular, will take risks in areas where the commercial giants literally cannot afford to.

But first there must be the quality. Where is the necessary impatient, acerbic, relentless, deflating, and knowledgeable criticism to come from?

Did I hear someone suggest that encouragement is better than all that destructiveness? Don't believe it! Writers are tough; it's the remorseless bashing that weeds them out from the dilettantes. Pretty-pretty encouragement mixed with soft-pedalled censure only confirms their belief in non-existent excellence. The real writer listens to what you say, wastes ten minutes hating your guts and then starts to think over the criticism - and goes to work to prove you wrong. Only the disposable dilettantes sulk and go home. And remember that a literary adviser has to have great confidence in a young writer to spend valuable hours belting the nonsense out of him. Or her.

Back to the question: where are they to get the advice? Workshops? Not really; workshops stimulate and involve but are ultimately too cosy - and in Australia, too short - to do more than shake out the promising from the ruck; from all our local workshops only Pip Maddern has leapt beyond her initial promise as a writer, and it can be argued that workshops were only fuelling stops on her determined way. The Melbourne University SFA has maintained a sort of in-group workshop for many years, publishing short tales in YGGDRASIL, but one sees little overall improvement as time goes on; David Grigg and Francis Payne have gone on from there to more promising performances, but in general I see little real value in round-table in-group criticism, which may form a practical basis of sorts but has too many obvious limitations in the general lack of practical experience and critical

development. A workshop is a good startline but steady attendance won't by itself win any races.

So what's to be done?

The first thing is for the aspiring writer to learn the basic apparatus of literary criticism and apply it to everything he reads. In that fashion he will build up a conception of a personal standard. He will reach that standard by applying that same rigorous criticism to his own work - yes, it hurts - and by being quite literally never satisfied. It was Somerset Maugham who noted that you are never finally finished with a story, you just get fed up with the unattainable and stop tinkering with it.

If in the meantime he chooses to write inferior work for inferior editors for a sake of a few dollars he takes the risk of falling into a rut he can never get out of. If he does struggle out of it he will know that those cheap dollars were dearly bought. A writer's final reward is his integrity. If he hasn't that, he is a hack - which is a respectable occupation so long as he doesn't pretend to be something better.

My own apprenticeship was twenty years of writing without ever offering anything for publication. When I felt I had reached a standard I need not be ashamed of I set out on what has proved to be only a very minor but enormously satisfying career. I am not and probably will not be a financially successful writer, but the hours of creation are worth all other delights put together.

That is not a pattern of advice to be followed; it is a statement of the most that the average writer of fiction can look forward to. Be warned that the game must be loved for its own sake.  
(George Turner)

#### REPLY TO A CRITIC

George Turner

Richard Faulder had me wondering what I've been up to these past few years (mutating like a demented fruit fly?) until I realised that he hadn't understood more than a few words at irregular intervals of my article (Feb-May, 1980).

'Inconsistent', says Richard. I dare say he's right. I'd hate to think I still cling immovably to the ideas 'glimpsed at UNICON VI' or in 1969 or whenever. Learning and changing are continuous processes. However, he doesn't say much to support the horrid charge.

I quote: '. . . perhaps he really has stopped claiming that SF is not great literature because it fails when judged against some other types of fiction.' Richard's memory fails him. What I claimed then and for many years before and still claim is that no genre fiction can be great literature until it bursts its genre bounds and opts out into the living mainstream. SF, despite honourable attempts, has not managed this. Tom Disch, in '330' and 'On Wings Of Song', has come closer than most, but in the end the genre limitations have hobbled him. Great work accepts only the common limitations of all art: shape and structure.

'. . . vague statements such as "A writer's reach must always exceed his grasp."' Nothing vague about it. It didn't occur to me that a Chunder! reader would not recognise a reference to one of the best-known quotations from Browning:

"A man's reach must exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?"

It means that if you attempt only what you know you can do successfully, you are in effect running on the spot, making no progress. This is the case with most 'popular' writers, in and out



of SF. Only the writer who is prepared to attack difficult forms and subjects, to stretch his abilities to their utmost limits and be prepared to fail for attempting too much, has any chance of real achievement. This is one reason why the great, in science as well as in the arts, often have to wait for recognition; they have reached beyond the understanding of their contemporaries and must wait for the times to catch up with them. The work which is immediately and completely understood is purely contemporary; however fine as a technical performance, it is 'running on the spot'. Fancy having to explain that! Black mark, Richard!

'... George's argument boils down to the old chestnut that SF is short on depth of characterisation.' Balls! Read page 8 again. What I wrote was to the effect that if this particular problem remains unsolved (I actually wrote 'insoluble', which was careless of me), there remains another matter - 'the lack of content, the recycling of the same ideas in story after story.' In other words, cannibalism and lack of honest thought. ('There's this telepathic alien, you see, and this prostitute in the quokwok miners' bar on Ceres, and she turns out to be a telekineticist; and then there's this matter transmitter left by the civilisation of Old Ones from before the Big Bang. . . . "Man, it's mindblowing."')

'... surely not even George would deny that there has been an increasing attempt to achieve this (characterisation), in many cases surpassing popular mainstream writers.' Which 'many cases' and which 'popular mainstream writers'? Even habitual hacks like Michener, Uris, and McEain (especially the last) leave SF writers standing where characterisation is concerned, and that without an effort. I know of no character in SF as real and human as Detective Steve Carella and his deaf and dumb wife, or Bloody Mary or Inspector Maigret or almost any of the wretched creatures he pursues. These make even top mainstream writers look to their laurels. They know how people behave; few SF writers do. Consider, for instance, the peculiar creatures served up as soldiers by Pohl, Dozois, Alderman (in his SF only), and Heinlein and other ex-servicemen who write as though they've never seen a serviceman, let alone seen him in action. As soon as they write SF, their sense of the real world seems to vanish and the puppets strut onstage.

'... it is not the function of SF to question the commonplace.' It is the function of all creative endeavour to question the commonplace, particularly the 'generally accepted' commonplace, and SF has a wonderful collection of private commonplaces which have achieved the status of 'accepted conventions', concepts held for common use throughout the genre. For example: immortality, telepathy, psycho-kinesis, FTL travel, matter transmission, radiation-induced mutation, the social implications of organ-bank technology, anabiotic freezing, the sociology of O'Neill satellites, invisibility, instantaneous communication. There are fine possibilities in these, yet there has not been an intelligent, thoughtful investigation of these and many other basic tools of SF (with one exception) that I can recall in fifty-some years of reading the stuff. (Could be worth an article some time to explain just where the magic possibilities lie - if I thought it wouldn't bore the tripe out of all the readers who prefer magic to logic.) This is why even the most intelligent SF risks finishing up as pseudo-technological fantasy; the authors either can't or won't think. They prefer the spectacular to the factual - and that is what makes them hacks. (Nothing wrong with being an honest hack; it's those who try to pretend that their hackery is high literature who need weeding out.) While they persistently ignore the realities of their chosen field, SF will remain a genre. They will one day (I hope) get a surprise to discover that the facts behind their misunderstood, taken-for-granted commonplaces are far more wonderful than their fantasies. SF needs badly to question its basic tools and materials.

'... If mankind's only fascination was with examining the commonplace, we would still be living in caves.' Sounds impressive, though I didn't suggest 'only', did I? How about this: It is because man examined the commonplace and gradually observed the facts behind it that he is not now living in caves; cave-man had only the commonplace to work with.

And I love the final kick: 'Humans are different from animals because they can escape from the mire of the here-and-now, and ask why and how.' Why not try it, Richard? (Though 'escape' is a bit of a giveaway, isn't it?) The first thing to hit you might be that a part of your very human problem is the acceptance (as a commonplace) of that word 'mire'. The here-and-now is just as full of wonder as any tomorrow or far star (which will also one day be here-and-now). But you have to look around you first to discover this; to do that, you must first remove that blinkered acceptance of the commonplace as dull. The real problem with the commonplace is that few except the creative artists ever look at it. The artist looks, and shows you what he has seen, and you gasp, 'How wonderful.' under the impression that he has worked some transformation; he knows that he has only shown you what was already there.

Let SF look to its commonplaces; the writers' eyesight is, too often, where the dullness lies.

Come to think of it, I was saying all this for years before UNICON VI was ever thought of. Am I becoming consistent? Now I am worried. Richard, what have you done to me?  
(George Turner)

#### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Christine Ashby

I enjoyed TESB - it would be very difficult not to. However, I am not one of those people (as common in fandom as everywhere else) who automatically equates enjoyment with critical approval. Just as you can be bored to death by an acknowledged masterpiece because you don't find it to your taste, so too you can get a lot of fun out of something which you know to be flawed.

Whether compared with STAR WARS or taken purely on its own merits TESB has unsatisfactory aspects. Having seen SW (and who hasn't?) I went along expecting the mixture as before and perfectly willing to be satisfied with just that. The said mixture is of course composed of spectacular special effects, lots of action, a minimal and elementary plot and stereotype, if not archetype, characters of no depth whatsoever.

The first two ingredients were provided on a lavish scale, and that's why I enjoyed the film. It's not really worth wasting words on the effects - if you haven't seen TESB I might spoil it for you, and if you have seen it you won't appreciate my feeble attempts to describe what goes on. Unfortunately the makers (who included Leigh Brackett helping out with the script) appear to have decided that it is not enough to use the story-line merely as an excuse for the spectacular action. Although utilising exactly the same plot and characters as before - varied with subtle changes like beginning on an ice-world instead of a desert-world and having people ride kangaroo-creatures instead of camel-creatures - they have succumbed to an urge to give the film some depth. Thus the vague hints in SW concerning the mystical nature of the Jeddi Knights are expanded into a boring lecture about dedication, sacrifice, and self-control (which seems to have little effect on the ever-dense Luke Skywalker). The Princess, as token woman, gets to do rather more than simply look helpless (she spends a good deal of time berating other people for looking helpless), but her main function seems to be to provide some very adolescent love

(continued on page 41)



