

that someone in the Government Printing Office kept on tripping over these vast mounds of uncollated pages that had been lying around for years and one day, having nothing better to do, decided to have a look at them. I like to think that that someone had some knowledge of Australian history, and that he almost had heart failure when he realized what was there. With the exception of a few hundred pages, what was there was the complete original and only edition of the HRA. The missing pages were reproduced in facsimile, and suddenly, after fifty-odd years out of print, there were a limited number of sets of this almost-legendary publication. By the time I came along there were two sets left in Adelaide and there were thought to be possibly four or five in other AGPS bookshops.

There were two in Melbourne. I checked that out a couple of days after I moved back here. Unlike Adelaide, the Melbourne shop allowed me to reserve a set, and a few weeks later I talked a finance company into letting me have them. Last week I was offered \$600 for my set, which I politely declined, mainly because I want to keep them, partly because booksellers are asking up to \$1200 for them. It would cost more than \$1200 to reprint them. By 1990 I should be able to swap them for a house in the suburbs (a very small house in an unpopular suburb at least).

The two series of Historical Records are not just shrewd investments and fun books to browse in: they form part of my basic working library. Most book editors I know seem to get by with a dictionary, maybe a style manual, and not much else. I'm eccentric, I know, but I can't work like that. Over the last three or four years I have been deliberately selling off entertaining books and replacing them with useful books. The odd thing is that I find so many of the useful books entertaining. The dangerous thing is that my pursuit of useful books takes me to the brink of book-collecting, and sometimes over it. Do I really need Peron's Voyage to the Southern Hemisphere (translated from the French, 1809, reprinted in facsimile, 1975)? At \$45? Well, booksellers are already asking more than \$45, and a few years from now... Which doesn't answer the question at all. I don't mean to be a collector, and I didn't set out to form a library of Australiana worth a frightening amount of money, but I am and I have, and god knows where it will all end.

What annoys me like mad is that there should be no need for me to spend so much money on the basic documents and standard works in Australian history. You would think that our

publishers would find it worth their while to keep these things in print. I think that, but they obviously don't. Next to the HRA and HRNSW the work most frequently cited by authors of popular (not to mention scholarly) histories is Flinders's Voyage to Terra Australis. The original edition of 1814 has lately fetched up to \$11 000 at auction. The second edition, a facsimile, was published in 1966; it cost \$25. I found a set last year for \$120. The going rate now is \$250-350. The standard biography of Flinders, Ernest Scott's, was published in 1914; it will set you back about \$120 if you can find a copy. Either of these books could easily be reprinted and sold at \$15-25. Similarly Scott's Australian Discovery (2 vols, 1929), constantly cited and rarely sighted. Complementary to Flinders is Baudin's Journals 1800-1803, first published in 1974 (the French haven't got round to publishing the original yet) by the Libraries Board of South Australia, and still available at \$15. But when the publishers run out of copies, which will be any day now, the booksellers will be asking \$50, maybe \$100, because they know it will not be reprinted, and each of them just happens to have ten or twenty or a hundred copies stashed away for the collectors who didn't collect in time.

Can you imagine the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, or Parkman's Oregon Trail, being available only from secondhand booksellers, and costing \$120 or \$350 - not for the first edition, but for the most recent reprint?

About this point I usually get very upset and morbid about the industry that provides me with a living, also very boring, so I think I will stop.

WHY I RARELY WRITE MAILING COMMENTS

Because they have a tendency to ramble on for pages, that's why. Attached to this Hanrahan you will find the first number of Threepenny Planet, published for ANZAPA (but don't let that stop you sneaking a look at it), in which I talk to Mark Fraser for three pages. Since I don't seem to have time for 90-page apazines, not every month, some of my fellow members could easily get cross with me for not talking to them in mailing comments. So I usually just talk to everyone. But somehow last Thursday I seem to have drafted some comments to FLAP members. It'll ruin my image, but here they are.

ARTHUR HLAVATY There's something about your writing that I don't like. Maybe I see in it a reflection of some

unlovely part of my own character.

I rather liked the 70s, except that they didn't seem to last as long as earlier decades. The 40s, now - they must have gone on for years! A decade of mostly sheer bliss for me, the 40s. Malcolm Fraser must have enjoyed them too, going by his efforts to take this country back there.

