

Critics to left of him,
Galahs to right of him,
Nongheads in front of him
Blether and maunder.



Then proving live and well,
Out from his jaws in yell,
To with sprayed spittle tell
Crapblatt once more, anew
Foyster does

CHUNDER!

- of which this is the January 1988 issue: published irregularly by John Foyster, PO Box 483, Norwood, South Australia, Australia 5067.

This issue is given over to letters from readers and copious notes on fanzines received. The cartoon, and the surrounding words, are by Jack Wodhams.

Contributions are always welcome.

Notes & Letters

Letters first or fanzines first? In Australia so few fanzines are published that it is almost a shock to receive one in the mail, although the last months of 1987 produced a couple of copies of *Thyme* and *The Straight Banana*, and even an issue of *The Space Wastrel*. *Larrikin* is yet to reappear, although its editors have returned from their northern excursions. By contrast, there's been no shortage, for me, of fanzines from the Northern Hemisphere, and that's where my comments will eventually be focused. But some letters of comment I've recently received should come first, I think.

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, USA

I've owed you for some weeks a loc on the batch of *Chunder!*s which spent a substantial part of 1987 drifting across half the world in my direction. There were lots of windy days in Hagerstown during the months they were in transit, but the sea must have been becalmed for months at a time.

You realize, I assume, what psychological effect they have on someone like me who is chronically late with locs. He decides to write a loc tonight despite not feeling very well, and then when he refreshes his memory about their contents he begins to wonder. A sketchbook from a 1979 con? A report on a 1975 worldcon? A review of the best rock records (if the two adjectives can possibly be considered compatible) of 1982? Has it been just weeks rather than years during which these issues have been awaiting locs? It does shake up a person who is too old and dilapidated to be shaken with safety.

I liked Elizabeth's drawings, despite the fact that I don't have a microfiche reader and so I couldn't distinguish as many details as I would have liked. The captions in particular were sometimes beyond the limits of visibility for my eyeballs. But the larger drawings were just fine, and I admire the sense of personality and the illusion of motion she got into the sketches which I assume were made hurriedly on the spot or shortly after the spot had been there.

Bruce Gillespie caused me to feel even more confused than usual, a considerable feat, when he referred repeatedly to inability to understand the words on the rock records he admires. I've heard so many times that opera isn't popular in the United States because it's

usually sung in other languages which people can't understand. But rock seems to be generally liked by young people and there's no essential difference between lyrics which are in English but too indistinct to be comprehended and words in a language the opera listener can't understand. Maybe rock bands will eventually utilize the gimmick that more and more opera companies have adopted in the United States, subtitles or supertitles, projected above the stage translating the libretto's text into English, just like the subtitles that are usually shown when foreign movies in another language are shown in English-speaking countries, with translations at the bottom of the screen. Virtually all televised operas broadcast in the United States are equipped with subtitles, even in some cases when the opera is sung in English, because of the fact that opera singers don't always have excellent diction.

George Turner is wrong about one minor detail in his criticism of the *Triquarterly* issue. 'Stef' isn't a 'private abbreviation' but rather a way of writing and speaking a shortcut for 'science fiction' that flourished in the United States back in the 1940s. In fact, Bill Danner has just published the 101st issue of the longest non-apa fanzine in existence in respect to continuous publication, *Stefantasy*, whose title is almost always shortened to *Stef*. The *Fanzine Index* lists such other fanzine titles as *The Stefan*, *Stefcard*, *Stef Headlines*, *Stefnews*, and *Stef Nyaa-aa-a!!*. The t in stef apparently got there out of respect to the old term for the literature, scientific fiction.

I may have read some or all of Don Fitch's conreport in apa publications but if I did, the memory of its contents had gone so I was happy to find it reprinted in *Chunder!* which I've just noticed you end with an exclamation point, a bad thing from my standpoint because this typewriter lacks that punctuation mark and I must stop to backspace to create one from a period and an apostrophe.

Don overdid to some extent the gimmick of capitalizing certain words for ironic or other purposes, and a few paragraphs look as if they'd been written by a German who had forgotten that nouns aren't always capitalized in English the way they are in German. However, I like very much the wealth of information about Australia and Australian fans and the worldcon (most of the facts about which I'd forgotten in the past dozen years). His prediction about how Australian fandom would change after the worldcon suffered the fate of most predictions about the future of fannish matters, mainly I suppose because fans are too individualistic and determined to do as they please to have their course of conduct deflected by one worldcon or one new fanzine or any other single factor.

I can't agree totally with your opinions in the fanzine reviews, mainly because excellence of format and extreme care in writing don't have as large a factor in my impression of fanzines as they affect your judgments. I find those excellences to be wonderful to have, if present in a fanzine, but I don't miss them at all if the fanzine has other good attributes like the ability to entertain or lots of valuable information or an embodiment of the editor's personality and characteristics which if they're chaotic will automatically cause the fanzine to follow suit.

I think it's a great pity that Elizabeth hasn't done more drawings of fannish events (although there are a few more than have been published already), but it also seems to me odd that fan artists generally don't seem to take an interest in illustrating events: is it because drawing lopsided unicorns is much easier?

