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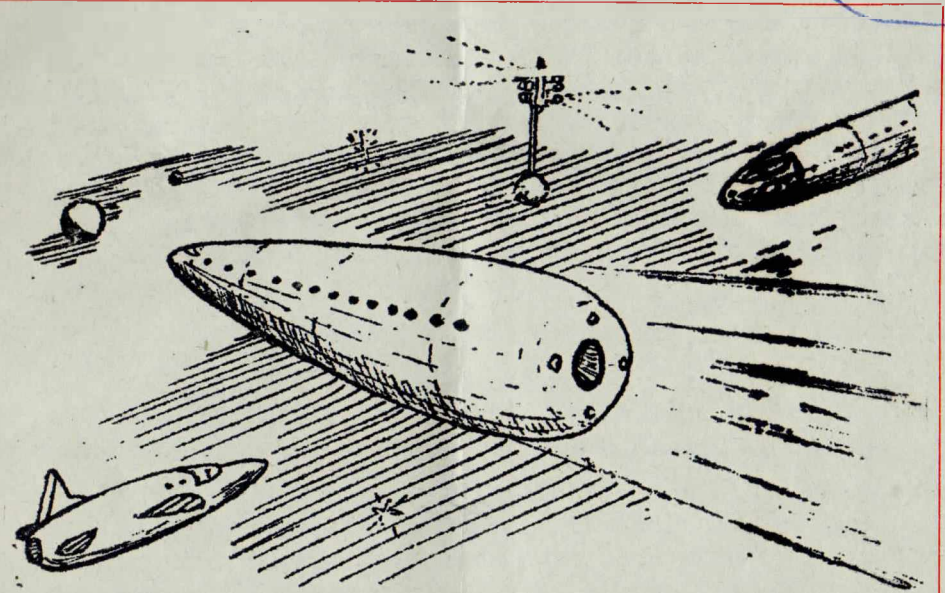
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FOURTH AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION REPORT
MAGAZINE REVIEWS + OVERSEAS
BRAISBANE NEWS + NEWS
AN AFPA PUBLICATION

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FOURTH AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION REPORT

I. J. CROZIER

As a prelude to the Convention, a very successful Fancy Dress Ball was held on Friday evening, March 18th, at the Convention site, Dunbar House, Watson's Bay.

This had to be seen to be believed. Although the attendance of 40 could have been better, everyone present had a whale of a time. Some of the sights of the Ball were Bill Veney and partner as 'Salome and the Wandering Jew', Arthur Haddon startlingly painted green as a Martian Grub, and, in my opinion, the best costume of them all Norma Hemming as the DYNAMIC cover, recently out as a BRE, a Venusian Swamp Girl. Fortunately, the color Norma used was a vegetable dye, and came off fairly easily but Arthur was still showing signs of the copper based chemical he used on Sunday evening.

The report of his demise is expected hourly.

Bill Hubble turned up as the character out of Sprague de Camp's 'Stolen Doormouse', while Doug Nicholson was in character as a ghoul. Crozier went as himself. Gaaaaah !

As a contrast to other years, this show went off with a bang, and set the tempo for the rest of the Con. We can only hope that the participants have recovered by now, though Bill Veney was still looking sick on it at the time of our leaving.

SATURDAY MORNING.

Good publicity was obtained via the press and radio on the Saturday morning, and around 30 fans turned up for

the morning session, which was mainly a get-together-and-meet-your-neighbour do. Original artwork was displayed from NEW WORLDS and NEBULA, both of which lots were auctioned on Sunday evening. On behalf of the Convention Committee, I would like to go on record, and extend our sincere thanks to both these publishing companies for the support shown to the Convention.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

The session opened around 2.30 PM with Dr. John Blatt being introduced by Convention Chairman, Pat Burke. The title of Dr. Blatt's address was SCIENCE IN SCIENCE FICTION, and in contrast to previous conventions, this was interesting. My opposition to serious and technical addresses as a Science FICTION Convention is well-known, and I was prepared to criticize Dr. Blatt as much as I have previous Convention speakers, but I was agreeably surprised at the line taken by Dr. Blatt. He made good points on the earlier stuff, pointing out that the science in those days in the main was long dreary descriptions of gadgets which nobody, including the author, knew what they were anyway. The renaissance came about under John W. Campbell in the late 30's, in which he pushed stories featuring the effect of new inventions on society.

