

May 24th... The blank space at the foot of the last page was caused by my losing the first draft of a piece I had written about the film, HAMLET. I had started stencilling it, you see, but the original disappeared somewhere between Clifton Hill and St Kilda, and I'm far too lazy to rewrite it.

I don't know that I'll get much work done in this room. As I mentioned earlier, this flat has three bedrooms, and Diane said I could have the largest of them - it's 11'3" by 14'3" - providing I put all my junk in it. That is, around two thousand books, four hundred records, a stereo set-up, my newly-acquired tape recorder (a large one, if not a particularly good one - a Teac A-2020), two large desks, a filing cabinet, two old chairs and various other things I seem to hang onto. Somehow I've managed to fit everything in. For the first time ever I have all my books in the one room and on shelves at that. Also I have the sound system rigged so that I can play records and hear them either through the main speakers in the lounge room or through the tape recorder's speakers here. Very convenient, but when there's something particularly lovely going, as there is at this moment - some organ music by Frescobaldi - it's very hard to concentrate on typing stencils, believe me.

What a fortnight it's been... We found this flat on a Saturday morning, 9th May. It wasn't ready to be occupied when we saw it about 11 o'clock, and the owner, who was painting something when we looked at it, suggested we call back when his wife was here. We filled in an hour or so by doing the shopping and calling at Leigh Edmonds' place (he wasn't home). After interviewing the lady and signing the lease (not a very legal-looking one: it refers to "the above property" but doesn't mention any names or addresses apart from our signatures), we drove into town (just over four miles, for the benefit of outlanders) to lunch at that renowned hostelry, the "New Texas". And there were Messrs. Edmonds, Harding and Gillespie, looking all cultured and perceptive as ever and talking fannish talk. We lunched, left them there debating what they would do with the afternoon, and went home. Hardly inside the door and there was a phone call from Sydney. The caller? Mike Horvat. I said, "G'day, Mike" enthusiastically, and he asked me if I knew who he was. Know who he was! Could I forget an ASFR subscriber?! No sir, not even if he does live in Tangent, Oregon (population 87). (But I have to admit that I misremembered his address as Tangent, Ohio.)

Mike was on R&R leave from Vietnam and wondered if he could call on us. Sure thing: would he like to stay with us? He would, and he did. After hanging up, Diane informed me that our spare bedding was at Leigh Edmonds' and Paul Stevens' place, since they had had interstate visitors the previous week. So I drove again to Balaclava, and again there was no-one home. But as I walked out to the street, along came Leigh and Bruce, looking as perceptive and cultured as ever, talking fannish talk. We talked a little, had some coffee (Leigh doesn't drink the stuff, so we all hiked around to the nearest milk-bar), talked some more, examined Leigh's monstrous hairloom - an enormous chest-of-drawers-kind-of-thing - talked again, and then I remembered why I had come and thought I'd better go home. I dropped Bruce off at Spencer Street station and Leigh came on with me - to play chess, or, if Mike turned up that night, to help me with cultured (not to mention perceptive) fannish talk of an international nature. For his third visit in a row Leigh had to endure a meal of fish and chips, which we consumed in the bedroom since Diane was feeling out of

sorts, and we had just finished when Mike arrived. Our first real fair-dinkum honest-to-goodness walking talking American fan, by crikey! (Hank Davis was here for the EasterCon, but he was so quiet we hardly noticed him. Certainly he didn't look or act like a man who has Dangerous Visions.)

Mike is a tall, athletic-looking, clean-cut, smiling young bloke with a science degree and (back home) 70,000 books, a couple of Volkswagens and a church. Thinking of him there in Vietnam, doing a fifth-rate clerk's job and not at all convinced he should be there, makes you wonder all over again what kind of mad world we live in.

Over the next few days we had a great time, talking about all kinds of things, driving him here and there, comparing everyday customs, introducing him to various things we take for granted but new to him - such as trams, Goon Shows, double-headed icecreams (he saw his first one in Bacchus Marsh, Bruce), fish and chips. It was a new experience for me, seeing Melbourne through his eyes, imagining it as it might strike someone for the first time.

We drove up to Ballarat, where he nearly got run over, standing in the middle of the road to take a photo of a sign someone had painted on a railway parapet - "Smash Yankee Imperialism", it said, or something like that. We found a little bookshop, where I bought Ashbolt's AN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE and Mansfield's BLISS and he bought... a John Russell Fearn hardback. (He asked me if it was any good. I said, Read the opening paragraph. He did, and made his own decision.) In the Ballarat Gardens I took a photo of him and Diane standing beside one of the heraldic lions; and beside a sign reading "Please Keep Off The Lions".