Don Fitch's report meant a lot to me not only because of its detailed reporting on Australian Fandom (not much done by visitors) but also because his writing style relied so acutely upon those elements you comment on, and in doing so brought back memories of the period in which Capitalization was Smart.

I hope you'll get along a little better with my fanzine reviews this time, which will operate across a broader range.

Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, USA

I was delighted to receive the clutch of *Chunder!*s which arrived recently after such a long silence from your direction. I was beginning to despair that my dutifully sending you *TRAP DOOR* all these years was a failed experiment. I put you on my list to begin with because I remembered your writing from the '60s fondly. As you know (and Don Fitch points out) I dropped out of fannish activity for some ten years - the entire '70s, pretty much - to go live on The Farm in Tennessee. Aside from these *Chunder!*s, I've been enjoying (if that's the word) your activity in FAPA and your occasional piece in *Thyme*. And hoping, of course, that someday you might favor me with something humorous and perceptive for my zine...

I don't see *De Profundis* or *Science Fiction Review*, but all three of the Australian fanzines you review in the March issue arrive regularly at my door (although with *Thyme*'s change, I've now been cut off from that list). I definitely agree with your assessment of the lot. Although I find it difficult to respond to, I look forward to and enjoy

Larrikin quite a bit. I find *Thyme* both interesting and mysterious, the latter because I know so few of the people who are regularly listed for their moves, marriages and baby-havings. *Tigger* is something of a source of puzzlement, because it's so uneven. I'd like to see Marc drop the pretense that *Tigger* is somehow a clubzine. I'd also like to see him focus his editorial abilities and more towards some sort of balance, if not in every issue, then at least over the course of the run. As it is, I find *Tigger* readable at best and confusing and pointless in its low points. From old issues of Marc's earlier zines that've passed by me, I know he can do better.

Elizabeth Darling's cartoon report of the 1979 Eastercon was pretty amusing. Her style reminds me a little of Margaret Welbank's (a Brit cartoonist whose work seems to appear only in UK zines) but a little less focussed. Nonetheless, I laughed out loud a few times going through the lot, and what more can one ask?

It was surprising to run across a 1975 conreport from Don Fitch in, of all places, an Australian fanzine. It made entertaining reading - I've always liked Don's ramblings and have missed his presence in fandom this decade - and it was quite surprising, as I hinted above, to encounter his mention of the 1975 whereabouts of Andy Main, Calvin Demmon and me. Of course, the footnote to that is that none of us are living in religious communes anymore. Andy is in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where at last report he was largely responsible for a monthly arts and entertainment magazine. Calvin lives in Monterey, California, where he has been employed as a reporter and writer for the local newspaper for some years now. He was present at a May 30th memorial for Terry Carr held in Berkeley, the first time I've seen him since around 1972. Other than graying hair (who among us lacks that?), he was pretty much the same old humorous Calvin Demmon once he got warmed up.

I found it impossible to get involved in Bruce's review of 1982 rock. Although I still listen to rock music, I long ago gave up trying to keep track of who did what, and I now listen to it in much the same way as I did in my extreme youth: just letting it wash over me as it comes off the radio and occasional jukebox, as well as records and tapes at various friends' homes. When I play tapes of my own, it's more likely to be stuff from my youth: Little Richard, Chuck Berry, the Coasters, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, etc. If this makes me a moldy fig, I guess I'll have to accept the mantle. Interestingly, my kids (aged 10-16) are more accepting of the rock I play than they used to be. Back when they were first discovering it themselves, they were very faithful to the likes of Van Halen, Billy Idol and their ilk. My

music was so much noise. Now they've discovered that rock has roots and I've got them socked away on my tapes. So now they sometimes even ask to hear a particular artist. A refreshing change...

Your FAPazines in the gigantic 200th mailing quite engaged my attention. I was caught by your admission that you've had three baby boys die on you this decade! I knew of one from your FAPA publications since I've rejoined, but three is a shocker. As the father of four disgustingly healthy boys (never had any girls), I definitely feel for you and Jennifer. I don't know what I can (or should) say beyond that.

When I lived on The Farm, one family had a little girl with spina bifida. They went through quite a lot with her when she was very young. I certainly don't remember the details because, in a large community, there is much to distract and occupy one's limited ability to encompass it all. I do know that as of the last I saw or heard of them, which was about 1979, their little girl was about 6 or 7 years old and they had somehow worked it out so she was, although limited, in pretty good condition. I visited them one time in Nashville, where they'd moved to be closer to medical facilities, and she was quite bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and a joy to be around.

As to Down's, I live some 1000 feet from a major facility for 'developmentally disabled' and see Down's people nearly every day. I have to drive through the facility to get to work or even just to check my mail, and they are out and around in groups on the grounds as one drives through. One also encounters them in the community out on field trips of various kinds. I've had conversations with some of them over the years, due to this proximity, and some of these talks have been rather satisfying in that I felt we communicated. Others, of course, are more severely 'disabled' and yet, even with those, there's a vibrational level of communication that can be achieved. Many of my friends work at this facility - it's one of the largest employers in Sonoma County - but I don't think I could handle that myself. Too much would be too much... But, as you touch on in the article, the term 'handicap' is itself a potential trap in that it typecasts people into areas of black and white and ignores the vast range of grayness inbetween. I don't find communication with Down's people to be any more satisfactory or unsatisfactory, on the face of it, than communication with so-called mentally 'gifted' (your Mensa types), who can be more of a potential pain in the arse because they're so bugged up about their 'superiority'.