All in all, the address was most warmly welcomed by all those present, and I for one, hope to see more emphasis in future on science fiction at Conventions, as Dr. Blatt gave us.

TRANSPORTATION IN THE FUTURE was the title of the address given by Mr. John Spence, while Wing Commander Ian Scott gave a talk on Dianetics. I would assume these addresses were of interest to (a): A transport enthusiast, and (b): a Dianetics follower, but to me, anyway, they were just so much wasted time.

Guest of Honour Arthur C. Clarke and Dr. Blatt then went onto the platform, and provided the second highlight of the day, answering many and varied questions from the floor. I was amazed at some of the questions. They must have been boning up on them for weeks.

Mr. Clarke disclosed that the Americans were advanced in their plans for an Earth Satellite Vehicle, and in his opinion, they should be one in operation within 10 years. One Sydney newspaper apparently got carried away, as they reported him as saying that man would be on the Moon within 10 years. It just goes to show you never want to say much when the reporters are around, or you'll surprise yourself in the morning.

This was a very enjoyable part of the proceedings, and after it had concluded, tea was taken.

Attendance at this session was 51.

SATURDAY NIGHT.

Lead film was the 20th Century Fox epic THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, starring Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal and Gort. Most readers will know this, so I won't go into detail. Second film was the silent classic, METROPOLIS, made back in the 20's by Fritz Lang.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Only about 20 fans turned up for the auction and as a result, prices were very low. There was only about 20 American items, the balance being BRE's and original British PBs and magazine. Top price was paid by yours truly for the pocket book edition of FANCIES AND GOODNIGHTS by John Collier, This set me back 17/6. Mostly, the American stuff brought around 3/- and the rest around 1/-.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

To some, this was the best session of the whole convention, but I think it was a disgrace. Supposedly the business session, the business of presenting reports was finished fairly soon, and the matter which had flared up at the last convention was on again.

Reports were received from the Melbourne SF

Group, delivered by J. Keating, Adelaide SF Association by Margaret Finch, read by Arthur Haddon, Mr. Bill Veney gave attendees an idea of the activities of the Brisbane SF Group, Ted Butt reported on the demise of the Newcastle Group, Vol Molesworth gave a report on the Futurian Society of Canberra, Mrs. Molesworth reported that the Vertical Horizons femme Group was apparently non-existent, but it was hoped to form a new femme group within the near future for activities in connection with the FSS and Thursday Night groups.

Mr. Brian Finch was surprised to be asked for a report on the activities of the ARCTURIAN PLAYERS, but obliged as best he could. He announced the holding of a competition of would-be playwrights. For further particulars, contact Brian.

Mr. W. Hubble reported on the activities of the North Shore Futurian Society, and mentioned that most of the energy of this group had been devoted to the Convention this year, so activities had been small.

Mr. David Cohen reported on the activities of the Blue Centaur Book Centre.

On behalf of the Futurian Society of Sydney, Ken Martin detailed this organization's activities over the past year, pointing out how close to extinction the club was prior to the return of P. Glick from Melbourne. This situation can be traced to the split in Sydney fandom, which took place some 18 months ago.

Mr. D. Nicholson reported on the present position of FORERUNNER, saying that the 3rd issue will be the last. He mentioned that in his opinion, there was a great need for a magazine of FORERUNNER's type in Australia, in order to develop the fan authors, and help them to break into the pro field. He hoped that some fan with more resources would start one.

A motion was moved by Vol Molesworth praising the work of Don Tuck in Tasmania in putting out THE HANDBOOK OF SF and FANTASY, which, I'm sure, every reader will join in with.