BECKY CARTWRIGHT I think it's disgusting the way people go on about their cats in fanzines. I mean, surely they've read some sci-fi lately that they can talk about. Or they can list their favourite pop music records. There's lots of things you can do in fanzines without resorting to going on about cats.

Fascinating, that tip about what you can do with pantyhose. But what does 'wing' mean, in that bit about what unmarried and 'unaffiliated' men will have to do? Someone else in this mailing uses the expression 'wing it' in a context that suggests something like 'fake it' or 'improvise' or maybe 'forget it, do something else'. Does it have something to do with shooting people in the arm? Lots of American culture and folk idiom is to do with shooting people, I find.

How about 'Cat on a Hot Tin Shibbleth'? Or 'Cat on a Cold Short Shrift' even. (Cat's in there again, Becky. You could easily alienate readers with this obsessive talk of cats. Bruce Gillespie used to go on about cats in his fanzines, and look what happened to him. He's got six, I think. He thinks they just wandered in off the street, but in fact what happened was the fans started sending him the things like they send Tucker bricks. I would tell him only I don't want to hurt his felines.)

Speaking of party games, which you were - no, the stuff about 'Cat on a Hot Tin Wing', not the stuff about pantyhose - what sort of books would you find in Bonaparte's Retreat, I wonder. Mein Kampf? Nixon's memoirs?

There is indeed an unusual Don Fitch. He's the one the usual Don Fitch writes about.

Yes, I published 'Extract from a Freelancer's Diary' in the October 1979 Society of Editors Newsletter, and yes, it actually happened (except that I don't keep a diary). Some of it only 'happened' in my head - by which I mean not that I made it up but that what happened could only be seen by me. The personal, selective and (bless you) 'amusing' way I wrote about it is an example of what someone has called the 'fictive essay'. Fans don't tell lies, they write fictive essays, some of them long and detailed, like the 'Extract', some of them short, like the Gillespie story above. They're true stories, in a twisted sort of way.

Calling this apazine Hanrahan may have been a mistake, but I did have in mind the poem as well as the character in it. Someone else in this mailing asks whether I aim to be the doom-sayer of FLAP, and the answer is no. I couldn't compete with Eric Lindsay, for a start. But I do get gloomy, like old Hanrahan, and then the clouds roll back (or over, as the case may be) and I like to think, as Father Hartigan knew, that things tend to work out in the end.

Am I a pessimist? (you ask). In my thinking, yes. In the way I live, yes and no. (This is typical of the Dark Nordic Soul, or possibly Melbourne's weather.) But then, once you break out of language and get in with the philosophers, like Hlavaty and that crowd in Aristotle's Retreat, you know that the opposite of pessimist is not optimist, but innocent. An optimist hopes in spite of knowledge. There is no such thing as a cheerful optimist. There are only cheerful innocents.

The innocent builds Stonehenge. The optimist builds Cheesehenge. Does that answer your question?

BRUCE ARTHURS Hell, I'm a blue-collar worker too! I don't possess a white shirt and I earn less than a plumber's mate. I trust I make my credentials for reading your fanzine clear.

De Vries is a sort of Walt Willis of the real world, a fabulous fan-writer gone wrong, or successful, same thing. It is possible to grow tired of De Vries (and of WW: Warhoon 28 should not be read in one go). I used to have a fine collection of his books, and I really meant to hang onto the one (forget the title) in which each chapter is a parody of some greater author's style, but they all seem to have gone.

I imagine that in the off season a ski resort reverts to being a nice place where hardly anyone ever comes, like an apa fan between mailings.

So that's what happened to Charles Korbas! All this time I thought it was the shock of getting a mailing comment from me that made him gafiate.

My dear Arthurs, you ask me whether I know what a spleen is. The spleen, sir, is the ache in your tummy that starts when you think you have your liver under control. It's sort of on your left as you look downwards, and the liver, what's left of it, is on your right. About the time you turn 40, if you lead the normal abstemious fannish sort of life that Glicksohn is noted for, these parts of the anatomy become the centre of your universe and you soon learn their names. Also you know what it means in books where they say someone is liverish or venting his spleen.