I managed to keep up a bit with what you and Andy Main and Calvin Demmon were up to through the fanzine world

- though Andy's short-term involvement with *Coevolution Quarterly* was more concrete evidence of his activities. *Trap Door* has always made me feel guilty as well as admiring, and perhaps this combination is not a good one to aim for...

As you will have noted from my recent fanzines, humour is not my long suit currently; but if something comes along I'll see what I can do.

This may not surprise you, but I am about as familiar with the inhabitants of the 'hatched, matched, detached' columns of *Thyme* as you are. So far as I can make out, most of them have nothing to do with fanzine fandom, and may attend occasional conventions. But to me they are all just names.

Bruce's rock reviews meant even less to me, I think, than to you. What most surprised me, I suppose, is how little Bruce was able to convey to a non-listener.

A major problem with both spina bifida and Down's syndrome - so far as parents are concerned - is that the severity of effects on the victim (not a great word to use, but a handy one) is often not clear for a long time, so that parents can for a long time live in hope of a nearly-normal Down's child, for example. (My working definition would be a child who can go to a regular school and then hold down a regular job (or would have in normal times...)) In the case of spina bifida it's the quite often associated (and unpredictable) conditions which create life-threatening situations. But many people with spina bifida do lead normal lives. (For that matter Down's syndrome by no means means a wasted life; one prominent Australian film-maker has a son with Down's who has worked on his father's films without difficulty.)

Pamela Boal, 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon., OX12 7EW, England

Well, that's one way of claiming you published 4 issues of *Chunder!* in 1987. I wonder if temporal distance makes the Aussie heart grow fonder? With one exception (American) all the reports dealing with cons held a decade or so back that I have come across have been in Australian zines. Pleasing enough for me as it was the era of my con going. Nowadays I seldom get beyond the stage of intending to

formulate the intention of going.

Tigger is an example of how different backgrounds produce widely different viewpoints. *Tigger* did come across to me as an around-the-table, casual discussion that occasionally gets more intense. For the most part I enjoyed the discussions and I'm rather sorry that Marc is folding *Tigger*.

I'm sorry too, but I'm still not ready for the world of the coffee-table fanzine, and hope that when Marc returns to publishing it will be with a different sort of fanzine.

Milt Stevens, 7234 Capps Avenue, Reseda, CA 91335, USA

Before seeing the cover of the March 1987 *Chunder!*, I always thought of your title as a verb rather than a noun. Somehow, thinking of it as a noun changes my perspective on things.

Speaking of magazines folding, I sometimes wish *Omni* would fold so I didn't have to collect it anymore. The fiction is of good quality, but it isn't of the sort I really prefer and there isn't enough of it for the price. While they have some good articles, they publish too much crackpottery. Like, I could really live without *UFO Update*.

It would certainly be understandable if Dick Geis was rather disappointed in the response he received in recent years. It was seldom mentioned that he was a first rate fan publisher and frequently mentioned that he ought to be thrown out of the entire fanzine field. It's one of those cases of becoming too good for your own good.

It would be interesting to see some Australian reactions to Don Fitch's speculations on Australian fandom. As a fully accredited galactic observer, Don ought to have been able to stir up something.

I've never heard of *Triquarterly* magazine. That leads me to suspect that describing it as a 'mainstream' publication is rather misleading. It sounds like it's a little magazine. Little magazines pride themselves on publishing idiosyncratic material that most magazines wouldn't want to publish and most people wouldn't want to read.

But without *Omni*, how would an unsophisticated Australian like me have found out about channelling? And I wish I could pass on to you some Australian views on Don Fitch's piece, but I've heard and seen nothing. *Triquarterly* is a biggish sort of little magazine that publishes mainstream stuff.

Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, USA

Let me start out with a bit of a non sequitur and say how much I enjoy Australian stamps. I'm not a stamp collector, mind you, I just find them incredibly well printed compared to American stamps which, even at their best, look like they were printed on the cheap. Australian stamps look like they could have been clipped from *National Geographic*; US stamps from *National Inquirer*.

Thanks for this bundle of *Chunder!* - a straight line if ever I heard one. I had an idea like this to force fans to subscribe to a fanzine (those making it less burdensome to produce). The idea was to produce a lively, sparkling, monthly zine but mail it out only once or twice a year - unless people wanted to subscribe. Then they would get each monthly issue as it came out. The trick, of course, would be to publish a fanzine so irresistible that people **would** pay money for it, a trick far beyond my abilities: I have trouble just getting people to loc!

These *Chunder!*s seem to be cleaning out a lot of old material - a '79 Eastercon Sketchbook, a '75 Aussiecon report, 2 articles from '83. I wonder if the next bundle of *Chunder!* will pick up issues of a more contemporary nature? I did enjoy Elizabeth Darling's sketchbook. Tho occasionally the writing was too small to read clearly, I imagine there are some good likenesses here. The only Aussie I've met is Eric Lindsay and that was years ago, but her sketches are quite expressive of mood and personality.