Mr. Doug Nicholson reported on the activities of

the Bridge Club Group and SCANSION. He outlined the reasons for the move to the Bridge Club, and the reasons for the local sheet SCANSION, which was a modern FUTURIAN OBSERVER, both in scope and popularity (?).

It was moved V. Molesworth and seconded by P. Glick that the meeting deplore the Obscene Publications Bill, now before the NSW parliament. This was carried unanimously.

The Chairman, P. Burke, asked whether any progress had been made on the motion put forward at last year's Convention, that the two Sydney Groups meet and try to iron out their difficulties. Motion was made and carried that this discussion be held under an impartial chairman, and delegate I. J. Crozier was 'bulldozed' into the chair. He made it clear that the position was most unhappy for him.

Discussion was held as to whether the Tape recorder should be switched off, in view of the contentious matter being discussed. After a lot of heated discussion, it was decided that the recording continue, but be transcribed under supervision of the Convention Committee.

Discussion was heated, and acting chairman Crozier never had much hope of controlling the meeting. I won't go into the gory details here, but finish on the earnest hope that when the two groups meet on Monday April 4th, they conclude once and for all this childish wrangling. After all, it's only a hobby - to most of us, anyway - and should be treated that way.

From where I sat, it looked as if the whole thing is a clash of personalities, and the sooner these personalities are gagged, forced out or resign from fan activities, the better it will be for all concerned.

This type of thing was alright when they were immature schoolchildren, but one expects something a bit better from them now. My God, the Labor Party hasn't got anything on Sydney fandom!

SUNDAY EVENING.

Highlight of the last portion of the Convention, an original play authored by Norma Hemming, had some publicity in the Saturday morning papers. Titled MISS DENTON'S DILEMMA, it was somehow tagged SEX WITH HEX in the tabloids, and as a result, there was a very large audience present eagerly awaiting the raising of the curtain. When this was done by a very engaging nymph, there was an immediate raising of blood pressure among certain members of the audience.

Play was a very clever bit of work, reminiscent of the work of the late Thorne Smith, with gods, goddesses, nymphs etc wandering around in gay abandon, and very little else. Capable acting of the cast was appreciated, with Jack Leggett superb in the alcoholic portrayal of the father of the gods, Bill Veney suitably loud as Mars, Norma Hemming as Miss Denton (younger version), Brian Finch doubling as Bacchus and the older Miss Denton, and an unbelievable Cupid in the person of Bluey Glick.

On the whole, the Convention was a great success, and congratulations are to be extended to Arthur Haddon, for the superb location at Dunbar House and to all other members of the Committee.

Only one thing was missing - the result of the Short Story Competition and Artwork competition. What about it?

The artwork from NEW WORLDS and NEBULA were auctioned on Sunday evening, and brought fabulous prices. Average was around 30/- each.

I was informed that all profits (if any) from the Convention will be passed on to the Melbourne Group. This is a common practice in the States, and we here in Melbourne will continue it. Thanks a lot, Sydney.

Ian J. Crozier

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BRISBANE NEWS

On February 27, half a dozen Brisbane fans, Jack Adams, John Gurney and wife, Iris Girvan and George and Betty Tafe, motored down to Coolangatta to visit Charlie Mustchin. George and Betty have been there before, but the others were reduced to despair at the sight of Queensland's premier collection of science fiction hard-cover volumes, magazines and fan publications. The well-known phenomenon of restless fluctuation between book cases and magazine cabinet set in, and delight at sight of something fabulous, but hitherto not seen, alternated with frustration at having not enough time to sample anything, while endeavouring to see everything.

However, the famed Mustchin hospitality and Charlie's generosity in lending freely quite a number of items, offset the possibility of anyone contracting neuroses and / or complexes as a result of frustration. Favourite scheme after a visit to Mustchin's is to wangle annual holidays in Coolangatta, and spend a few weeks in close contact with that library! Meanwhile, Chas, we hope you have an extra good memory for who has what of yours, or that you keep a secret record. We don't want anything of yours missing when we holiday at Coolangatta!

