

# **LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 17**

**LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 17**, August 2023, is an issue of a mailing comments apazine published by Perry Middlemiss, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, 3122. Produced only for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association). E: perry@middlemiss.org

This fanzine acknowledges the members of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it is produced in Hawthorn, Victoria, and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There doesn't seem to be much happening in the Grove of late. Maybe it's winter and all the local residents are hibernating like me – staying in and watching the sport from Europe overnight. So on to other things.

You'll only find one issue of **Perryscope** in this mailing. I almost have another issue finished but got rather slack and just didn't get it done in time. And, as I may have hinted at earlier, this may be an early indicator that my interest in this is starting to wane. My wife Robyn has pointed out to me that the deadlines I set for these fanzines are only mine, impact no-one else to any great extent and can be easily missed if so desired. Yeah, sure, but I see missing deadlines as a note that something else is going on.

I've been putting out these issues mostly monthly for almost three years now. It was easy enough during the pandemic as I had very little else to do. Now things are freer and more open and I'm trying to get out and about more. One thing rises and one thing falls.

On the fanzine front, however, I've decided to go back to work on my sercon genzine **The Alien Review** with an issue of that scheduled (in my head) for late August, maybe early September. This issue will feature a lot of material about Fritz Leiber from various people. They have all been very good and sent their work in on time. Now it's down to me to get it all into shape, finish off a couple of things that I need to write and then work with David Grigg to publish the thing. And, as is usual for me when I start to get enthusiastic about another project, I already have plans in place for the next two issues – another by the end of the year and then the next after that by about Easter 2024. If I can get three to four issues out a year I'll be more than satisfied. So let's give that about another two years before my interest starts to wane again.

Other than that the whole family is doing well. I will be at this year's Natcon, Conflux in Canberra, at the start of October as I have been asked to be, unexpectedly, Fan GoH. Maybe that will give me a new lease of fannish life and I'll be more enthusiastic next time. I may even write up the experience. But let's not make any promises. I know where that leads.

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### Comments on Mailing 333

#### **OBE Stuff – David Grigg**

I still mourn the loss of my blue pages. [This is just so you'll have something else to feel guilty about.]

#### **DAJA VOO #CART – Derrick Ashby**

While I don't consider myself to be on any sort of "diet" I do subscribe, somewhat, to the concept of intermittent fasting. And by that I mean not eating between say 8pm one evening and 12 noon the next day. You can drink as much water as you want, in fact the more the merrier, and any other drinks with no calories, like black coffee or tea – no milk and no sugar. The idea is that your body starts to utilise fat reserves after about 12 hours of fasting, and that is a good thing. Some people have commented that it must be hard to fast for that long but, frankly, it isn't that bad. It means I stop drinking alcohol after dinner – a good thing – don't snack while watching television – didn't do that much anyway – and don't have breakfast. It isn't that hard, and the good thing about it is that when you do get to lunchtime you're actually starting to feel hungry. A good sign in my view.

And so, I hear you ask, how's it going? Well, it's keeping the weight under control, though not really making a dent in the COVID-induced weight gain as yet. My doctor has told me to reduce the carbs and move to protein and plants. Again, not so onerous. ●

Good to hear you're tracking your reading habits. I find it helps to keep me focused on what I want to read and I don't use it as an excuse to beat myself up for not hitting self-set arbitrary targets. As I have stated in the past, it also reminds me that I'm not reading enough books in translation or those authored by women, say. David Grigg and I both use GoodReads as well. It does have some problems, especially with negative reviews, but it also tracks your page counts. Not on a day-by-day basis unless you want to. I don't, though David seems to like updating his progress on books. Maybe he's just showing off? ●

#### **Quoz 89 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer**

**Mark** – Compulsory voting? Love it. You may not be aware that it was introduced in Australia as a sort of "accident". One party in the Federal Parliament, probably Labor, was attempting to provide women with the vote via a change to the Electoral Act, or whatever it's called. The other side didn't want that but realised it would look bad if they opposed women's votes so they added in a compulsory voting amendment, in the hopes that that addition would get killed and so take out the votes for women as well. It back-fired on them and they got the lot. And a good thing say I.

I honestly don't think you'll need a lot of political education before introducing compulsory voting. The main reasons why people don't vote is 1) laziness; and 2) they don't think their vote will make any difference. Both objections are undone by compulsory voting. Julia Gillard's arguments are correct though not necessarily the full picture. Most people I know would say that voting in elections and referendums ("-da" if you prefer) is part of their civic duty as a citizen. We do make it very easy to vote here though: voting day is a Saturday, you can vote anywhere in the country for your electorate, postal voting is

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easy to arrange, and we have an extended voting period before actual polling day. You can never say you didn't get the chance to cast your vote here. Takes about an hour per vote, which is mainly for Federal (every 3 years) and State (every 4 years in Victoria) elections. Voting for Local Council elections – yes, they are compulsory as well – is usually postal.