18 May Typing an apazine on a dull, overcast sort of Sunday afternoon, when I could be out there getting some fresh air and feeling virtuous and dull and overcast, or better still getting on with editing this cookery book Penguin have given me to do (I believe they give their history books to editors who like cooking), invariably reminds me of The Lost Steps and Carpentier's dissection of that sort of laziness which consists in bringing great energy to tasks not precisely those we should be doing. Also I'm expecting a phone call from Andrew Pike in Canberra, who I understand has some further corrections for his book. I have this very morning finished reading the page proofs of his book, and I remind myself that it is the editor's duty to be Very Firm about authors' wishing to make corrections at this stage. And I ask myself and Bruce Arthurs: Do plumbers' mates work on Sundays? Is it a proud and lonely thing to be a plumber's mate? Should I have been getting on with my horrid cookery book last night instead of frittering away my time, as I did, watching George C. Scott on the television and then reading Patrick White into the small hours? Is there a life after breakfast?

Returning to my draft mailing comments, I find: 'Hulan qt Stefl ct Who? Kent 15 mins Dagma dakma'. That's all. It may not seem much, but Paul Newman may have risked his life defecting to the Karl Marx University of East Berlin for less. We seem to have had some pretty rotten films with pretty good actors in them lately on Melbourne television. The Newman caper you will recognize instantly as Hitchcock's er, um, you know the one. The Scott, while it's fresh in my memory (Iiar! - while the tv program is still in the house), was The Last Run, and it wasn't all bad. It had Scott, which makes any film worth watching; it had a beautiful Alfa-Romeo in it, and I have a soft spot for truly aristocratic motor cars; and the screenplay was by Alan Sharp, whose books I enjoyed years ago. I have sometimes wondered what happened to Alan Sharp. I wondered again last night whether it was the author speaking in such lines as 'I'm doing it for money - but I would like to do it well.'

DAVE HULAN, I reckon, sums up the US election quandary superbly. May I quote you, Dave? Ta. 'If Anderson isn't the first president of the '80s, things will be pretty much the same no matter who's elected, provided it isn't Reagan.' That sort of leaves you with Carter or Kennedy provided it isn't Kennedy, doesn't it? Luckily for the Free World, I have a solution to this seemingly insoluble dilemma. Australia has a federal

election coming up this year, and I reckon we should swap leaders. Jimmy Carter would do a much better job of running Australia than he has the USA, and Malcolm Fraser isn't quite as reactionary as Ronald Reagan, so we'd all be happy almost.

You know, I reckon I might have missed my calling. My next solution to world problems is this. The moment Big Mal is installed as President, he reaches a compromise with Iran: in exchange for the hostages he will give the Imam the entire Australian Labor Party, thus making the world safe for democracy and Australia safe for Jimmy Carter. If that's too long to wait for peace in our time, Mr Carter might act now by suggesting that the hostages be allowed to compete in Moscow. Then again - no, come to think of it, there are probably religious reasons against making Mrs Thatcher Imam. Or even Pope. Forget it.

SUZI STEFL Hey, we don't have fan parties like that in Melbourne! My remarks on the sober, reserved affair at Binns' place on New Year's Eve, ma'am, you have seriously misconstrued. 'Everyone dissing and hugging' indeed! What a disgusting thought.

At the moment I have the honour to be resident at two PO boxes - three, since I still have mail forwarded to me from Norwood - but I'm home much more often at Fairfield.

DAG Sorry I made you wince, you wince - some ol' son-of-a- whoops nearly said it again. The title of your zine reminds me that I once thought of calling the letter column in ASFR 'Dakma'. (Of course you remember ASFR, don't be naughty. Hugo nominations, '67 and '68. Of course you remember the Hugos.) A dakma is one of those towers that Parsees - Zoroastrians, okay, have it your own way - put their dead comrades on to be picked clean by vultures. Recent reports from Iran seem not to suggest that the Parsees thrive under the new regime, but they're probably doing marginally better than those heretical Sunnis. What has this to do with Dean Grennell? Nothing. I'm just sitting here watching the sun go down, still waiting for the call from Canberra, typing anything that comes into my head. Tired? You bet. I've been too tired even to bother using corflu on this page. Did you know, DAG, that 'dag' is not a nice word in Australian? Remember when Ted White and that crowd tried to change the fan Hugos to 'Pongs'? Seems like only yesterday. 'Pong' is not a nice word in Australian either.

SOMEONE was talking about the chemicals in cigarettes. I can report that an Australian Kent kingsize filter will burn by itself for 15 minutes. The things I do for fandom. See yez.