March meeting of the Brisbane Group was a quiet one. Present: Rick Day (first as usual); Fred Dreman; Iris Girvan; John (Champ) Adams; John Gurney; Frank Bryning and host and hostess George and Betty Tafe. We had hoped Chas Mustchin might be there, but he was too busy at home getting ready to receive Arthur C. Clarke, who plans to spend some days at Coolangatta at the end of March.

Business was done purveying ETHERLINE, and exchanging library items. John Gurney made preliminary arrange-

ments for a party from the Group to view the firmament through the telescopes at the invitation of the Astronomical Society in Brisbane on March 20, weather permitting. There followed some discussion of the more advanced (!) aspects of nuclear physics, a few chess games, talk, supper (bless you Betty !) and more talk.

WARREGO

OVERSEAS NEWS

Not much in the news line this issue, but here goes. A new film company has been formed in U.K., Romney Pictures, and the first film will be THE ISLAND, a mature science fiction film in CinemaScope and Technicolor, starring Jack Hawkins, scripting by Howard Koch (remember Welles War of the Worlds?), technical advice by R. A. Smith and Arthur C. Clarke.

EARTHLIGHT by A. C. Clarke is due from Mullers April while MISSION OF GRAVITY by Clement will be out from Hale in June. HELLFLOWER by George O. Smith from the Bodley Head in May, 240 Pp, 9/6 stg., CATEGORY PHOENIX edited by Bleiler & Dikty is a collection of 3 short novels, Firewater by Tenn, Category Phoenix by Ellanby and Surface Tension by Blish, 192 Pp, 9/6 stg, out on March 7 ANGELO'S MOON by Alec Brown, from Bodley Head also, is 224 Pp, 9/6 stg, due May.

In production at Bray Studios, U.K. is Hammer Films production of THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENTS, a new sf film. Special effects are by Leslie Bowe and film is directed by Val Guest and produced by Anthony Hines.

Upcoming from Columbia is MONSTER BENEATH THE SEA, in which Faith Domergue and Kenneth Tober will appear.

IJC

MAGAZINE REVIEWS

IF BRE 15

Cover by Robert Swanson depicts apparently the authors idea of the trend of evolution, when we mere males will finish up as midgets with amazonian wives. So so.

ESCAPE VELOCITY by Fontenay. He caught a killer on Ceres with maths. Good. QUICKIE by Lesser. A gate washer in the holiday matrimonials. Fair. MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL GOOD by Wilkins. The playboy is an undercover do-gooder. Fair. PATTERN FOR PENELOPE by Young. He liked oceans so he cancelled her milk bill. Fair.

THE NAME OF THIS CITY by Christopher. He led a successful revolt against their E.T. rulers. Fair. LITTLE BOY by Neal. More about after the A bomb. Fair. MIRACLE BY PRICE, by Cox. He used the professor's gadget to help his own romance, only he never knew it. Fair. SPATIAL DELIVERY by Garrett. They used the space station as a babies incubator. Just fair. UNWELCOME VISITOR by Morrison. A rather funny twist on the ET visitor plot. Quite good. PEACE by Arkaway and Henig. The Venusians take us over for our own good. Only fair.

This marks the last of the BRE's of this magazine. I'm sorry to see it go, and I'll miss it.

Jack Keating.

AUTHENTIC 53

Cover by Davis who does a rather good job of the old faithful 'Saturn seen from.....' etc.

WITHOUT LOVE by Strauss. A team of geniuses, held together by a woman, create their successors and botch the job. Not bad. CONSPIRACY by Christopher. He came, she saw, and

the doctor conquered. Not bad. A PRESENT FROM MARS by Jordan . This is a louse - y plot, and the story is just fair. PLAYING WITH TIME by Moore. He goes up and down time like a lift. PARTING by Rigby. She didn't want to lose her robot playmate and she succeeded in helping him, but she lost her pop. Not bad.

The articles were very interesting, there being a rather large list. I won't itemise them but one on blueprint for a bug eyed monster is quite good.

No inside illos (hooray !)

This issue has had rather poor fiction for quite some time, and is only relieved by the articles. I hope they improve.