In addition political parties don't have to spend a huge proportion of their available time and effort to get people out to vote, so they can concentrate on the issues instead. And finally, you can safely say, that the full will of the people has been heard when everyone has to vote. The UK should join the club; there are only about 5 countries who currently insist on all adult citizens voting.

Is it perfect? No, of course not. But I can safely say I prefer this to the alternative. ●

We could have a huge discussion about Worldcons and their future but I suspect that might be better done over a few jars in Glasgow. As you might expect: I have opinions on the subject. ●

ReYCTo Me about book ratings: I hadn't realised I was being harsher on the 1960s than other decades. But I wouldn't be that surprised. I suspect I'm reading a lot more novels from that period for the podcast – more than the 1950s or 1940s say – so am coming across rather a lot of dross. The good ones really stand out. ●

ReYCTo Me about ***The Best of S&SF 16***: If you drop the poems and the 1965 story ("A Few Kindred Spirits" by John Christopher) out of this anthology then you get 12 stories. It seems I left "The Age of Invention" by Norman Spinrad out of my considerations. Looking into the Short Story sheet of my 1966 workbook I note that I did actually read that story as it had been recommended by a Galactic Journey reviewer and was on the shortlist for the Nebula Award. I did not, however, have it as a "starred" story. You can put this discrepancy in the number of 1966 stories down to a transcription problem on my behalf. I have now updated my personal document. ●

ReYCTo LynC about my Best Stories of 1966: I'm aiming to have a write-up of my Nova Mob talk in an issue of **The Alien Review** later this year. Probably December if it all comes together. See comments in the Introduction above. ●

ReYCTo Bruce about your most read authors: And people say I'm obsessed with data keeping about my reading habits! I've only been keeping a record since 2012. ●

**Claire** – ReYCTo Me about ***Moneyball***: I think it best to look on this book, and film, as being only incidentally about baseball. I'm a bit of a baseball fan – as well as having played the game in my youth – so I took to it rather easily. I can understand that others won't. My advice is to think of it as a people management story rather than a sports story. ●

ReYCTo Me about Aussiecon 4: I remember very little about the actual convention. When Dublin won the right to hold the Worldcon in Helsinki I went up to James Bacon and introduced myself. He told me that we'd spent some time in a bar during A4 having a beer or three. Didn't remember a thing about it. ●

I see from your reading of the Slough House novels by Mick Herron that you are one of those who can follow one novel in a series immediately with another. Not me. I start to see

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repeated phrases and thoughts and think that it begins to lessen the enjoyment for me. This can have the disadvantage of meaning that I have lost track of some of the characters and connections, but you can't have everything. ●

Thanks for the heads-up about **The Lost Words** by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris. I especially like Macfarlane's work, having read his first, **Mountains of the Mind**, in November last year and **Underland** in 2019. Both wonderful books. ●

ReYCTo Me on a typo in my reading tables: Yes, I'll admit to having that mistake linger on for some months before I discovered it. You may be chuffed to note that you are the only person who has called me out for it. Hopefully I'm keeping a closer eye on things now. I suspect this comes from being the proof-reader as well as the writer. Never a good combination. ●

ReYCTo Me on the Adelaide Oval scoreboard: I suspect the board has now been changed to reflect a change in title from "batsman" to "batter", though I have to admit I haven't noticed nor looked for it. Summer is still a few months off yet. October beckons. ●

### Malaise – Leigh Edmonds

I didn't get to see the Andy Porter circulated academic paper on apas. Did it specifically mention ANZAPA? I still have hopes of re-introducing the Wikipedia page for it, the one that got deleted some years back. In order for me to re-instate it I will need some reference material that pertains to it. Another project! ●

By the time you read this the latest Ashes test series in England will be over. Say what you will but I don't think it was a series for calm, comforting listening. It seemed that something weird was happening nearly every day. ●

### Frabjous 1 – David Grigg

I can now start to see some of the advantages in having an Apple Watch. My main trouble is that I seem to have completely stopped wearing a watch at all since I retired. The last time I wore it was on our trip to Canada late last year. The band broke on that trip (near Niagara Falls) and I've never gotten around to replacing it. So I'd have to get used to having a watch again if I went the Apple Watch route. I'm not sure I want to do that as I'm quite enjoying not wearing one. After all there are many clocks around the place and I do tend to carry a mobile phone with me. ●