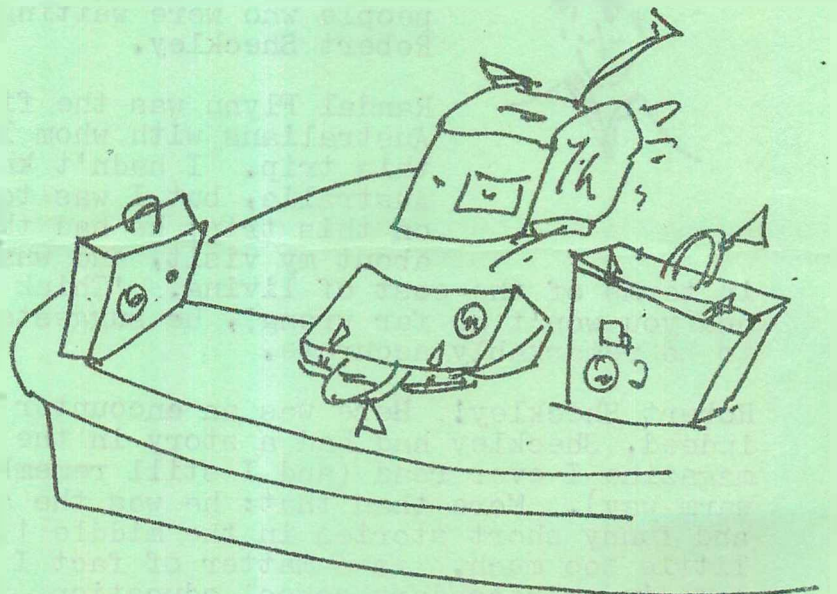
## CHAPTER TWO: TWO DAZE IN LONDON



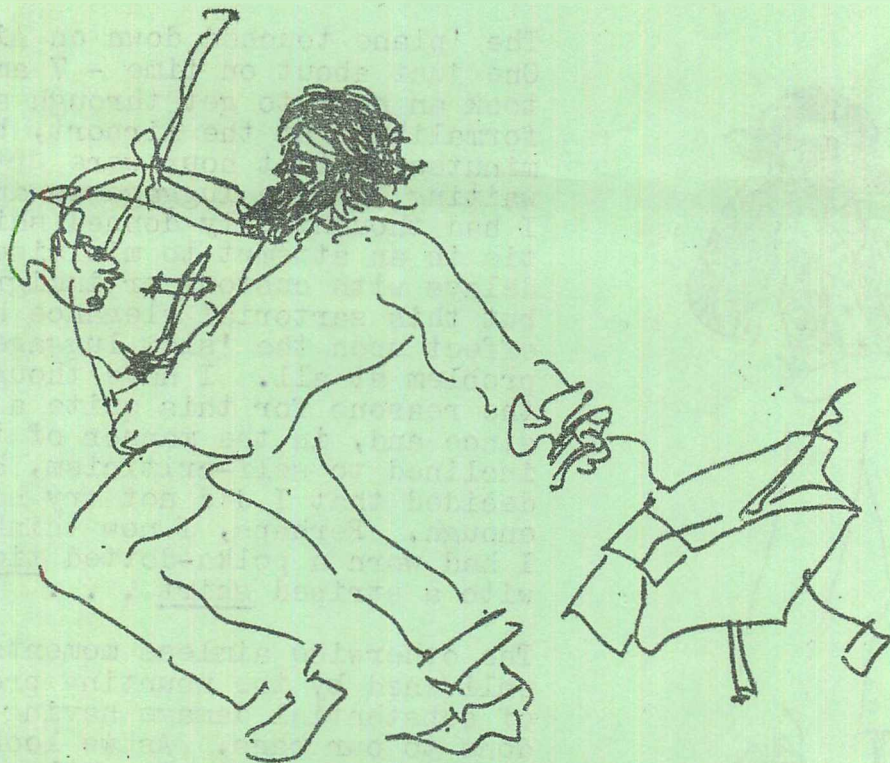
The 'plane touched down on Airstrip One just about on time - 7 am. It took an hour to get through all the formalities at the airport, but 55 minutes of that hour were spent waiting for the luggage to appear. I had thoughtfully donned shirt and tie in an attempt to minimise any delays with customs or immigration, but this sartorial elegance had no effect upon the 'slow luggage' problem at all. I have thought about the reasons for this quite a bit since and, in the manner of those inclined to self-criticism, have decided that I did not try hard enough. Perhaps, I now think, if I had worn a polka-dotted tie with a striped shirt . . .

The otherwise aimless moments were enlivened by the mounting prospect of substantial damage having been done to our bags. As we looked on forlornly a seemingly endless parade of once-proud travel equipment, now reduced to odd-shaped pieces of cloth, leather, and plastic, streamed by, looking for all the world like the output from an FAQ

mincing machine. I felt things were not going to be pleasant when our remnants appeared, for with my now all-too-obviously unjustified optimism I had bought cheap and lightweight pseudo-leather (but real plastic) overnight bags. When eventually the bags did appear it at first seemed that we might not have done so badly, for the only damage appeared to be that one



handle on one bag had torn loose. However, as I picked up that bag by the remaining handle the quiet of Heathrow was shattered by the roar of that poor handle tearing loose from the bag, leaving an unsightly pile of plastic and clothing to be dragged



past the smiling customs officials.

No more tragedies, just a parade past the hordes of onlookers until a strangely short-haired Chris Priest strode forward from the end of the tunnel of flesh to grasp my hand. He then grappled with Jenny in a manner I've not seen described or illustrated in any of the wrestling manuals. He took us back to the other people who were waiting - Randal Flynn and Robert Sheckley.



Randal Flynn was the first in a longish queue of Australians with whom I renewed acquaintances on this trip. I hadn't known Randal at all well in Australia, but I was to see him fairly frequently on this trip; he had thoughtfully written to me about my visit, and what to expect, especially in terms of the cost of living. 'Think of pounds as being dollars and you won't go far wrong!', he suggested. His predictions proved to be remarkably accurate.

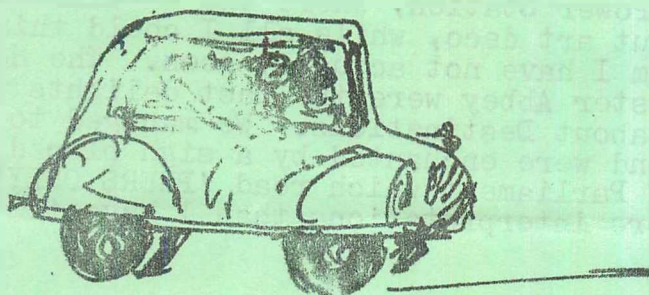
Robert Sheckley! Here was an encounter with a hero of my youth; indeed, Sheckley had had a story in the first science fiction magazine I ever read (and I still remember that story in a vaguely warm way). More than that: he was the author of some rather deft and funny short stories in the middle 1950s which I admired just a little too much. As a matter of fact I recall with horror that late in my secondary school education, faced with a rather difficult essay partway through an examination, I had rather desperately knocked out a thousand-word Sheckley pastiche which, so far as the examiners at least were concerned, was passable. But late in the



1950s - perhaps around the time of THE JOURNEY OF JOENES - Sheckley lost me, or to be a little more honest about it, I suppose I lost him when my interest in science fiction first hit a trough. Since then I've not been able to get back to his writing. Some people have suggested that I'm missing something.

Sheckley, it soon became clear, had just arrived from New York and was really tired. He sat with us while we had a light breakfast and then headed off for his club to sleep.

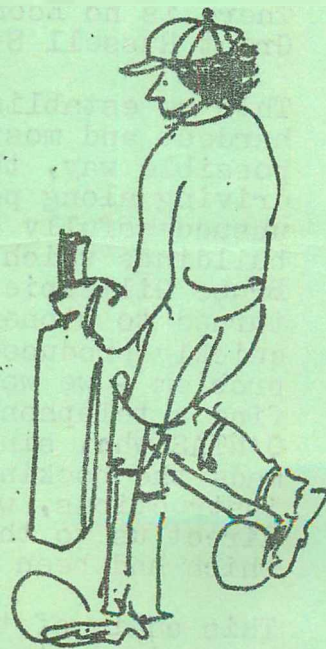
That breakfast was an occasion at which I suppose I should have been listening rather more closely than I did. Chris Priest and Randal provided a briefing on such matters of worldshaking importance as the Astral League and the Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society. But the main message I could make sense of was that some of the British fans most worth meeting and knowing were not exactly outgoing. This should have been helpful advice since, as a founding member of the Antigregarious Society, I am rarely accused of being outgoing myself. But the best I could come up with was the suggestion that I should pretend to be talking to computer salesmen, a class of people I regard as marginally more socially desirable than insurance salesmen (and far above politicians). Chris was mildly amused by this suggestion, but he was hardly enthusiastic about it.



The breakfast had been about as expensive as Randal had predicted, and we were a little relieved to be escorted to Chris's Morris Clubman - not a large car for four people, especially after they start exchanging and reading fanzines. We set off down what turned out to be the right motorway.

Now Chris was relaxed enough to begin unburden himself on more serious matters, such as his great ambition to play as an honorary Australian in the UK vs Australia cricket match which had been scheduled for some unspecified time at Brighton. Since someone had once uttered that I was supposed to be captain of the Australian team I took it upon myself to explain to him that apart from the difficulties in connexion with establishing residence for the required period, he would have to turn out for all practice sessions, pass a fitness test, then face the selection panel. He was rather crestfallen, but how in all this could I raise falsely his hopes of easy immortality? (As it turned out, most of the Australians failed the fitness test - getting out of bed in the morning to play - and Chris need not have spent the time sulking in the bar.)

I don't remember much of the drive in the car. Views from motorways are uninspiring, but what we could



could see was sufficiently different from the Australian countryside to keep us awake. It was on this trip, too, that I first became aware that my trip was going to have an unexpected focus - upon architecture. From the car I spotted an odd pair of two-storey houses - odd to me because, for the upper storey, in place of the conventional sort of windows used on the lower floor, was a vast almost frameless window consisting of a square surmounted by a semi-circle, with the semi-circle rearing up above the ceiling level. The light inside must have been magnificent.



But there were also more practical matters to be considered. Randal and I got into a discussion on the availability of Vegemite in the UK and this sparked off in Chris the notion that we should see Earl's Court, or at least pass through it. As it turned out, Randal hadn't yet been there either. It was possible that there we might come across a wild jar or two of the ambrosial yeast-derivative. No luck, but Randal thought he knew where some lurked.

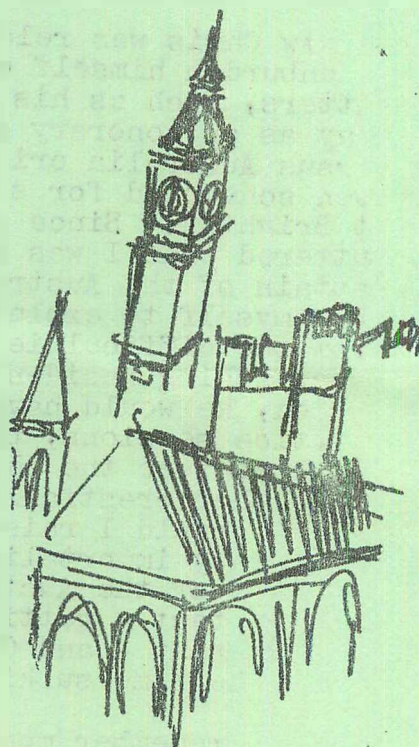
Thereafter we were driven along the Thames past such architectural wonders as the Battersea Power Station, where the intellectuals in the car began talking about art deco, while all I could think of was THINGS TO COME, a film I have not actually seen. The Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey were the last delights we saw before Chris got serious about Destinations. We managed to take a couple of photos there, and were enchanted by a sign placed at one entrance to the Houses of Parliament which read 'PEERS ONLY', leaving itself open to more interpretations than I have time or space to go into here.

Then we dropped Randal off near his place of employment, and headed towards Great Russell Street and the quaintly but (we hoped) appropriately named hotel into which Robin Johnson had booked us - the Economy.

There is no Economy Hotel in Great Russell Street.

This we established in the hardest and most empirical possible way, that is, driving along peering anxiously and unsuccessfully at strange looming buildings which reminded me of Bruce Gillespie or Paul Anderson turned to stone. My agile mind quickly produced a solution to our problem - we would park the car, find a telephone, and I would ring QANTAS who, since they had actually made the booking on Robin's instructions, would immediately direct us to the accommodation which had been arranged.