On Wednesday night we saw him off at Essendon. He departed with an enormous sack full of books and fanzines, and with our sincere hope that he will come to Melbourne again. I think he had a really restful leave, full of talk and music and books and a long excursion into open, peaceful, undevastated countryside. For our part, we enjoyed his visit immensely, and we sort of hope we might get to Tangent, Oregon one day. (And not only to see a church full of books...)

When Mike went, we settled down to the delights of moving house. (But lets not talk about that.) In between shifting Volkswagen-loads of books and saucepans I managed to read a couple of Evelyn Waugh's novels, Nancy Spain's autobiography and Flann O'Brien's THE DALKEY ARCHIVE, and to spend quite a few hours working on a word competition devised by our evening newspaper. (After I'd posted my entry off I started wondering whether my employer would be altogether pleased if I should happen to win the thing.) Leigh came one night and we talked until two. And right in the middle of this fairly normal (only mildly chaotic) time a couple of globe-trotting Bangsunds arrived in town.

Other Bangsunds? I find it hard to comprehend. In effect I am the only male Bangsund at large in Australia (my grandfather is 90 and lives in a world all of his own: he last recognized me about eight years ago). And suddenly there we are, sitting in my sister's lounge room with the legendary (in my family) Erling Bangsund of Tromsø, Norway, philatelist extraordinary and holder of King Olaf's gold medal for social services or whatever; and his son, Ivar. I won't bore you with the family chitchat that went on that night, apart from

confirming that my suspected English relatives, mentioned in Lodbrog *1, do in fact exist. I understand that William Bangsund lives in Wales (does that make him the Jonah of the family?), and the lady relative I referred to is Mrs Dalziel Job.

Readers of John Foyster's "Satura" might conceivably remember a piece of mine called "The Saga of Sai-Hoo the Cynic". Really? - you don't remember? Oh. You prefer not to remember. Ah well. It was rejected by OZ, too. Neville or Walsh (I forget which) said it was pointless, and that the pun which it led up to was a bad one. The pun was the point, actually, but not everyone sees things my way. Anyway, there was a strange echo of that little piece in something Uncle Erling said to me. I couldn't quite believe my ears. He was showing me a photo of some building in Tromsø which he once owned, and he said (or I thought he said) "This is the House of Ill-Fame". I asked him to repeat that, and when he did realized he was saying "the House of Alheim". I'm not sure what it was, but Alf's Home is now a large community centre, with swimming pool and the works. Pity about that; we nearly killed the puritan-Bangsund image for good.

My sister Ruth noticed that both Erling and Ivar sign their names with an accent over the "u". Beautie, I thought - now I can make my name even more foreign by signing it as they do: Bangsūnd. However (my second disappointment for the night), they told me it was simply to distinguish the "u" from the "n", and not part of the name. Since my signature is normally indecipherable except for the "B" and "s" this is no use to me at all.

May 30th... (continued)

We've had another letter from Mike Horvat, and he hopes to get back here for a few days in June.

Charlie Brown informs me that he has asked Bruce Gillespie if he would like to be Australian Locus agent. Dick Geis, in a very friendly and concerned letter, urges me not to gaffiate and says he probably won't appoint another Australian agent for SF Review. Ethel Lindsay hopes we're settled at Clifton Hill (* blush *). Terry Jeeves thought Scythrop was okay but needed some artwork, so enclosed three drawings. Howard Mills liked Scythrop, too, and I might print his letter here if I can find it. Norm Metcalfe sent a stack of his apazines, which I didn't enjoy.

For the interest of the dozen or so people who voted, here are the results of the Scythrop ballot: LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS/STAND ON ZANZIBAR; ANALOG; ANCHOR MAN; SF COMMENTARY. As I have indicated in conversation and correspondence, I will not be making any awards.

Tom Disch wrote some weeks ago, wondering where his Ditmar had got to and implying that he was thinking of coming to Australia sometime. I don't know if he has contacted anyone else here; if not, that is the basis of the rumour that he's coming. There was nothing definite.

Now I must go and do the shopping and vote for my friendly ALP man, whoever he is. When I come back I'll look for Dr Mills's letter. Don't go 'way.

May 31st... Couldn't find it. Tough. Sorry I'm late, Gary. See yez.