I was happy to read that your mother's COVID bout wasn't worse than it turned out to be. It's odd how it affects people so very differently. But then again, it seems some people tend to catch the flu every year if they aren't immunised whereas I, who has never had a flu shot and who used to catch public transport in peak hours each day for about thirty years, only ever had one dose of the flu. And that was at a time when Robyn had it as well, so there might have been some close-quarter contamination to blame there. ●

ReYCTo Derrick about desktop computers: I suspect they were called that as a means of comparing their size to that of a mainframe or mini (like the old Prime). You could, in fact, rest it on a desktop and move it from one to another. ●

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ReYCTo Me about books reviewed and not mentioned on the podcast: I don't talk about everything I read, just the ones where I think I might have something interesting to say. And, yes, I am aware, that even that doesn't apply all of the time. ●

Re your reviews of the Slough House books: make sure you read the novellas in the right order. ●

### **Crash of the Hard Disk 66 – Gary Mason**

Ah yes, tax returns. I do have a tendency to leave them, like you, till almost the last minute. I always promise to do better but never seem to. There is always something vastly more interesting to be getting on with, like, anything really. ●

ReYCTo Fishlifters re Keir Starmer: Yes, he does seem rather uninspiring but then so did Albanese leading into the last Federal election campaign. Albo is not a great campaigner though he does appear to be a perfectly acceptable Prime Minister as he seems able to handle the work and marshal the troops. Maybe Starmer will be the same. I really know very little about him. ●

Very dedicated of you to resurrect that old fanzine. ●

### **MOZ 38 – Murray Moore**

Surviving to 100? No thanks. I can really only take my father as an example of what it is like to get older. He had been in excellent health throughout his life – odd given that he was a long-term smoker and a heavy drinker – until he was diagnosed with prostate cancer in his early 70s. He got it under control but it returned and spread in his mid-80s, and that was what killed him in the end. He made it to a few months short of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. And that's a number that seems fine to me. I turn 68 in August this year, so I'm thinking another 20 years should do it, if I should be so lucky. I suspect I'll be able to travel long-haul distances (Europe say) for another 5-8 years – until I'm around 75 – then my travelling will be either short-haul (Asia) or cruising for another 5. After that I suspect I will be mostly Australia-oriented. And I'd be happy with that. But 100? Nope. ●

### **Mathom Volume 3 Number 2 – Mark Nelson**

Did you keep in touch with Alex Holt over the years following high school? ●

As to what Worldcons do with their surplus funds (note, we don't use the word "profit" here as that implies we were doing the work to make a profit when actually all we were doing was trying not to "lose" money), that's now reasonably regulated by World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) rules. The money is supposed to be used for the promotion of sf fandom as a whole. Monies are usually passed on to future Worldcons as seed-funding, donated to Fan Funds, or used in the local sf community to fund other conventions etc etc. Each Worldcon committee has to keep reporting each year to the WSFS Business meeting about their funds and how they are being distributed until those funds are exhausted. We had to keep reporting on our 1999 surplus for some years as it was decided to run another one in 2010 and some funds were set aside for that. After 2010 we decided we'd had enough and we were able to finish our distribution in three to four years so we could close the books and shut everything down. ●

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### **Sparrowgrass & battle-twigs 86 – Roman Orszanski**

The new laws in South Australia affecting protestors seem very draconian. I have a feeling such laws have also been introduced both here in Victoria and in New South Wales. This is not a good thing for political discourse and I suspect it has been introduced as a result of whining by various parts of the TV and print media. Not hard to guess who is behind that either. ●

### **(Book)worm in the Big Apple – Lucy Schmeidler**

ReYCTo Me about the cover of **Perryscope 29**: that is a photo of my shadow against the trunk of a eucalyptus tree. All covers of **Perryscope** feature me in some way or other. ●

### **Les Chattes Parties 186 – Sally Yeoland**

That was rather a scary story regarding your gas stove top. I haven't ever had anything like that happen to me (other than a flame-up on a gas BBQ) but can sympathise. I suspect that the problem actually seemed greater in retrospect, after you'd had a bit of time to contemplate the possible outcomes. Of all of them it appears that you achieved the best. Well done. ●

### **Les Chattes Parties 187 – Sally Yeoland**

There's a helluva lot in this that I will need some time to read my way through; typically I've left this too late. From my toe-dippings so far it looks wonderful.

**And that's it for mailing 333**: thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but...