Don Fitch's article on Aussiecon was well done but - I don't know - it all seems so remote now. I never could get involved with discussions about music, nor have I read *Triquarterly* 49, tho I'm tempted to argue with George Turner over it. Turner's dismissal of Budrys's comment that British sf was either hopeless or directed towards American markets raises a very good point: why does so little British sf sell to American publishers? It's not the writing that was hopeless but the prevailing tone of hopelessness that has limited British (and I suspect Australian) success in the larger American markets. And to that extent the New Wave was a fad that came and went with little impact on the development of sf. The increase in literariness in sf would have come anyway, I think, because the next generation of writers **and editors** came out of university literary courses. Engineer-writ sf faded away with Campbell. As for the lit. value of the stories there - don't know. I have had serious reservations about literary mainstream fiction ever since trying one of Joyce Carol Oates's books and finding it not merely to my tastes but almost illiterate in its incomprehensibility. Goes to show, eh wot?

Well, *Pong* met the requirements with respect to regularity of publication, but that would have been the last

contender for your experimental notion, I think.

Elizabeth's drawings have the benefit (for those who attended the '79 con) that they accurately portray certain events...

I don't really want to have debates about science fiction in a clean-living fanzine like this one, but I suppose it's my fault for publishing George's piece in the first place. I think you are wrong about the sales of non-US sf in the US, about the fading out of engineer-writ sf, and about Joyce Carol Oates: otherwise there is probably room for us to agree.

Some Fanzine Reviews

Abattoir 3, from Bryan Barrett and Lucy Huntzinger, PO Box 6202 Hayward, CA 94540, USA

Australian SF News 46, from Mervyn Binns, PO Box 491, Elsternwick, Victoria, Australia 3185

Bottled Lightning 1, from Maureen Porter 114 Guildhall Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1ES, England

Cathseye 8, from Cathy Kerrigan, PO Box 437, Camberwell, Victoria, Australia 3124

Down Under Press 1, from Gary Makin, GPO Box 4435, Sydney, NSW, Australia 2001

Duprass 2, from Leslie R Smith and Linda Bushyager, 6092 Drexel Road, Philadelphia, PA 19131, USA

Erg Quarterly 99, from Terry Jeeves, 56 Redscar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RG, East Yorkshire, England

File 770 71, from Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA

The Kryptonite Fanzine, from Frank Macskasy Jr, PO Box 27274, Wellington 1, New Zealand

Light in the Bushel 5, from Richard Brandt, 4740 N. Mesa #111, El Paso, Texas 79912, USA

The Matalan Rave 13, from Michael Hailstone, PO Box 258, Manuka, ACT, Australia 2603

Mimosa 3, from Dick and Nicki Lynch, 4207 Davis Lane, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37416, USA

Munich Round Up 156, from Waldemar Kumming, Herzogspitalstrasse 5, D 8000, Muenchen 2, West Germany

Outworlds 52, from Bill Bowers, #56, 1874 Sunset Avenue,

Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-3142, USA

Secant 2 and 3, from Greg Hills, GPO Box 972G, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3001

Sikander 14, from Irwin Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Road, Caulfield South, Victoria, Australia 3161

The Space Wastrel 13, from Michelle Muijsert and Mark Loney, PO Box 428, Richmond, Victoria, Australia 3121

Stampede 9 and *Skullroses* 10, from Owen Whiteoak, Top Flat, 11 Horsell Road, Highbury, London N5 1XL, England

The Straight Banana, from Tim Reddan, PO Box 162, Toowong, Queensland, Australia 4066

This Never Happens 10, from Lillian Edwards and Christina Lake, 47 Wessex Avenue, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0DE, England

Thyme 65, from LynC and Peter Burns, PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3052

Tigger 26 (and out), from Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 215 Forest Hill, Victoria, Australia 3131

Weberwoman's Wrevenge 27, from Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW, Australia 2776

Wahf-full 19, from Jack Herman, Bob 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, Australia 2006

Wing Window 10, from John D. Berry, 525 19th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington 98112, USA

With so many fanzines to take note of, this section might be expected to ramble a little. But to write that is immediately to imply something about what fanzines are, and nothing can be much more certain than that the items listed above are diverse, perhaps so much so that the notion of fanzines **being** any particular thing is dubious.

But one can see these fanzines as being about **several** things, and that's the line I'm to follow.

Australian SF News is 32 pages of - not surprisingly - news about science fiction. More than half of those pages are book reviews or lists of publishers' announcements, with the rest being odds and ends of news (including two reports on the recent Worldcon in Brighton which could scarcely be less informative). Whatever interest one may have in the contents of *ASFN* is tempered by the fact that most of it is incomplete and somewhat out of date. Yet because *Locus* and *Science Fiction Chronicle* cost around four times as much and have rather less news content, *Australian SF News* must continue to be important to people who want to pick up snippets of news and generally keep up with what books are being published. It's offset, and

clearly takes a lot of Mervyn Binns's time and effort to produce; and there are fewer typos than there used to be, without any proofreader being acknowledged, suggesting that Mervyn has not had to hurry quite so much.