This chain of thought might make sense in Australia, but it did not work out quite so well in





London, and this was perhaps my first charge of culture shock.

In the first place, parking a car is not quite so straightforward in London as it is in Melbourne. Chris did manage it, however. He also explained the complicated rigmarole through which we must go with our luggage so that no suspicious bomb-like objects would be apparent to passers-by.

In the second place, while finding a telephone wasn't terribly difficult, thanks to the ingenuity of Chris Priest, finding one which worked was. The third one I tried did provide my fumbling fingers with only minor mechanical problems before we/I got through to QANTAS.



In the third place - well, the facts of the matter are that after only five minutes QANTAS was able to establish to their satisfaction and mine that we existed, and what's more that we had flight bookings somewhere on their computer files. Then, only two minutes or so later, I was assured that a booking had been made for us at the Mitre Hotel in Great Russell Street.

Now as you may imagine from our careful study of Great Russell Street which has been reported part way down the previous page we thought ourselves to be rather expert on the subject of Great Russell Street, and it was our

considered view that we had not seen anything purporting to be a Mitre Hotel in that street. I therefore asked QANTAS what I think was a pretty reasonable question under the circumstances, namely, what was the address of the Mitre Hotel in Great Russell Street.

For two more minutes the entire efforts of a mighty international airline were directed towards solving this problem. In that period we looked up a telephone directory and found - but you will already have guessed that the London Telephone Directory did not list any Mitre Hotel with a Great Russell Street address.

The two minutes ended with the voice of the QANTAS lady solemnly informing me that while they in London did not actually have the address of this hotel, if I had any difficulty whatsoever in locating it I should telephone again, and they would be only too happy to telephone Sydney, Australia, whence the details would certainly be available. I thanked her and hung up the telephone handpiece.

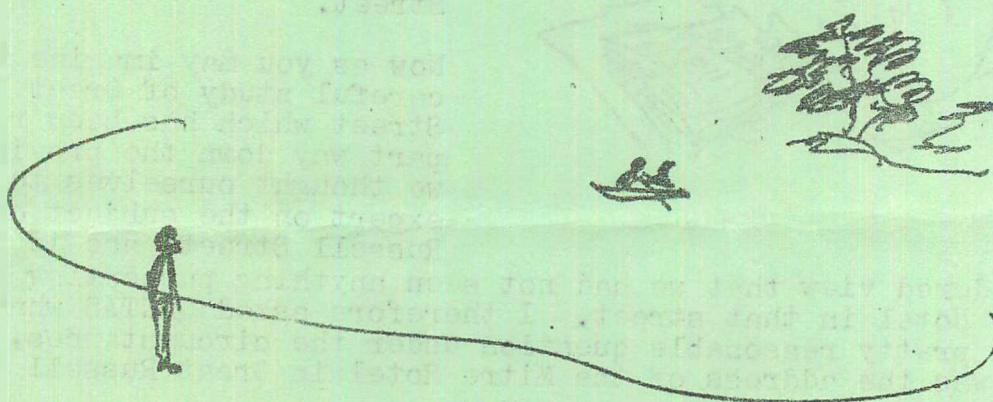
Clearly it was time for a cortico-thalamic pause, and one of the advantages of having a science fiction writer in the room is that as a class science fiction writers are even faster on these things than fans; Chris Priest was already urging on me the fact that there was in Sussex Gardens, an area of London renowned for its cheap accommodation, a Mitre House Hotel which would be worth trying.

I rang and although they did not have a booking for us (last, fond hope!) they did have rooms available.

Chris drove us out to Sussex Gardens where we were almost booked

into a double room with breakfast and bath for £15 plus VAT. Indeed, just as soon as the room had been cleaned we would be able to put our bags in the room. But now we could leave them in the foyer, and if we would come back in a couple of hours...

At Chris's instigation the three of us went for a walk in the park, which happened to be Hyde Park. We loitered palely by the Serpentine. Once again there was a new experience for me. The overcast sky was associated with a kind of weather we simply don't have in Melbourne; there that combination of temperature and cloud would have been accompanied by an unpleasant humidity, but here one could only describe the atmosphere as 'light'. The Serpentine itself, with a few boats skating on its mirrored surface as a result of the effortless strokes of casual rowers, reminded me of several Northern Hemisphere paintings (both European and North American) in which the morning light, with contrasts so low that shadows only flicker occasionally into one's perceptions, makes everything still, contrary to the obvious motion of the boats. Perhaps it is something to do with the distance from the motor cars. And there is an impression of intense, suffused light, yet the actual light-level is low. I suppose that the lack of contrast multiplies the effect, but whatever the explanation I did have the feeling that I was looking at a vast fluorescent screen.



This charming scene was disturbed only by two people arguing loudly about the relative merits of sales tax and income tax. Actually Chris and I were agreed that VAT, as a consumer tax, was probably a good thing, or at least a better thing than almost all of the alternatives. My objection was, as it had been in the United States a few years earlier, to the way in which prices are publicly represented to potential customers (i.e. before VAT). As a person about to reach into my pocket I am little interested in knowing how much of the money I pay goes direct to the government as a consumer tax, at least in comparison with knowing how much to give the seller. There isn't a universal rule about this sort of thing, naturally, with the result that the buyer not only has to be prepared for the usual range of scame, but also for whether or not tax has already been added to prices.



We had drinks in a cafe by the Serpentine, paying prices most appropriately described as overwhelming. To tell the truth I didn't have to worry too much as, for some reason, Jennifer and Chris split the bill between them. The extended and wandering conversation had by now descended from the heights of VAT and touched upon many matters including, I seem to



recall, science fiction.

Now Chris had some other matters to attend to that afternoon, so he escorted us back to our hotel via Speakers' Corner, passing as many attractive buildings as he could recall lay between us and that destination. We placed our bags in the room and looked around. Hmm.

My travelling experience is pretty limited - especially with respect to accommodation. Outside of science fiction conventions and business trips I've only ever had to choose accommodation in a far-off place once or twice. Science fiction conventions in Australia tend to be in middle-of-the-road hotels (which can be awkward at times), and my various employers have tended to make accommodation decisions simply by the amount of money allocated. On this occasion both choice and finance were our responsibility, and I was a little apprehensive as to how it would all turn out.

This wasn't a bad start. It was more than we were to pay anywhere else, but it had the essentials - a couple of beds, cupboards, lights that worked most of the time. The fire alarms didn't go off very often, and the fact that the room was very dark didn't matter too much, though I suppose that if I were the sort of person who used a razor I would have had trouble picking the spots to shave. There was a lightwell which provided some illumination, but the view could not be recommended. But it was towards the back of the hotel, and that made it very quiet.

By now it was around 12.30pm and Chris thought he might as well have some lunch with us before leaving. He knew a small restaurant in the area, and guided us past the cafe/milk bar where we'd briefly refreshed ourselves before heading for the park, past a newsagent laden with all sorts of goodies and most especially street atlases, to a corner from which we could see



Paddington Station, and around the corner to the entrance of an Italian restaurant which could have been, so far as quality and price were concerned, in Carlton. It was delightful (lasagne of monumental size) and I even remembered to work out what the price was in dollars (later I neglected to do this, and so lost track of what the trip was costing), but by this time Jennifer was looking quite tired, and I wasn't in much better shape myself. Chris returned to Harrow, and Jennifer and I walked back to our hotel. She went to bed (she had arranged to attend a concert that night) and I thought for a bit and then telephoned Mervyn Binns at his hotel (which had been the site for the 1965 Worldcon - poor Mervyn, his first day in London and already he was 14 years behind the times). He sounded a bit tired too, but said he wouldn't mind seeing me. He also mentioned that Robin Johnson would be calling around shortly. Well, I felt that I wouldn't mind a word or two with Robin about the wonders of computer bookings, so I decided to drop around to the Mount Royal.

But first, a necessary purchase. I collect street atlases. One reason for this is that I like to know where I'm going. More honestly, I have to admit that back in 1974 I found myself having to travel a considerable distance in a strange city (Wellington,

New Zealand) without any map at all, and I had found that particularly uncomfortable. I remedied that as quickly as I could, and still have a Wellington Street Atlas in my collection. The newsagents we had passed had had a fair selection of the things, but not the one Chris had recommended. The hell with perfection, I needed one to find Merv Binns. Having bought one I quickly checked where Chris Priest lived. Bloody Hell! Just about the edge of the map.



To the Mount Royal, where Mervyn Binns was Not Happy. Somehow, in the United States, he had managed to do so much walking that his feet were now rather more blistered and sore than anyone facing a world science fiction convention and a second trip through the United States would like. He wasn't looking forward to it all, to put it mildly.



Robin Johnson had arrived and then stepped out for a while, so I sat talking to Mervyn (or rather, listening to his recitation of his pedal problems) and taking mental notes on how the other half lives - television set and refrigerator, no less.

We talked about our adventures so far; we were both tired and by no means sure that we would be in good shape for SEACON. Mervyn had been able to do some work for the shop (Space Age Books) on his way through the United States, but there was still a great deal to be done on the way back, as well as another convention to attend. The other problem was that unless his feet healed quickly he wouldn't be able to get around in London to all the places he felt he should visit. We also discussed Robin Johnson's prowess as a organizer of hotel rooms, with both of us looking forward to the confrontation with the swine and his explanation of his villainous performance on behalf of Bryce and Foyster.



At last Robin appeared, and was not at all non-plussed by my tale of woe about non-existent hotels. 'Oh' he said 'I suspect that the hotel in Sussex Gardens was the one I wanted you booked into.' (Somehow the fact that the Mitre House Hotel had no booking for us escaped his attention.)

We talked for a while about our immediate plans in the vague desultory fashion for which Melbourne fans are well-known (at least to those who've met us). Robin produced his latest toy, picked up in Singapore - a calculator with an inbuilt timer/alarm, the alarm consisting of a tune of half a dozen notes. Robin played a couple of tunes for us, but we really couldn't see how the available variations could fill in the whole afternoon - some other form of entertainment was clearly called for. Robin eventually proposed, and



Mervyn and I accepted, that we should take a lift with Robin in 'his' car and check out the stfnal bookshops.

I hadn't seen these before, so my interest in FORBIDDEN PLANET and DARK THEY WERE AND GOLDEN-EYED was probably much greater than that of either Mervyn or Robin. I didn't buy anything in either of these shops on that first day, but I was to spend a pretty penny or two in them before the trip was over.

As I might have expected the basic stock in these shops wasn't too exciting; in each case it was the specialties of the house which made the visits interesting - back issue magazines, French comic books, and so on. The sort of stuff Space Age Books as, but rather more of it.

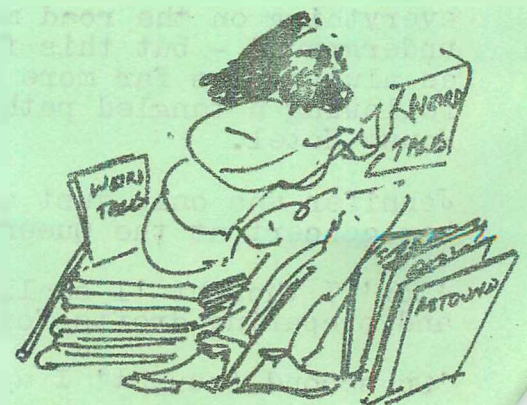
FORBIDDEN PLANET was the smaller of the two shops, and is located in Denmark Street near the edge of Soho. The neat window display gave considerable emphasis to forthcoming autographing by Famous Science Fiction Authors such as J. G. Ballard.

