

NEVER AGAIN

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Every time I move house I reassure myself that this will be the last time. The events of January last should reinforce this attitude a thousandfold, yet I'm somehow doubtful that I will have learned my lesson. And, as the remainder of this woeful tale is unfolded, you'll realise that my mistake is but one of many.

As some of you may know, when we returned from OS last October we felt that there were some unsatisfactory aspects of your relationship with our landlord/estate agent. Yet we didn't wish to move, first because that flat was in other ways quite satisfactory, and second because we didn't think we would be able to find anywhere suitable and close; having become used to living in St Kilda, quite close to the Triangle of Death, we were not anxious to move out of that area.

At the same time, we knew that Lee Harding and Irene Pagram were sort of interested in moving in to our flat (and as it turned out so were a few other people) so the advantages of the flat (overlooking the sea, f'rinstance) would not be completely lost.

So we could at least look around, mindful of the fact that not only were Lee and Irene in the move, but so were Sally and John Bangsund, and Damien Broderick and Di were thinking of moving down from Sydney. It seemed the season for it. This concatenation turned out to be exhausting, in the end, and to have a deleterious effect on Melbourne fanzine publishing. (You'd noticed?)

We did find a place, just around the corner from the old flat, more or less the same size, but a house. And, being one house back from the beachfront, there was some semblance of a garden. Quite attractive.

And so to move. For most fans books are the primary concern, and certainly that sort of thing takes up most time. For me this is a major problem, but having moved a few times I believe I now do things in the right order, which is to take the books from the shelves, move the shelves to the new location, and then move the books to the new location, for they can in this way be placed directly on the shelves. A great method, and I wish I had followed it precisely. Unfortunately I have a few too many books, and had to shift some to the new house before moving the shelves.

In our case, however, the determining factor in our case is not the height of the piles of books, but Jenny's piano. Moving pianos is a specialist job, especially from upstairs flats. Especially when they can't be taken down the stairs.

It's a job for a crane, and they are expensive. When we moved in the crane was expensive, too, but at least that was evidence that the job could be done. Although I had not been a witness, I had seen photographic evidence.

This time I did watch, and I was very impressed. The whole job, from the time of arrival of the crane to its departure, took just under fifteen minutes, and that included a fair amount of time for writing out the (three-figure!) bill. Since the piano had to be moved onto a balcony, over the balustrade (decaying), and around some power lines, I reckon the time was charmingly short. Once the piano was safely out of the way, I spent some time assisting the movers.

Wrecked my back again, of course.

Shifting the books took the most time, as I've already indicated, and here we were helped especially by Brenda Mason, a non-fan friend, who spent one Saturday afternoon ferrying me and cartons of books (borrowed, the cartons that is, from John Bangsund and others) around the block to the new house. I managed to do most of the actual carrying, until we were interrupted by a former owner of the house who was delighted to see someone moving in and recounted to me some of the past history of the place, details of which were later sorted out with John Bangsund. While I listed, Brenda carted books.

On the day of the move (25 January) and later, Stephen Campbell came around with Mich and also helped move swags of stuff. It was all great fun, really, when you weren't sweating pints.

Since then Sally and John have moved from Kew to Fairfield, Lee and Irene are moving in the next week or so to St Kilda, and Damien and Di, when I last heard about it, were going to be moving to Brunswick. That would have been enough to knock us all over for a while, but there's more.

Early in January Mervyn Barrett said on the telephone that he would be coming to Australia in early February and could he stay with us. I replied in the affirmative (that's the part of the telephone you speak into), but pointed out that we would just have moved and that things might be a little more disorganised than usual. Didn't worry Mervyn.

Then in the week of the move Christine Ashby told me that Jean Weber was down here in hospital and would appreciate visitors. Packing frantically all weekend, I figured that we could possibly visit Jean on the Tuesday night. And, when I got home that night it was in time to get a message from Damien Broderick to say that we was visiting us that night; no Jean Weber. (And if I understand the actual chronology, Jean was just about out of hospital by then anyway.)

The other height of activity was when Keith Taylor came around the day after we had moved to run off his ANZAPA 'zine. Since I had promised to do this I unearthed the Roneo and ran off the single-sheeter. The Roneo has not been touched since. (The January CHUNDER! was finished in mid-January but waited a month to be collated and mailed.)

The table-tennis table remains covered in papers and uncollated fanzines. Where, we asked ourselves, is Mervyn Barrett?

February was a terrible month (still is). I had hoped to spend the time on house-cleaning and occasional sorties into the garden, but instead I've found myself involved in four conferences, three of them at weekends. It's beyond a joke. Where is Mervyn Barrett?

Finally on Tuesday night Mervyn Barrett telephones. I'm arriving Saturday lunchtime, he says, can you meet me? Ah, I says, I have a conference to attend, Mervyn, but Jenny may be able to meet you. Ring if there's no one there. Actually, says Mervyn, The real reason I rang was to ask if you could buy tickets for Stan Getz's concert on Saturday night. Fine, I reply. Interested in coming, he wonders. I have a conference, I reply.

Slap in the middle of all this excitement arrives the APPLESAUCE distribution. MINAC REQUIRED declares the firm text of A Taubman.

Is there no peace?