Thyme, which subtitles itself 'The Australian SF News Magazine', is a very different kettle of fish. Most of it is produced by hi-tech computing software and hardware, and then the pages are reproduced (often poorly) from electro-stencils. The editors' notion of what constitutes sf news is odd: issue 65 has nothing about science fiction in its 14 pages except for mentioning the relocation of a specialist bookshop in Melbourne (on page 1) and ten lines on recent sales by Australian writers on page 13. It does have a great deal about science fiction conventions, with the greatest space given to an attack on the Sydney bid for the '91 Worldcon. While the Sydney bid may be ill-conceived and poorly planned, this anonymous derogation is rambling rather than pointed; we know the writer thinks the Sydney bid hopeless, but the reasons given are general rather than particular. It would have been more illuminating had the writer contrasted the two Australian bids.

Then there's the famous page of notes on fan-faces which Robert Lichtman (see above) found so puzzling. I do rather well myself this time, for I don't know either Alan Avant or Debra Reynolds (who now appear to be living together) or Matthew Clarkson or Cindy Evans (who are to be hitched in the near future, it seems). I don't believe any of these names is associated with fanzines, but presumably they've been to a convention or two, and so qualify as 'fans'. The point of circulating such 'news' is not easy to uncover. Gossip is interesting if you know the people but don't know the latest: in this case the newsworthy persons appear to be little-known, and everybody who actually cares about their living arrangements probably already knows the 'news' at first hand. But such notes breathe pseudo-life into what is otherwise a pretty stolid fanzine.

Down Under Press is the fanzine produced by the Sydney bidders for the 1991 Worldcon. *Thyme's* opinion on the bid has been given above; let's look at the fanzine. In physical presentation this is the kind of fanzine which would appeal to Greg Hills (see below), but once one goes beyond presentation there's little to be said. Fanzines associated with Worldcon bids are difficult to make interesting while they stick with the humdrum stuff like details of the proposed site; *Down Under Press* seems to be trying to solve this problem by being a sort of newszine - a difficult task on a quarterly schedule, unless you are thinking of slowmoving news. There's a report on Conspiracy

which, I think, summarises the problems of both the fanzine and the bid. It's intensely depersonalized for the most part, so distanced from events that the last-minute note on a bidding party comes as a distinct shock. There is a useful guide to Conspiracy fanpublications, and a diary of events oriented towards television shows and games. Perhaps if *Down Under Press* can publish more information about its bid then there will be more shape to the fanzine, but at the moment it seems much more like a collection of loose pages.

Although *File 770* is about science fiction fandom rather than science fiction - perhaps partly because of it - there's a coherence about its contents which was absent from the two newszines described above. So while the range of stories here is vast - conventions (especially business sessions), awards, fandom in Brazil, scientology and Budrys, and interclub hanky-panky - it's all of a piece because Mike Glyer has a strong notion of what his magazine is about. It's shaped or directed or - happy thought - **edited**, in other words, rather than merely being an agglomeration of what the publisher could find at deadline time. None of the other newszines could be said to have a personality in the way that *File 770* does, and you don't have to agree with Glyer to admire the way a spark of life flickers over every page of his magazine.

Fanzines about fandom or science fiction have - or can appear to have - fairly clear missions: other kinds of fanzines have a more difficult time explaining themselves. One of the easiest to understand is the letter-substitute (in its various forms) which is substantially written by the editor, though there may be occasional outside contributors. This issue of *Chunder!* is of this variety. But so are many of the fanzines I've listed above.

Abattoir is fundamentally a collection of short pieces/sketches designed to raise a laugh. Most of the letter-writers - the ones who are published, anyway - have the same aim, but Mike Glicksohn wanders into the deeper waters of the credentials of DUFF candidates. *Abattoir* clearly isn't the top place to engage in such a debate at length, but the two sides are set out clearly.

Glicksohn. To me, the fan funds like TAFF and DUFF have always been considered as awards for a proven record of fannish activity.

Huntzinger. DUFF exists because of the perception that our countries needed more social contact, not primarily as a way to honor transPacific fanac.

Lucy's statement seems to be factually correct, but it also begs the question: who could best promote that social contact? That's what Mike's answer is about and, initially at least for DUFF, that fanac was manifested in fanzine publishing. DUFF has changed over the years,

so that fanzine-publishing is no longer a significant part of it, not least because so few Australian fans publish fanzines (especially those who manage to get overseas). CONSPIRACY was definitely unusual in that it had many Australian fanzine fans present - the *Larrikin* and *ASFR* pushes in particular. Fan funds, like the Hugo and Nebula Awards, are now based solely on seeming popularity, not on quality or performance.

That's partly why this year I am supporting the Rogers Street Laundry Door for DUFF (though I urge voters to write in Roman Orszanski first, and to put the Rogers Street Door second: Roman makes slightly better conversation).