DARK THEY WERE AND GOLDEN-EYED I visited quite often while I was in London. The stock, spread over two levels, was better than that of FORBIDDEN PLANET, though there were rather too many comic books for my liking (taking up valuable space...).

Our other interests that afternoon were food and costumes. The Australian fans, or at least some of them, were doing a group thing, based on various characters out of Cordwainer Smith, and we had spent quite a lot of time over the last weeks in Australia trying on the costumes which John Breden had designed and Minnie Hands had made. Most of us had had to cart our costumes around the world, but there were still bits and pieces to be hired in London.

As well as that, Robin Johnson was to-ing and fro-ing on the question of a costume for himself. In the long run, although he investigated two shops fairly thoroughly, Robin did not take a costume. As for Mervyn, he had ordered, or so he thought, a couple of sets of centurion's gear from a particular shop, so we started there. There were rather more hummings and hahings than I expected would be the case for negotiations conducted by captains of industry like Mervyn, but eventually we tore ourselves free from the Miss Piggy masks and other stuff and shuffled out onto the streets of Soho. At that point Robin (and Mervyn) had not stilled a perverse interest in costumes, so we mooched around the area looking for more of these establishments. There were a few, but nothing to interest me. On the other hand, there was a shop which sold secondhand magazines, and I spent quite some time there,

usually with either Mervyn or Robin, while the other part of our group scouted for costume shops. Now this was the kind of shop which only displays prices on the items you



don't want, like British reprint editions of PLANET STORIES. Mervyn's comments about the prices on the old fillum magazines suggested to me that the prices on the unlabelled items would be rather high.

Food was not a problem, but drink was. Mervyn and Robin both wanted alcohol with their light snacks, but we had chosen to eat at one of those times of the day when, according to the no doubt sensible but generally-incomprehensible-to-Australians customs of the land, the pubs are closed. And the cafes don't serve grog then either.



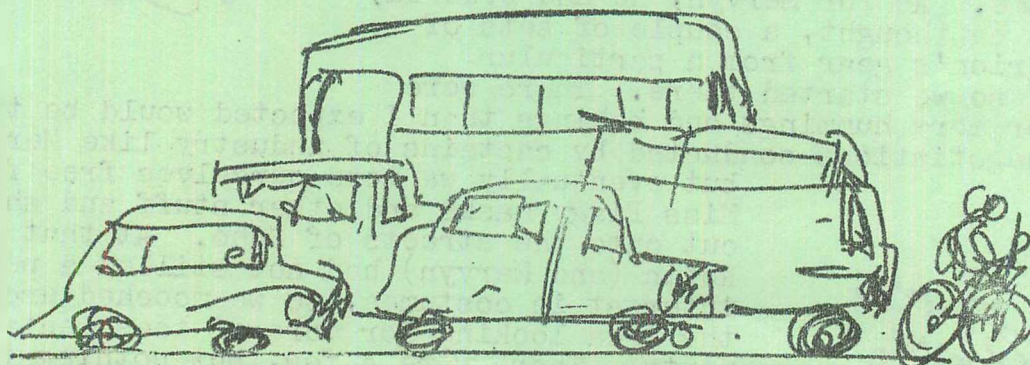
We did pay a fortune, however, for the stuff we did get - very ordinary Coca-cola, I regret to report.

Sitting down did give us a chance to talk seriously about what we would be doing over the next few days. Robin seemed determined to fit in an immense amount of activity before SEACON, while Mervyn and I were more modest.

It was now quite late in the afternoon, and Jennifer was going out to her concert fairly early that evening - my job was to wake her in time for it. Thus I was rather anxious to get back to Sussex Gardens to make sure that she at least got on her way on time. Robin offered to drive us back to our respective hotels.

In my GUFF platform I had included a line to the effect that I loathed motor cars. This was no joke. I genuinely do not like motor cars, and travelling in one is even more painful. So travelling back with Robin was a slow and excruciating experience. I am never happy in cars, and here I was in a strange city being driven about by someone whose driving style I had not previously experienced!

The traffic was heavy. Eventually I learned that in London



everything on the road moves slowly - that's why they have an underground - but this first exposure was quite a shock. Robin, as always, was far more patient than I could ever be, and after following a tangled path we reached Sussex Gardens and the Mitre House Hotel.

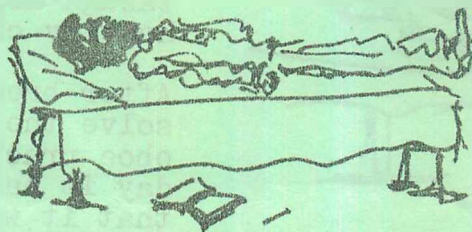
Jennifer was only just awake, but I managed to hustle her off to her concert at the Queens Elizabeth Hall.

'Now' I thought 'I shall get on with the business of making notes and preparing drafts for my trip report.'

In second thought' I appended 'I have been on my feet for a long

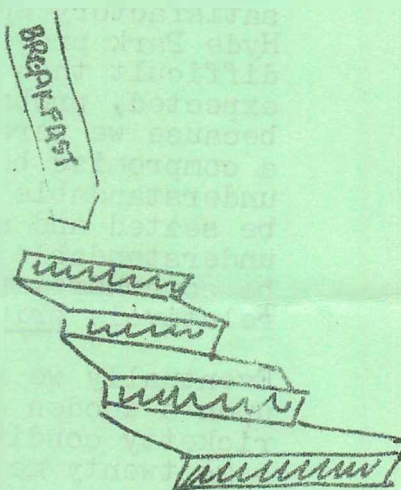


time and it is now 6.30pm. I shall follow a prudent course and just lie down on this bed for a few seconds.' This I did.



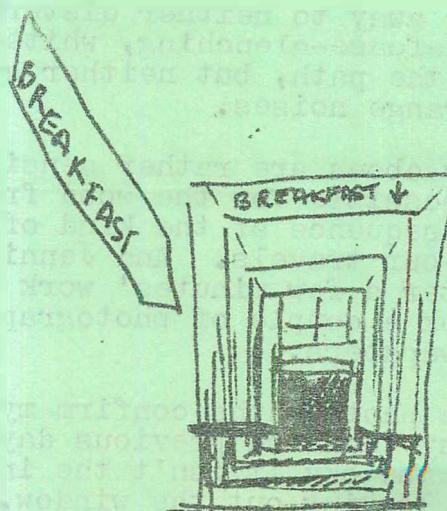
I woke at 3.00am on Tuesday morning. Fortunately, or possibly unfortunately, Jennifer awoke at the same time. We had something to eat, call it breakfast, or dinner, or what you will, and went back to sleep.

Tuesday was the day we did a lot of walking. Our major responsibility, if we could be said to have one, was to try to recover from the air travel. But we were also meeting Jennifer's sister, who worked in Line Street, for lunch, and in the evening we would be going out to meet a few people.



The first responsibility, however, was to become acquainted with breakfast, and breakfast rooms. Neither of us usually pays much attention to this particular custom, but over the next few weeks breakfast became an important ritual. In the Mitre House Hotel the dining room is in a basement (and basements are things we don't have too many of in Australia) and it took us quite a while to find our way

into it. Our fellow guests seemed to fall into two classes, I thought. There were foreigners like ourselves who either could not afford a fancy expensive hotel or preferred not to put up with one, and there were visitors to London from the surrounding countryside who apparently also couldn't afford the big splurge and didn't have any friends or relatives to stay with in the big smoke. Organization and service at the hotel was pretty minimal but nevertheless friendly, and I feel we could have survived there quite happily during a quite lengthy stay in London, except for the bills. I suppose that by UK standards the bills weren't high but the amount of competition might have been expected to force them down a notch.



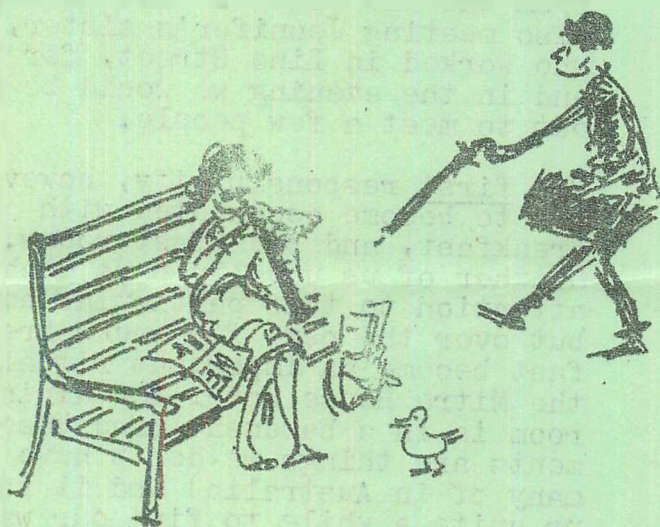


Breakfast being reasonably accurately classed as a thing unknown, we were able to treat such commonplaces as eggs and bacon and toast as genuine novelties. I suspect that I even drank some of the coffee, though not much of it, and that heavily charged with sugar.

After breakfast we did have to solve the problem of Jennifer's oboe practice. On the previous day it had seemed to both of us that it would be appropriate and sensible to try Hyde Park as a practice room, so after I had walked around the corner to buy

a paper or two, we set off on the short walk to the park. The morning traffic was heavy as Londoners were in various stages of arriving at work, but there were also many people walking - I suspect on their way to work rather than for pleasure, if the

briskness of the gait is any measure. Finding a satisfactory spot in Hyde Park proved more difficult than we had expected, probably because we were seeking a compromise between an understandable desire to be seated and an equally understandable desire to be somewhere, well, relatively private.



Eventually we settled upon a wooden seat in rickety condition and some twenty metres from the nearest path. We had passed, on our way, some horses being exercised on a tan, but now the nearest living beings were sufficiently

far away to neither disturb nor be disturbed. An occasional briefcase-clenching, white-shirted office worker did stride past on the path, but neither gaze nor attention was distracted by the strange noises.

Now oboes are rather sensitive instruments. It is by no means impossible for the wood from which they are made to crack as a consequence of the kind of temperature changes we had experienced in our travels. And Jennifer's reeds were rather dried out. But after a few minutes' work she was able to begin practising. I took a couple of photographs of her and then began reading the newspapers.

The photographs confirm my memory of that morning. It was less hazy than the previous day had been, but although there is blue in the sky it isn't the intense blue I can see in Australia just by looking out the window. And the grass is certainly greener than would be the case in Australia towards the end of summer, and although everyone knows about these things, it is still a shock to see trees whose green doesn't have that characteristic



Australian touch of blue-grey. We can handle, I think, the large changes. It is the minor ones, at first unnoticed, which prove most unsettling. (An example - I didn't find traffic in the United States nearly as odd as traffic in the UK.)