Jack Keating

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION BRE 22.

Vidmar takes Mel Hunters place on the cover this month and does a very good job. PARTY OF THE TWO PARTS by William Tenn is a mildly amusing piece. One man's filthy picture is another man's textbook. Even on the glorious seventeenth I was unable to call Finn O'Donnevan's SUBSISTANCE LEVEL more than fair.

THE DEPARTED by Arthur Sellings has as its theme a rather pointless alternative euthanasia. F. L. Wallace's THE IMPOSSIBLE VOYAGE HOME shows that nothing can come between fond grandparents and their latest grandchild. The Pohl/Kornbluth serial finishes as well as can be expected from this team.

By the way, someone should tell the makeup editor that a 250 word article is usually not listed as a short story.

Tony Santos

AMAZING: BRE 8.

Cover by William Benbrach illustrates BLESSED ARE THE MURDEROUS and does it well. This is a return to form.

SELL IT TO SATURN by Lesser - he brought a never full cage, trouble, trouble, trouble. Just fair. NEVER LET THE LEFT HAND by Earl - he educated the lary right hand side of his brain, and it murdered him. Fair. BATTLEGROUND by Morrison - Earth is saved from being a battleground by a kick in the stomach. Fair.

TWO'S A CROWD by Toland - he found a package and his wife - as usual - got curious, tch, tch. A good new idea.

BLESSED ARE THE MURDEROUS by Jorgenson - after the A bomb once more, only they don't believe in being saved.

GRANDMA GOES TO MARS by Bloch - follows the title, but, oh boy ! that last line redeems a ,till then, fair story. LORELIE OF CHAOS by Winterbottom - the robot loves the lady. fair. THE REVENGE OF EDWIN MUDD by Jakes - he talks back to announcers . THE GONE DOGS by Herbert - some cross breeding . Fair.

Articles are not bad. This is a better than usual issue.

Jack Keating.

SCIENCE FANTASY 12.

Quinn excels himself with his cover painting . His best effort yet. The novelette THE WRONG TRACK is a rather good 'if'. The author - Bert Chandler/George Whitley - Carnell was unable to make up his mind.

Alan Barclay's THE DRAGON is a post atomic- war story with a different mutant angle. THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER , by E. C. Tubb tells of the perfect end of a perfect day.

AUTOFICTION LTD. by Wanless Gardner may explain some of the crud we see today. A fair tale. Dal Stivens' FREE WILL (two Aussies in one issue) is a most entertaining robot tale and whilst it lacks a moral, ETERNITY by Bill Temple is loaded with them. A very amusing yarn. BREATHING SPACE by Brian Aldiss tells of an outpost which had forgotten its purpose and a machine which had not. In all a fair issue.

Tony Santos.

Melbourne News

17/3/55.

In spite of the date, there was not a shamrock to be seen at tonight's gathering, at which only a few were in attendance. Keating, Crozier and McLelland were in Sydney attending the Convention, and Merv Binns was lending a handkerchief to Johnny Ray.

The Chairman announced that the Richmond Town Hall had been confirmed as the site of the 1956 Convention, & we have sole use of western entrance, upstairs hall, all conveniences and kitchen. The hall is well lit, well ventilated and equipped with power points. The kitchen is small but well furnished. The seating is similar to that of the Symphony Concerts in the Melbourne Town Hall (nuff said).

There will be an early Con Committee meeting decided on dates, and to view the hall.

The Chairman asked permission to pay the £2 deposit from club funds, and advised that the total charge was still under discussion. He also advised that it was necessary to register with the Taxation Dept., and asked approval of a letter to be sent.

Some difficulty is being experienced obtaining film for the showing on April 1st., but a 3rd trip to the Film Centre should right matters.

The Scientology Congress, at the Coppin Hall, Punt Rd., Richmond, a 4 day affair at Easter, seems to be the Dianetics Group under a different name. The advance publicity has mental control, tension removal and auditors listed - a familiar pattern.

The evening finished in the usual manner.

ARMAR