The Matalan Rave is a fattish sort of fanzine which Michael Hailstone produces in pretty small print using a platen which seems to slip a lot. Michael, like a few other faneds in Australia recently, chooses to deal with Serious Stuff in his fanzine, and this encourages lots of ravers to write in about Greek grammar, ecology, politics, space travel, racism, hippies, usw. It's just like the coffee conversation Marc Ortlieb wants in his fanzine, and most of the time it's insufferably boring because when it isn't wrong (in this issue we learn that Richard Nixon 'was Prosecuting Attorney at the trial of the Rosenbergs', for example) it's overwhelmingly superficial (like Joseph Nicholas or Leigh Edmonds on politics). Michael deliberately encourages this by his own overcasual use of scientific language (he seems to believe that quarks have the properties top, bottom, charm, beauty and strangeness). The only thing saving *The Matalan Rave* from Sheol is the fact that there's nothing here by John Alderson on the social sciences.

Tim Reddan also sees himself as being on the outer with at least some other parts of fandom. Coming from Queensland is probably a major handicap, but *The Straight Banana*, undated and unnumbered, seems more readable to me with every issue. The latest one is handicapped by a long serious letter from Richard Faulder, and lately there's been some of this serious stuff about science fiction, but laser-printing masters for offset printing produces, in this case, a highly legible fanzine. Tim used to put a lot more of himself into *TSB* but now his contribution is almost limited to a brief editorial and replies to letters, making it more difficult to see *TSB* as a letter-substitute, though that's still what it is. I think he's be better off going back to writing about himself and Brisbane fandom, even if some readers are put off by his, er, assertiveness. The contents of *The Straight Banana* don't have a chance of making it look like a general magazine.

Bottled Lightning is a first fanzine from someone who is

prepared to put a lot of time into producing (via Amstrad) a neat-looking magazine. The longest piece deals with how and where British Eastercons should be held - a matter of grave import over there, but not especially enticing to outsiders unless they happen to be grappling with similar problems. The earlier parts are of the vaguely introductory type which fans almost always start their first fanzines with. The response one makes to these disparate sections depends so much on one's own background that their success is almost entirely out of the writer's hands. For example, I could rise to the defense of William and Henry James in the matter of their treatment of sister Alice, but there's so much evidence around about this that I do not think I could add anything useful. An excellent example of a letter-substitute, *Bottled Lightning* nevertheless needs a chance to settle down, so that we can find out a bit more about Maureen Porter.

Weberwoman's Wrevenge, by contrast, has fancy makeup but is really a letter-substitute.

Jean Weber dresses up her writing with considerable attention to detail in layout, as is the case with all letter-substitutes. However, the ultimate test of quality for the reader is whether or not you happen to like the kind of person Jean is. This happens to be an anti-authoritarian issue, and hence the contents are even more political than usual. The other major piece is about the hard times writers of computer manuals have. At least Jean, as a user herself, recognizes how difficult these manuals are for readers. For all of this, I have a feeling that Jean is too definite, too sure of herself, for many readers. There's more than just a suggestion in the way she describes her feelings that Jean may be somewhat sharpish with those who disagree with her (there's no direct evidence in WWW - no letters, anyway - just a hint of confrontation in the way she writes). *Weberwoman's Wrevenge* is the best looking and the best written of the Australian fanzines mentioned here.

Tigger the last is Marc Ortlieb's attempt to bring to light the activities of the Australian National Science Fiction Association. Unfortunately the newer members of the Association have some aspects of the Association's history quite wrong, and I had thought that in this issue of *Chunder!* I might set them right. However the amount of research required has proved to be greater than I had anticipated and readers will have to wait until the next issue of *Chunder!* to find out about ANSFA (based on my own experience when I was a member in the 1960s - to be precise, from the late 1950s, but this too can wait until next time). Putting aside the question of his misunderstandings, we can see that Marc has managed to put together a typical issue of

Tigger - a conversation which is halfway between letter substitute and formal magazine - which is also atypical in that it includes so much about science fiction.

I like Richard Brandt's *Light in the Bushel* because there's so little wasted space and time in it (apart from any other reasons). The issues I've received have had a fairly calming effect because they are - almost - predictable. There are a few pages about Richard's recent life, a longish piece of fannish import (this time a report on Corflu) and a letter column which specializes in **short** comments. The mix is good, and makes you want to meet Richard Brandt (if you haven't already done so - I wonder how others feel?).

Almost the last of the letter substitutes is John D. Berry's *Wing Window*; it provides a neat bridge to the next set of fanzines. Number 10 consist of six pages in which John writes about just two topics: junk mail and how fanzines look. When John writes about junk mail he writes about experiences we have all had; no one is excluded on this short trip from what one gets in the mail through Bangkok to the Worldcon and the need to publish a fanzine in order to render one's fannishness concrete.

The major part of *Wing Window* 10 is devoted to John's development of this last-mentioned point. In tying together fanzine publishing and being with fans more generally John produces an extended philosophy of fanzine publishing so beautifully developed that it is sure to be ignored worldwide. 'Where did fans ever get the idea that fanzines were amateur versions of fiction magazines?' is the question he poses as an opening gambit and, ignoring the fact that large numbers of fanzines are still produced on that principle, he moves swiftly to argue that if anything fanzines are based upon general magazines, of which he instances *Science News* and *The New Yorker* as extreme examples of personal journalism. In brief, John believes that '(fanzines) knit (the fan) culture together'.