Jennifer practised for about three-quarters of an hour, but the wind was a little strong, and perhaps she was a little too ambitious anyway, expecting to do so much straight away, so we packed up and returned to the hotel.

I thought we could walk to Lime Street, so we set off along Sussex Gardens to Edgware Road, then down to Oxford Street, and so eventually to Soho and Charing Cross Road. I showed Jennifer DARK THEY WERE AND GOLDEN-EYED, and then we went to Foyle's. Here our interest was largely in travel books. I have regrettably expensive tastes in items like Nagel's Travel Guides, and it was probably fortunate that Foyle's didn't have in stock any that I wanted. We did buy a couple of maps, however, including one I especially wanted - the FALK city plan of Vienna. The FALK style, which compromises between utility and ungainliness, is the most useful I've come across. You can convert from a pocket-style reference to a wall-map with great ease.



We now pressed on towards Lime Street, but two things began to dawn upon us.

First, we had committed ourselves to a lot of walking; it didn't look far on the map, but  
....

Second, everyone else in London seemed to be out walking too. After the shock of the motor traffic the

previous day, the crowded pavements probably should have been expected, but they weren't. I don't believe that either of us ever got used to the number and density of the pedestrians in London. We didn't just get tired - it began to look as though we wouldn't meet Barbara on time. Both of us were pleased to be able to take the underground from Holborn to Bank - my first ride on the London underground!

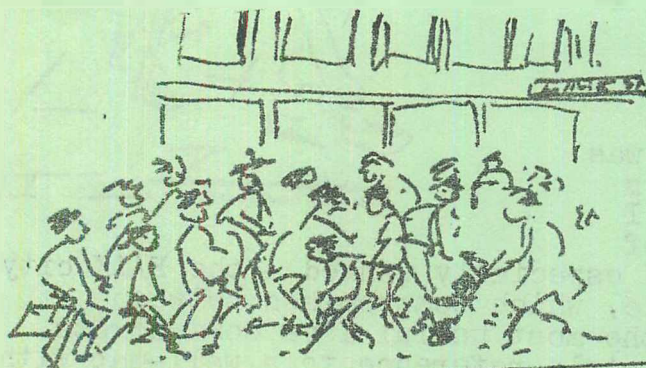
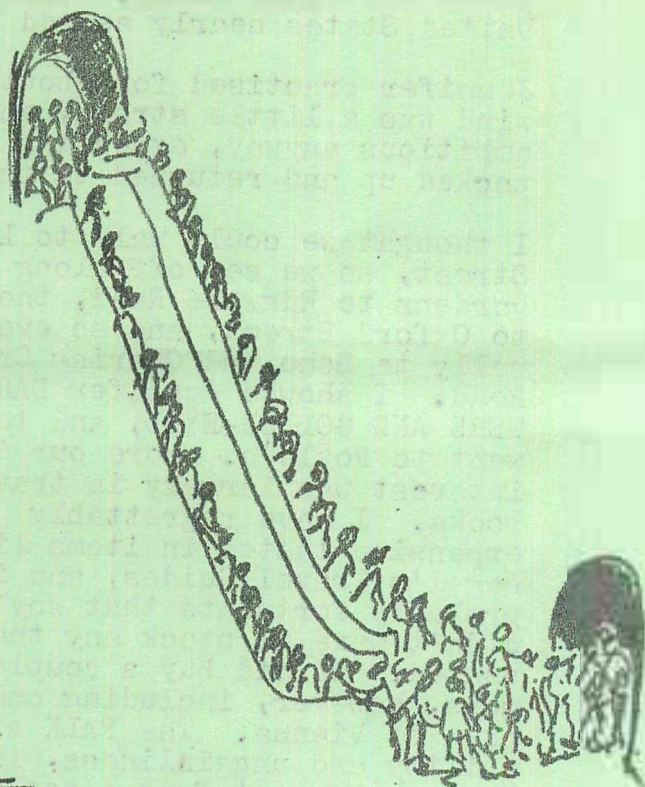


The London underground is at once frustrating and facilitating, expensive and indispensable. No single characterisation is suitable. There were times when we found travel on it fast and efficient. At other times it was maddeningly slow. Often crowded, but sometimes almost deserted, it became of major importance to us strangers as the fastest way around in a new city.

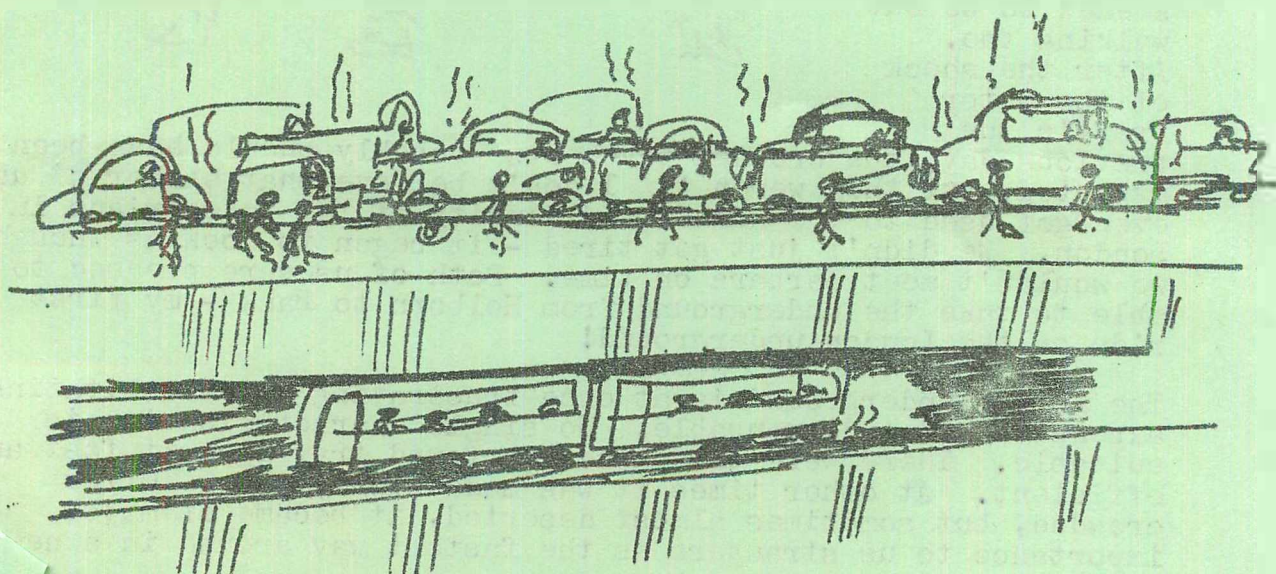


What was consistent was the high price. But if the price was high it was also frequently reasonable in terms of the kind of service provided. In the year since we used it prices have gone up at least twice, so although no great bargain in 1979 it may be even less so now.

But on this occasion it got us there on time and so, clutching maps and a couple of fanzines I had bought along the way, we

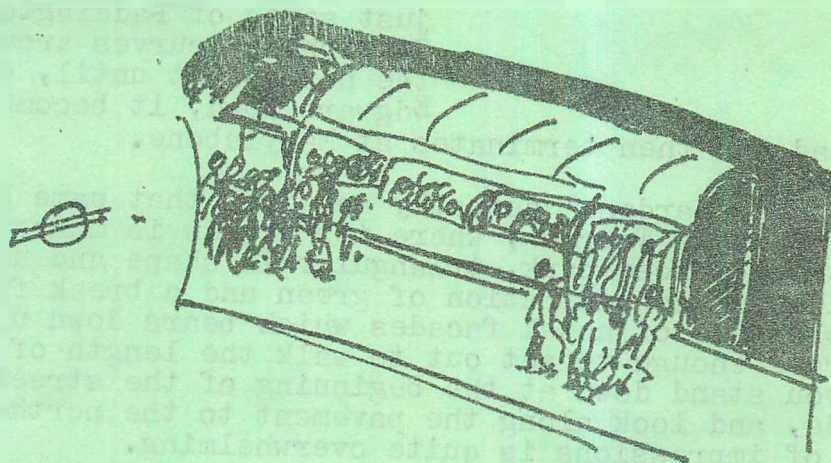


met up with Barbara and went to a crowded pub, the Bull's Head, for lunch. Now the differences in the ways living spaces may be used began to be brought home to us even more strongly. Visitors to Melbourne remark upon the wide streets; now we felt quite the opposite. It is true that the area around Bank is rather old and crowded, but at times we felt almost as though we were in a doll's house. This impression was strengthened in the Bull's Head which, although it served reasonable food, wasn't exactly palatial. It was spread over several floors but none of the rooms seemed capable of holding much more than a dozen people. Some people might see that as cozy - not me. We sat near a window and while I ate some rather ordinary pate I thought back to the lunch on the previous day which could have taken place in Melbourne. How thoughtful Chris had been to break it to us gently!

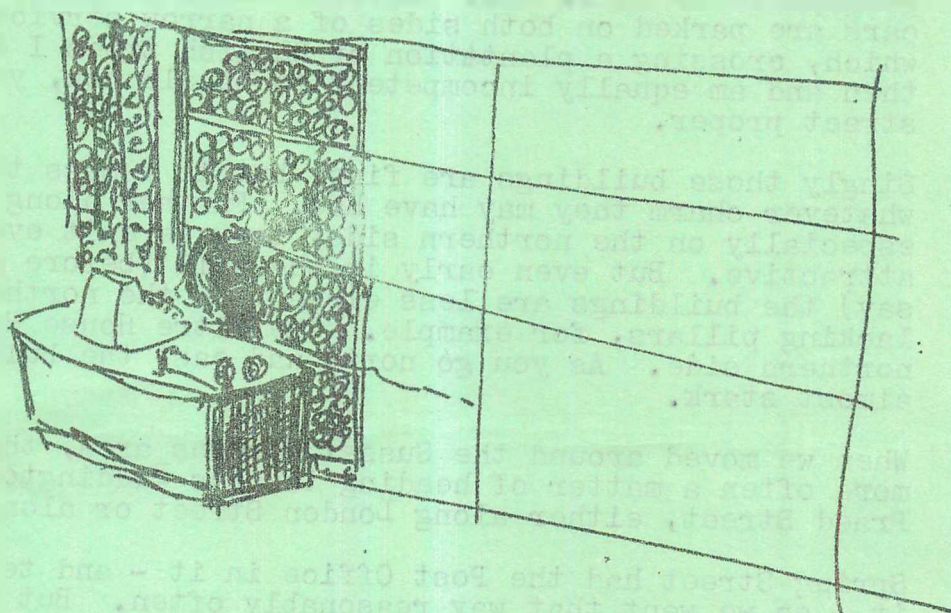




Eventually Barbara had to get back to work, and we had to return to our hotel. This we did by the usual combination of methods - by underground and by foot.



We called in at Selfridge's because I needed a ribbon for the Norstrilia group's costumes, and they had, as predicted, a huge range which made selection almost an embarrassment.





When we got back to the hotel, Jennifer arranged to do some more oboe practice in the Hotel's breakfast room, and I, with my eye quite obviously straining to detect what remained of the original notion of concentrating on recovering from the trip, decided to walk around the neighbourhood again.

Sussex Gardens is itself a street full of hotels. Starting just south of Paddington Station, it curves around to the north-east until, crossing Edgware Road, it becomes Old

Marylebone Road and then terminates at Marylebone.

The street 'Sussex Gardens' actually acquires that name only as it crosses Westbourne Terrace, where its origin is marked by a small wrought-iron-fenced park, triangular in shape and useful only in providing a concentration of green and a break from the relentless colonnade of hotel facades which bears down upon the pedestrian brave enough to set out to walk the length of the street. If you stand down at the beginning of the street, on the south side, and look along the pavement to the north-east, the contrast of impressions is quite overwhelming.

If you consider any single building on that southern side it has, by comparison with buildings in Australia, considerable elegance. Well-kept, it typically has white-painted ornamentation which is neither ostentatious nor modest. But the word which hurts is 'typically'. For as you stand on the pavement you see a line of identical buildings, as far as the eye can distinguish them - perhaps 15 or 20 in all. Outside them, on the pavement, small cars are parked on both sides of a narrow service road after which, crossing a plantation of English trees I didn't recognize then and am equally incompetent to handle now, you come to the street proper.

Singly those buildings are fine, but in a mass they seem to lose whatever charm they may have had. Further along Sussex Gardens, especially on the northern side, they weren't even individually attractive. But even early in the walk (before London Street, say) the buildings are less elegant on the northern side - lacking pillars, for example. The Mitre House Hotel is on the northern side. As you go north and east the buildings become almost stark.

When we moved around the Sussex Gardens area, though, it was far more often a matter of heading towards Paddington Station and Praed Street, either along London Street or along Spring Street.

Spring Street had the Post Office in it - and telephones outside it - so we went that way reasonably often. But London Street had its attractions, too, as a way to walk, such as a branch of the National Westminster Bank, which we also needed to visit. The buildings in Spring Street were probably slightly more elegant - fewer shops - but there really wasn't much to choose.

And by the time you got to Praed Street, you were effectively in a shopping centre anyway. At either junction, of course, the roof of Paddington Station dominated the scene.





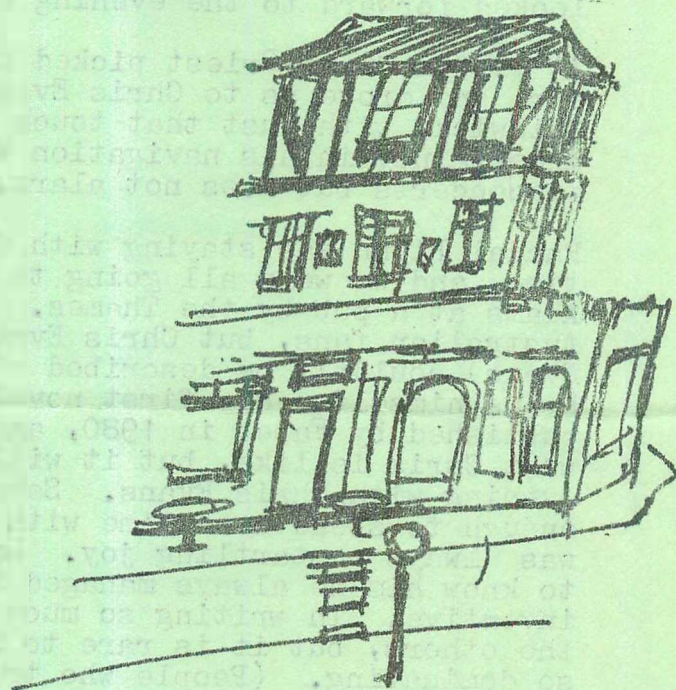
It was here that I went to buy a copy of the British Rail timetable. I've always felt more comfortable, when arguing with ticketsellers or others, if I have a timetable in my hands, but the BritRail job is not exactly portable. (I wonder what Chris Priest did with it after we left? Use it to schedule his toy train?)

Praed Street is a curious melange of shops, mostly seedy, such as the Indonesian restaurant where we ate some satays that evening.

But if you walk north-east along Praed Street then on the northern side you do

eventually reach the Grand Junction Arms, a delicate-looking pub on a triangular block of land. It's tiny, and probably not much to get excited about on the inside, but to anyone walking along Praed Street its striking contrast with its surroundings is a most pleasant relief.

This particular afternoon I walked along Praed Street to Edgware Road - just getting a feel for the neighbourhood, which I suppose seems a strange thing to say when I point out that in just over 24 hours we would be leaving never(?) to return. But in ~~thaily~~ I suppose the neighbourhood I was trying to get a feel for was England, rather than just a few streets.



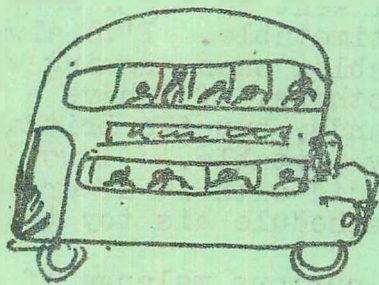
As I walked I checked on the price of film for my camera; I kept hoping for a bargain but I didn't find, I have to confess, even one. But it was on this walk that I learned that 'turf accountant' is not just a product of Bill Tidy's fertile imagination.



At the Edgware Road intersection, which appears to have been blessed with every inconvenience town planners can dream up for large intersections, I came as close as I ever did in the whole trip to

entering a Marks and Spencer store, for one lay on the corner opposite the one on which I stood. I took a couple of photos to remind myself that I had been there and set off down Edgware Road to Sussex Gardens, a walk which is wholly unremarkable, and turned for home along Sussex Gardens, where the monotony of that boring parade of hotels was occasionally broken on the southern side by something I didn't understand. Blocks of flats





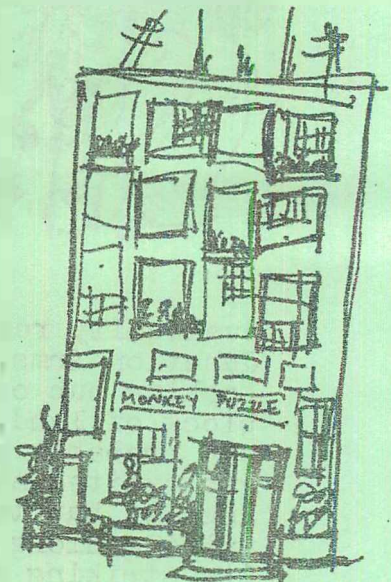
I did recognize and understand, and it was while walking along here that I first consciously noticed a London bus.

And then there was the pub at the corner of Southwicks Street labelled 'Monkey Puzzle', which had me puzzled until much later, in Australia, when I realized that the name must have been

derived from a tree growing in the area, a variety of Araucaria.

At the end of my walk I was slightly tired, but felt comfortable with the neighbourhood. The day had been pleasantly warm, and I looked forward to the evening out.

At 7.30pm Chris Priest picked us up in his car, and drove us to Chris Evans' place in Chiswick, with just that touch of uncertainty in his navigation which disconcerts but does not alarm.



Randal Flynn was staying with Chris at the time, and we were all going to meet Douglas Adams at a pub by the Thames. Randal is well-known to many Australian fans, but Chris Evans (not the late Doctor Christopher Evans) couldn't be described adequately by anyone other than Chris Evans himself. His first novel, CAPELLA'S GOLDEN EYES, was published by Faber in 1980, and it may give readers some idea of what Chris is like, but it will be a poor substitute for an evening with Chris Evans. Several times in England we were lucky enough to spend some time with Chris, and his sparkling conversation was always a startling joy. No matter how much we felt we had come to know him he always managed to unfold something new and inventive. In writing so much about Evans I might seem to slight the others, but it is rare to find someone whose imagination is so dominating. (People who try to dominate by force of personality are dime a dozen - and a different matter altogether.)

The plan was for us to walk to the Black Lion. Everyone else, in this balmy weather, put on sweaters. I knew better, of course. Unaccustomed to English evenings, and only just recovered from a cold in Australia, I knew that I would not need a sweater as we walked along beside the river.....

It was a pleasant walk, too, for the five of us. The river was very low, making it almost possible to compare it unfavourably with Melbourne's Yarra, and the twilight encouraged a good deal of loitering. Chris Priest speculated on whether or not we would see the Concorde later that evening, since it passed almost overhead at a particular time most nights. In a desultory fashion we agreed to watch out for it, but we never did. So much for a sense of wonder. When we reached the Black Lion we went straight in and got down to the business at hand, completely forgetting about Concorde. No one seemed regretful afterwards.

Inside we talked about lots of things. It was one of those 'getting to know you' sessions when anything goes, but at a fairly superficial level. It is helpful, later on, to have this sort of background information, but of itself it has little value. Partway through the evening the deceptively tall Douglas



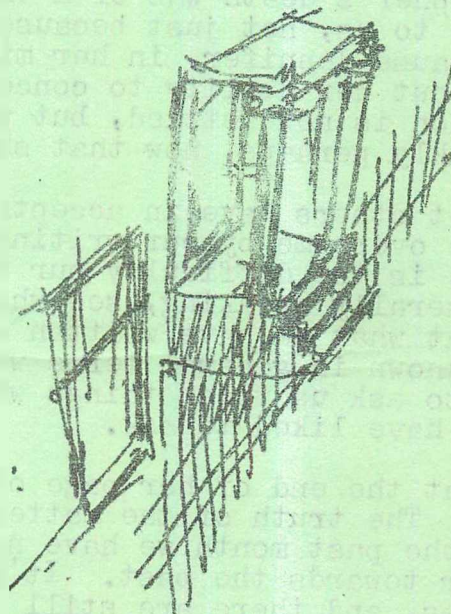
Adams arrived. I write 'deceptively tall' because, until he stands up, he doesn't seem tall - to have any of those facial characteristics, or the bearing, that we usually associate with the tall. He was to be interviewed, at SEACON, by Chris Priest, and they spent most of the evening chatting to each other. Since I'm not an eager absorbed of popular culture, especially television, I doubt I'd have much to say to the script editor of DOCTOR WHO anyway.

Afterwards we walked slowly back to Chris Evans' place. It was now chilly. Actually, it was damnably cold, and I was envious of those who'd been thoughtful enough to wear sweaters.

Back at Chris's we talked again about all sorts of stuff. I remember particularly defending the proposition that any writer worth his salt ought, as an exercise, to be able to imitate the style of any given writer (well, at least one from amongst those who might be said to have any style). Chris Priest was not enthusiastic for this viewpoint, but he was unable to change my attitude. Eventually he drove us back to Sussex Gardens.

It was 12.30 am and I had, by carefully planned stupidity, managed to catch a cold which was to lay me low for the next day and keep me quiet through the early days of SEACON. But this was my first extended contact with 'British Fandom' and I had enjoyed every moment of it.

(The next day, not to be reported at length here or elsewhere, was the day of the cold, the fish and chips, and the Tate. Going to the Tate Gallery late on the Wednesday afternoon was sufficiently mentally stimulating to keep me going for a week, and all I can say in summary is that in consequence of that visit I now reject utterly the proposition contained in Bob Shaw's line: 'He who has a Tate's is lost'.)



(continued from page 8)

rather dark skin because babies at that time in gestation have not accumulated much fat.