He then illustrates how this is done, by taking a couple of negative examples from (as it happens) British fanwriters. He contrasts his view with theirs:

When I got into fandom (John Berry writes), *it was an axiom of good fanwriting that the best writers worked the background into their writing (much like an sf author hiding an expository lump) unobtrusively, using the shared knowledge of the fannish in-group but also providing enough context, enough cursory description of the characters described, that a new fan had something to hang his understanding on.*

this he contrasts with John Harvey's:

Jimmy doesn't consider himself a writer and what he does write is aimed at a small known audience. Therefore common reference points can be used as a kind of shorthand in making the task of communication simpler.

and Simon Ounsley's:

There is so much shared knowledge between the writer and the readers that a lot of the work is taken out of the writing [...]. Just mention D. West a lot and you can probably scrape by.

('146', muttered one old comedian to another. 'Oh yes, and 253' replied his companion.) John's riposte is simple: 'What you've got when you've got an author who just mentions 'D. West' and expects a laugh is **lazy** fannish writing'.

From this point John D. Berry goes on to consider **how** fanzines should look. This completes his double, and by dealing with the PR publications for CONSPIRACY he is able to bring together again the notions of fanzine publishing and fannish togetherness in terms of attending conventions and drinking in the bar. It's not merely that I agree with what John writes, but that he argues with such care and elegance which leads me to urge you to obtain a copy of *Wing Window* 10 and read it all.

Not by chance, Owen Whiteoak's fanzines come very close to illustrating John Berry's points in the negative sense. Reports of fannish get-togethers almost make their own contexts, but there were times in reading these two fanzines when the descriptions seemed, in their fawning groupiness, to be derivative of movie magazines rather than of sf magazines. This is illustrated by the struggle letter-writers seem to have to go through to respond to earlier issues. In some ways it's the cleverness with which Whiteoak skates close to deserving admonishment in Berryian terms which one most admires; it would be more pleasant if one could snuggle a little closer to Whiteoak's intentions.

The final group of fanzines to be considered is the group of magazine-imitators. There are nine of them in this batch, some less magazine-like than others, and I'll start with this latter group.

Secant comes from someone who almost sobbingly admits (on page 10 of issue 2) that it marks a decade in fandom for him. Greg Hills knows exactly how to put together a well-mimeoed fanzine, and every page of *Secant* is carefully laid out.

But I find myself struggling with Greg Hills's fanzines because, I think, there's a relentless over-earnestness about them. After half a dozen pages of his own recent history, Greg provides us with a lot of stuff which takes science fiction and its ideas seriously. I mean

seriously, for the ideas are presented as those of intellectual Leviathans, fully capable of leaping to cosmic conclusions from a standing start. The 'fiction' part of 'science fiction' seems to go unnoticed, and while I've no objection to looking at various aspects of a fictive world, the Hills philosophy seems a little too myopic to me.

Then, in the second of the issues under consideration (number 3) Greg decides to go in for some Deep Analysis. There's a series of fanzine reviews in which the obsession with reproduction of fanzines and the means by which this is achieved is almost Freudian. There's certainly an unwarranted assumption that everyone shares Greg's views about the Right Way to Produce Fanzines, but we are ready for this because we've just come through an introductory piece on the value of fanzines which ignores everything I value in fanzines and sets up, instead, a dollar-value. Everything, the drift of this article leads on to believe, is valuable only in exchange terms (preferably for money); perhaps Greg is thinking of joining the Australian Labor Party. His resolution is the kind which might lead you and me to decide that the original article wasn't worth writing: do we need four pages to decide that fanzines are published as part of the quest for egoboo? Elsewhere in this issue Marc Ortlieb explains that he is indeed a victim of the computer.

Frank Macskasy Jr **almost** has fanzine production under control, but there's a curious break in the middle of his main article (about an NZ fan artist) into which are inserted three pages of fanzine reviews. As that article is the only substantial piece in *The Kryptonite Fanzine* the break is doubly puzzling. It's hard to tell from this issue what Frank is like at fanzine editing; there's almost none of his own writing here, except for some rather tentative fanzine reviews which are little more than lists of contents. The letter-writers don't have much to say about previous issues which is enlightening. I didn't get a strong sense of Frank's personality from this one.

I think of Cathy Kerrigan as a new fan, but this is the 8th issue of *Cathseye*. *Cathseye* really hovers between letter substitute and general fanzine; the **approach** is that of the general magazine, the appearance is very much that of letter substitute. Like *Secant* this is mostly about science fiction, though with more consideration given to the fiction. *Cathseye* 9, which I've not seen and which is to be largely about George Turner, may mark a change in direction which will clarify where Cathy's going with her fanpublishing.

The final group of fanzines consists of those which 'look and feel' like magazines; only three of them are Australian. *Sikander* is the other half of Irwin Hirsh's publishing empire, the part which has had

to take a back seat to the frantically-regular *Larrikin*. In some ways, as a result, this issue seems a lesser thing than its predecessors. But it retains - at least for me - Irwin's imprint in its balance of content.