I now regret ... in fact I feel guilty ... that during the two precious occasions when I held Christopher I was partly concerned with technical things - asking questions about the effect of oxygen on his brain and other faculties, or noticing how his heart-rate, as shown on the monitoring gear, increased when he was picked up. I think that I was frightened about acknowledging my feelings for him because I knew that he was likely to die. If only I had known that acknowledging these feelings would have made no difference to my present grief. I now wish that I had asked to stay with him in the special nursery throughout his brief six-hour life.

Now we must try to reshape our lives without Christopher, although it will take some time to get over the shock of unexpectedly becoming parents and then experiencing death all in one day. John finds it difficult to look at our photograph of Christopher, but I find it reassuring to have a tangible reminder. I guess that ultimately the maternal hormones will stop coursing through my body, but just at the moment day-to-day life for both of us is fairly mechanical, and it is difficult to look forward with enthusiasm to the rest of 1981.  
(Jennifer Bryce)

28 February 1981

Those people who've read my fanzines over the years will know that I don't often write about my life or what is going on in it there. In the case of Christopher's life and death I am making an exception because, I suppose, this particular experience was rather overpowering, but also because our friends and relatives have found it difficult to accept Christopher's existence.

Both of us are not unfamiliar with death, both of family and friends, sometimes because of old age, and sometimes as a result of suicide (the latter more outside fandom than in it, I might add). But Christopher's death was of a different class, and also rather closer to us, not just because he was the product of our flesh, but because Jennifer, in her middle thirties, was quite uncertain about her ability to conceive and carry a baby. That latter question is now settled, but we have to ask the same question, more weakly perhaps, now that she is a little older.

The difficulty that others have in accepting Christopher's existence won't be overcome by our writing here. The most painful aspect, I suppose, is the difficulty our own families have, and they will not, generally speaking, see what we have written here. But we do hope that what we have written will help those of our friends who have known in general terms what has happened but have been unable to ask us those things which, for better or worse, they might have liked to ask.

Jennifer writes, at the end of her page or so, about what we feel about the future. The truth of the matter is, I think it is fair to say, that for the past month we have not been looking at a future, but rather towards the past. It's a temporal inversion that comes and goes, and there are still several times a week when we are wrenched into the past. But we are contemplating, more and more easily, a future in which Christopher will be a precious memory in a family that builds and grows.

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## FANZINE REVIEWS

(by Irwin Hirsh)

Every now and again the AUSTRALIA IN '83 Committee will suggest that if you want to help the bid you could put out a fanzine. A very good suggestion, for while a fanzine won't actually win the bid - I doubt there is anyone who wants to put in the work and money needed to reach the 1000 Americans who will vote for the '83 Worldcon site - a good fanzine could entice a number of fans into voting for our bid, and help it along. I can't say, however, that I am happy with the way the Committee puts forward this suggestion: they make it sound like helping the bid is the only reason to put out a fanzine, as they never say that you might receive personal satisfaction from 'pubbing an ish' and have not yet published an article offering advice on 'how to...' for those people who feel they need it (I tend to think that a well-written 'how to...' article is more likely to entice people to fanzine publishing than the words 'go pub an ish').

Putting these criticisms aside, I get the strong impression that it is the bid that influenced Ken Ozanne (founder of the present bid) to change his CRABAPPLE from an apazine to a genzine. And unfortunately it isn't very good. There is very little of the 18 pages of the 17th issue (3rd, I think, as a genzine) that contains that indefinable spark that all good fanzines have. But worse than that, CRABAPPLE reads like it is being put together out of a sense of duty and not as if an editor wants to communicate with his readers.

This issue opens up with a two-page editorial which is mainly about the fanzine itself - problems attached to it, future plans, et cetera - and a mention about the work he has been doing in connection with a mathematical research project. I get the impression that talking about his fanzine is what Ken wants to do the most, as every now and again throughout the fanzine he will return to this subject (once or twice repeating things said earlier). This would be okay if it was only a minor part of Ken's writings. But that isn't the way it is; Ken touches upon other subjects, but not at any length and almost always in passing. (He does write at length about Medvention and Bathcon, two cons he is associated with, but these are nothing more than extended plugs.

Over a space of six pages Ken reviews 14 fanzines, but these struck me as being more like lengthy rehashes of the fanzines' contents tables and not the well-considered criticism Ken would like to think they are.

However, it is with the letter column that I got most annoyed. For some reason Ken has seen fit to include whole slabs of the letters he has received rather than edit them down, and he sees a need to give some sort of reply to just about every point made in those letters. The result is that, for example, Marty Cantor thanks Ken for sending artwork for inclusion in Marty's fanzine and suggests that Ken send \$2.00 if he wants to join the LASFAPA waitlist, and Ken replies that he may send more artwork and will send the \$2.00. And we get to read all of it.

Perhaps I'm wrong, but stuff like this should be handled via an exchange of letters, not through the letter column of a fanzine; and if Marty Cantor feels unfairly treated because a reply to his letter was stuck in the middle of a letter column sent by seamail I don't blame him. It is obvious that Ken likes a letter column

that is fairly loosely edited, but what he has presented here is beyond loose. Not only has he presented stuff like the above exchange between him and Marty, but he lets WAHF comments creep into it: one letter he printed consisted of nothing more than the person appreciating having received a copy of a past CRABAPPLE and saying that she was delighted to have met some Aussies at Noreascon. I know from experience that getting letters like this can create a mild case of egoboo, but they are not the type of thing upon which to build or create an interesting letter column. Most people, when sending you thank-you notes, aren't doing it with the expectation of getting it published, so it is not as though they'll be insulted if they only get a mention in the WAHF section.

It is annoying to think that a fanzine like CRABAPPLE can be so uninspired, if only because I would have thought that the length of time Ken has spent in fandom would have enabled him to build up a pretty good knowledge of what makes a good fanzine. Ken obviously has to rethink his approach to his fanzine because, if nothing else, the free booze at the Baltimore in '83 party looks far more enticing than CRABAPPLE number 17.

(CRABAPPLE, edited by Ken Ozanne, 42 Meek's Crescent, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776. Available for the usual or 75¢ a copy, with a maximum subscription of four copies.)  
(Irwin Hirsh)

1 March, 1981

I have to confess to making a mistake. After Irwin sent the above, I told him that I thought it a pleasant piece of work, and that I hoped the reviews which would follow to make up the column would be as good. Now Irwin, as it happens, is getting on in years, and has reached the age of uncertainty. Right now he can't make up his mind whether he wants to be South Yarra's answer to Sergei Eisenstein, South Yarra's answer to Richard Avedon, or South Yarra's answer to Patrick Nielsen Hayden. I hope he has made up his mind by the time the next Chunder! deadline comes along, and produces a full-length column. (Come to think of it, Marc Ortlieb hasn't been really verbose on the subject of apas lately.)

While we are waiting, here's something from South Melbourne's answer to Derrick Ashby.

#### AT LAST, THE KEN AND VERA AUSTRALIA IN '83 FOLLIES by Derrick Ashby

Why is it that every time I see anything put out by AUSTRALIA IN '83 I find something to be annoyed about? Is it me or is it them? The latest things to get me off my bike were two 'fanzines' in the latest (February 1981) ANZAPA mailing, and the 'advertisement' in the latest DENVENTION Progress Report.

#### (1) Vera's Information Pamphlet No. 3

This has been put out by Vera Lonergan. I don't know to what extent it's been circulated, so maybe I had better describe it. The publication consists mostly of several lists of names. The first is headed 'Denvention members and Friends of AUSTRALIA IN '83', and is divided into sublists for New Zealand and the Australian states. To get on the list you have to fall into one of three categories - a) be an ANZ fan who is a member of Denvention, b) be an ANZ fan who is a 'Friend of AUSTRALIA IN '83',



or c) be an ANZ fan whose address happens to be known to Vera (and I don't think much of her address list, either). Later lists are of overseas 'Friends of AUSTRALIA IN '83'.

These lists are interspersed with comments from Vera. There is a preamble which tells us that more ANZ Denvention members are required - 'there are still many more fans on the following list of Auz (sic) and NZ friends of AUSTRALIA IN '83 and Denvention members who have yet to join the 1981 Worldcon and so be eligible for the 1983 site selection' she says. 'Please do your utmost to persuade them to join...'. The lists themselves are usually followed by comments from Vera as to their fitness or unfitness (usually the latter). The overseas lists themselves are compiled from those people known to have 'donated money at overseas cons, and in some cases writing ... with donations'. (One wonders how many of these people have merely bought something at an auction because they wanted it, never suspecting that they'd become one of the select band.) The purpose of the overseas lists is to encourage Australians to send 'zines or write, and therefore encourage them to vote for A-in-'83. The closing exhortation says in part 'Come on, Aussies, this is YOUR bid, so how about doing your share to help us win it'.

I have no objections to Vera publishing a list of those people who have given money to the bid (especially since there is no such thing as a pre-supporting membership). In a way that's part of the contract, because at least the supporter will get some egoboo out of being on the list, even if the bid is lost. I guess that I have no objection to her publishing a list of AustralianDenvention members either. I do have objections to this publication, though (you hadn't guessed?).

i) Vera has no right to attempt to put public pressure on non-Denvention members in this way. The pamphlet is not basically an attempt to tell us who does support AUSTRALIA IN '83, but rather tries to bully those who aren't. This is particularly objectionable in regard to the few oddly-selected people on the list who are neither Denvention members nor AUSTRALIA IN '83 supporters.

ii) I question the label 'Friends of AUSTRALIA IN '83' as a basis for judging support of the convention. As I have said above, AUSTRALIA IN '83 does not have any pre-supporting members. Instead they have given the label 'Friend' to anyone who has handed money, for any reason whatever, to the Committee or its representatives. I once subscribed to the AUSTRALIA IN '83 BULLETIN - basically because I was interested in knowing what was going on. I found out that nothing much was, and didn't renew the sub. Am I a 'Friend'?

iii) Certainly it is a questionable assumption to make that just because an ANZ fan is a member of Denvention ' ' he or she necessarily supports AUSTRALIA IN '83. Maybe they joined in order to vote for Baltimore.

iv) If the categories of person mentioned in ii) and iii) are questionable regarding support for AUSTRALIA IN '83, then the overseas 'Friends' must be even more so, for the reasons already given.

v) The reasoning behind the publication of this pamphlet - indeed, the whole strategy of the AUSTRALIA IN '83 Committee in this respect - seems to be quite doubtful to me. They operate under the assumption throughout that the voting public (or at least the Australian voting public) will support them as of right. They

make little attempt to justify their existence to us. The statement by Vera that the '83 bid is 'YOUR' bid is an example of this. It isn't 'our' bid, of course, but theirs - the Committee members'. They have to prove to us that their bid is a good idea and worth supporting. To my mind they have signally failed in this - firstly, by doing nothing, and secondly, by putting people's backs up, noses out of joint, et cetera.

Vi) If AUSTRALIA IN '83 is to be a reality (I don't mind whether it is or not) then the Committee would be well advised to have a look at just how much of the Committee's money has been wasted in producing this particular effort. Couldn't it have been better spent in putting out one of those Australian fanzines the Committee keeps talking about?