Irwin's editorial/article could hardly be more personal than it is; Wendy's doubly-dangerous experience in hospital is reported with care, but the emphasis on the article is on recovering from the past, not reliving it. Each of the articles gives every sign of having been chosen to allow the writer to use all of his talents, so some of them are predictable. But Cy Chauvin's mythic DUFF report was **quite** unexpected, and goes to show that Irwin has ways of getting his writers to move away from their usual grooves. The letter-column is left to the readers, although the letters have been chosen so that a thread flows through the whole thing.

Jack Herman's *Wahf-full* is rather closer to the letter-substitute variety than is *Sikander*, by which I mean the contents are dominated by the personality of the editor rather as *Secant* is, although *Wahf-full* ranges wider. In *Sikander* Irwin is much more inclined to encourage his writers to pursue their own interests, while *Wahf-full* deals with conventions and convention politics, and movies, as well as having a letter column in which Jack jostles with the letter writers in developing arguments of one kind or another. This way of producing fanzines ensures that there is plenty of opportunity to get miffed with the editor - which is almost guaranteed to increase reader participation. The result is that there's an apparent (but misleading) narrowness in the content; it isn't **really** like that, but it seems so.

The Space Wastrel is rather more like *Sikander* in approach, though without, I think, the coherence Irwin brings to his fanzines. Lurking behind a cover on the theme that sex is the friendliest thing three people can do together is a very mixed bag of articles which look more like whatever happened to be handy than anything else. Lucy Sussex's and Michelle's convention reports could hardly be more different. In fact no pair of successive articles could be said to have any relationship other than consecutivity. To surprise a reader with a particular contribution may be a good ploy: to do so without end (and seemingly to no purpose) is less easy to understand. I found most of the pieces too short or lightweight to bear the burden the editors want them to carry. Pity.

Erg Quarterly is an anomaly in this set of fanzines - much of it is devoted to science fiction; six pages of brief book reviews, five pages on the problem of 'first editions', and a short sciency article make this look very much like a fanzine of the serious kind from the 'fifties (which is essentially what it is). Terry Jeeves has had so much practice

that producing a careful 24 pages must be a snap to him, but I thought that it was only in his autobiographical four pages that his illustrative talents were well-integrated with the text.

Munich Round Up is also a fanzine from the 'fifties; science fiction and closely-related (usually science-oriented) subjects (including conventions) dominate *MRU* - together with the regular appearance of the Elmer T Hack cartoon (in German, like almost all of *MRU*). There's a long list of sf-tapes available from Waldemar Kleinmair or Waldemar Kummig, some of them looking very interesting indeed. I'm surprised that English-speaking fandom hasn't developed any sort of system of gathering together tape-recordings of sfnal events to match this German effort. Most issues of *MRU* devote more space to fannish events, and have a longer Englished version but *MRU*, whether infrequent or relatively inaccessible, remains one of my favourite fanzines.

Duprass, I'm pleased to see, has as a major contribution a convention report from 16 years in the past. Apart from that, it looks just like a 'sixties fanzine which has been slightly uprated technologically (for example, with somewhat better electro-stencilling of illustrations). The written contents depend for their impact not so much upon content as upon the way the writers present their ideas, while the illustrations are all more than competent. All of *Duprass* is devoted to recording the lives and activities of science fiction fans; in that it is just like *Sikander*.

Mimosa is the same. Like *Duprass* and *Sikander* it depends upon the reader caring about the lives and non-science-fiction activities of science fiction fans. It's easy enough to do this, but I wonder how well someone trying to apply the Greg Hills analysis of fanzine worth would manage? None of these fanzines is intended for the neophyte, at any rate, but to some extent *Mimosa* and *Duprass* constitute successful expressions of Marc Ortlieb's interest in round table conversations.

This Never Happens, although a very personal fanzine which deals with the lives of science fiction fans, is neatly balanced. Pondering just why this appears to be the case, I notice that the articles run up to a maximum length of five pages, which means the writers are given enough space to make a substantial point, but not enough to be boring. Since it's unlikely that I'll ever learn from this discovery, perhaps I should just say what a good piece of editing this is and pass on to the next fanzine.

Finally *Outworlds* is not at all like the other general fanzines I've discussed. The three main articles are outstandingly successful pieces of writing independent of their context, and the way Bill Bowers has done a balancing act to get them into one issue is admirable. Terry Carr's faanfiction about a 'Fannish Clarion' brings fandom and prodrom together skilfully, as does George R R Martin in writing about his early days as a fan/writer. Then the third author, Robert Lowndes, writes about his early days as a magazine editor, and one feels the three pieces merge to create a solid picture of the science fiction microcosm. It's imaginatively and confidently done.

It's a pity that so well-prepared a fanzine should be let down by a bad choice in layout; I do not think that running the letter column in the gutter of each double page works, and indeed I've always wondered which superhumans this approach to layout has been prepared for. I've never been able to follow a different column with each eye (the only possible benefit from such a layout), and have never met anyone who could. Is this intended as an ultimate demonstration of the fact that fans are (or ought to be) slans