## (2) An open letter to Australian fans

In this, Ken Ozanne attempts three things. Firstly, he attempts to make the link between AUSSIECON and AUSTRALIA IN '83. No such link is really tenable, but he makes the attempt anyway. (Talk about 'collective highs' is a bit misleading - most Melbourne fans were totally shellshocked and buggered, and engaged in little fannish activity for about 12 months afterwards!) Secondly, Ken exhorts us all to join Denvention and vote in the site selection. He points out the huge advantages to be gained for the \$14 cost. Thirdly, Ken discusses the numbers game of winning the bid in an attempt to persuade us that the Committee needs out votes.

We are told that 1200 people voted in the Noreascon site selection ballot. He assumes that the total will be similar for Denvention. Thus we need 601 votes to win. (I write 'we' for purposes of shorthand.) These are defensible assumptions. He then makes the indefensible assumptions that 150 Australian fans will vote on site selection, that they will vote for Sydney, and that they will be a part of the assumed 1200 total votes cast. Of course, he wants many more Australians than the 150 mentioned to vote, but bases this minimum on those who are already Denvention members.

I've already talked about the blind certainty with which the Committee assumes that all Australian fans and votes are committed to them. What I want to go into here is the arithmetic of the Committee. Having done some thinking and figuring of my own, it seems clear that any Australian votes at Denver will be in addition to the 1200 at Noreascon. (How many Australians voted on site selection last year?) The fact is that the more Australians that join, the more votes the Committee will need to win. True, it could be supposed that the majority of Australian votes will go to Sydney, but the size of that majority cannot be calculated. Just how many people will abstain, lose their ballots, or receive them late cannot be calculated. There might even be some who will vote for Copenhagen or Baltimore. For every committed Australian vote the Committee gets they will need  $\frac{1}{2}$  a vote less from elsewhere, so that one American vote is worth two Australian ones to the Committee. If 150 Australians vote they will be in addition to the 1200 others, so the total number of votes will be 1350. Australia will need 676 of those to win (75 more than if no Australians voted) and 526 of those would have to be non-Australians (75 less than if no Australians voted). An American vote is more valuable to the Committee than an Australian one. That being the case, can anyone tell me what is being done to woo the American vote? Will the Denvention PR ads do that?

The Committee is assuming (they assume a lot, don't they?) that about 300 American fans would visit an Australian Worldcon. I



would like to leave you with the thought that an Australian win would therefore cost American fandom in the vicinity of half a million dollars in airfares alone.  
(Derrick Ashby)

The foregoing is present primarily for the amusement of Mike Glyer. What follows is for the rest of us.

For a long time now John Bangsund has been publishing his fanzines mainly for a spray of apas and a collection of spiders. On the offchance that other readers are interested in what the old chap is up to nowadays, I reprint the following, from the 54th number of PHILOSOPHICAL GAS (February 1981).

BAH, HUMMELBUG!

by John Bangsund

Music? Don't talk to me about that crazy bar-crotchety stuff! I was sitting quietly at the Foysters' place on the evening of the 28th, minding my own business, taking care not to smoke too many cigarettes at once because it does terrible things to their wall-paper, when the tall hairy one started asking me all these silly questions. 'Who wrote Mozart's 39th? How many horns in a horn trio? What do the following have in common: Fidel Castro, Yehudi Menuhin, Tommy Flynn? In which opera does the heroine say "Gak!" and die? What instrument handles water music?'

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; fourteen; characters in an opera by Leigh Edmonds; none; bath tuba' - and after a while he gave up and threw the National Times at me and said he didn't know any of these.

That's how I got involved in the National Times Music Quiz Competition, driving myself and everyone around me mad for the next week. There were 100 questions, twenty each on Opera, Mozart, Orchestral Music, Chamber Music, and Twentieth Century Music, but because the questions often had several parts, or required multiple answers, I finished up looking for 190 answers. By the time I got to Mervyn Binns's New Year's Eve party I had about seventy answers. I cornered George Turner, who knows even more about opera than he knows about science fiction, 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. Mervyn didn't know either. Still, it was a pretty good party. It continued next day at Dianne and Damien'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. There was a lady at the party who looked remarkably like Valma Brown. Valma would be delighted at the number of people who cuddled her by mistake at the party. I know it wasn't Valma because she couldn't tell me who had written a concerto for Ondes Martenot. Also, she was smoking. Canberra does funny things to people, but it it's not that bad.

The rest of my answers (I finished up with 154 correct by my reckoning, 146 by the judges') came mainly from the Gramophone magazine, of which I seem to have accumulated about 250 issues, and Jenny's books on modern music. The two books I needed most, Einstein's Mozart and Kobbe's Complete Opera Book (?title), had disappeared from the shelves of every library and bookshop in

Melbourne, it seemed. The competition closed on 7 January, and I posted off my entry on the 4th. I tried to forget the whole thing and concentrate on my work and that other competition. You can see how well I succeeded if you check PHILOSOPHICAL GAS 53: by Sunday the 11th I didn't even know what day it was.

The official results took up two pages of the National Times on the 18th. The winners were a doctor who composes in his spare time, the secretary of a philharmonic society and a music teacher. The judges' comments make it pretty clear that I ran fourth or fifth, but I didn't rate a mention. Some of the official answers are ambiguous, and some just plain wrong, but what the hell, it was all good clean fun and it stopped me watching television for a week. But I must admit that I have been thinking a bit about why I went in for the thing. Was it to impress John Foyster, who knows I'm not as clever as I think but thinks I don't know that? Was it to prove that a competent book editor or journalist can find out anything about any subject if he sets his mind to it? Was it simply to win first prize?

I think I can answer the last one. First prize was two season tickets to Musica Viva. Now, I haven't been to a musical concert since they threw me out of the Union Theatre for snoring through the entire second act of Monteverdi's L'incoronazione di Poppea (or possible Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria: I always get those two mixed up), and that was many years ago, when I was still constitutionally capable of listening to music and not smoking for an hour or more. If I remember correctly, Dee Harding and I once went to a concert at the Melbourne Town Hall and heard a Bruckner symphony. For a committed smoker that's an endurance test more difficult even than going to church, I can tell you. No, I just wouldn't last out a concert these days.

Am I really as far gone as that? Surely not! If someone gave me a free ticket to something I liked, I'm sure I would make an effort. It might even be the first step towards rehabilitation and a return to the full and normal life enjoyed by non-smokers. I could catch a train to work, for example, instead of risking my life every day in the crazy, stinking, poisonous traffic. It's something to think about, if ever anyone is giving away free tickets to things.

Now, how's this for a mildly wryly amusing little coincidence? The Age, Melbourne's premier newspaper, of which I have spoken findly and often in these pages over the years, is running a little competition of a musical nature in its admirable free lift-out TV and radio program guide. This week there are four pictures of composers, and their autographs, and you have to guess who they are. Well, that beats '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?', doesn't it? I think I'll be in it. There are fifty (50) prizes of two season tickets to Musica Viva.

Life's little ironies, eh, Tom?

If you've 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. They 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.  
(John Bangsund)



(continued for page 14)

interest, which is also boring. Whenever people pause long enough to exchange a few words we are treated to a number of not-very-surprising little surprises. (I dare you, gentle reader, to guess the alleged identity of Luke Skywalker's father...) If this is intended to convince the audience that they haven't actually switched their brains off then it clearly indicates some confusion by the makers as to just exactly what they thought they were trying to achieve. The adjective which comes most readily to mind for these supposed improvements to the SW formula is 'pretentious'.

Since we are told that Lucas plans a number of SW-derived films, in the manner of 'PLANET OF THE APES and its offspring, these developments are a cause for mild concern, at least among people who bother to feel concern about such things. Is the future price of a bit of rip-snorting action going to be lengthy interludes in which a transparent Alec Guinness or a bald-headed Fozzie Bear or both of them intone mock-religious rubbish about 'The Force', or, worse yet, touching scenes of the Princess agonizing about whether to go to bed with Luke or Han or both of them or somebody else altogether? If it is, I won't be going, even if they show the sequels in a theatre with no stairs.  
(Christine Ashby)

#### EDITORIAL STUFF CONTINUED

Joyce Scrivner won DUFF, as most readers will already know. So I suppose it might be appropriate to give here some official GUFF results.

Joseph Nicholas had a clear win over Malcolm Edwards both in the UK and in Australia. 56 votes were received in the UK and 20 in Australia. When you set aside the votes which didn't affect the outcome, it looks like this.

	UK	AUSTRALIA	TOTAL
Malcolm Edwards	16	8	24
Joseph Nicholas	35	12	47

(The turnout for Australia would have been larger had not 9 votes been delayed in the mail.)

Support in Australia was received from the following (donations of either cash or goods):

Paul Anderson, Harry Andruschak, Allan Bray, Andrew Brown, Valma Brown, Jennifer Bryce, Elaine Cochrane, Neil Cooper, Leigh Edmonds, John Foyster, Bruce Gillespie, Carey Handfield, Jeff Harris, Jack Herman, Greg Hills, Irwin Hirsh, Rob Jackson, Robin Johnson, Denny Lien/Joyce Scrivner, Gary Mason, John McPharlin, Perry Middlemiss, Bill Moon, Marc Ortlieb, John Playford, Margaret Sanders, Michael Schaper, Joe Schluter, John Snowden, Dennis Stocks, Helen Swift, Andrew Taubman, George Turner, Jean Weber;

and: NOREASCON 2, EASTERCON '80 auction, SWANCON 5, SSFF (SYNCON '80) and MEDVENTION auction.

As a result of all this activity, funds held in the UK totalled £611.50 at the close of voting, and in Australia \$607.41.

Joseph Nicholas plans to spend three weeks or so in Australia - probably the last week of May and two weeks of June. On the other hand, it may be possible to work in the NZ convention.... In other words, plans are flexible. GUFF auctions to raise funds will continue - Australasian readers see enclosure.

Chunder! is a fanzine about the doings of science fiction fans, and is published four or five times a year by John Foyster, 21 Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda, Victoria 3182, Australia.

Chunder! is available for trade, contribution, or letter or at the rate of \$1 each. No subscriptions accepted - only single issues available.

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ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

One way or another this issue just got out of hand. Forty pages was the notional upper limit, but stretching to 42 pages, a wretched excess in these hard times, still doesn't allow me to include Tiny Daryl's explanation of how to run a successful SF convention; you'll have to hold your breath for that one. But you'll need a pretty decent respiratory system, since the next issue won't be out until June 1981. I have a lot of work to get through in the next few months, and that will prevent excessive stencil-cutting. But the remaining issues for the year are planned as 'August', 'October', and 'December'. I'm not quite sure what will appear in June, but the August issue will almost certainly have a couple of convention reports. The deadline for the June issue, by the way, is mid-May, 1981.

Please note that subscriptions are no longer an 'acceptable way'. They don't bring in much money, and they encourage disinterested readers.

In some respects this issue represents the range of material I'll be using in Chunder! in future. I think it likely, however, that I'll be writing a bit more about science fiction in here (next time, especially for Bob Smith, a piece about Paul Anderson's FLIGHT TO FOREVER).

In addition to the GUFF Auction info, local readers will also find with this a ballot form for the '81 CHUNDER! POLL.

Please note that a cross in the space below is an indication that this is the last issue of Chunder! you can expect.

John Foyster, 9 March 1981.