

LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 18

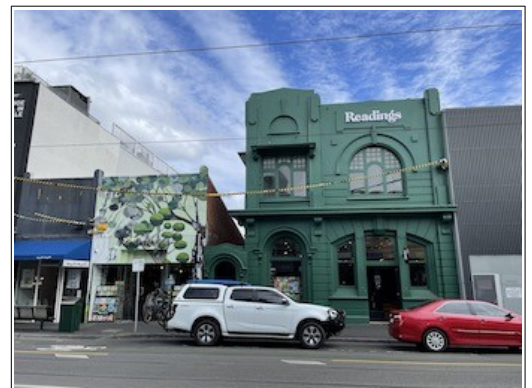
LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 18, October 2023, is an issue of a mailing comments apazine published by Perry Middlemiss, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, 3122. Produced only for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association). E: perry@middlemiss.org

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.

GOINGS ON IN THE GROVE

The Grove has been quiet again. There are a couple of signs up for the coming referendum, the bulk of – if not all – are in favour of a “Yes” vote, which is pleasing to see. But otherwise, the various building projects have either finished or stalled. We have one site at the end of our street, on the corner with Barkers Road, that has been in an on-again, off-again construction phases for the past twelve months it seems. There will be trucks going in and out for a few days and then nothing for a few weeks. Maybe they are waiting for the concrete for the underground car parking to set. Yes, the previous single residence house on the site was demolished to make way for a multi-unit building. I’m not sure how many. In any event the present regulations state that car parks must be underground. Which is good as it gets cars off the street, but bad in that it brings a number of extra cars into the neighbourhood. Nothing to be done about it but grin and bear it.

On the Glenferrie Road front the big news was the move of our local Readings bookstore from the site it has occupied for about the past 20 or so years to a new site (an old bank building) further south, closer to the railway station. You can see the two buildings below: old site on the left, new one on the right.



[No, that is not the same car out front of each building, though it sure looks like it.]

Normally such a move wouldn't worry most of us but I think the new layout is not as good

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as the old one. And it seems smaller, even if the new site contains two shops: one for the “adult” books (painted dark green) and one for the children’s books (green and white). I went to the book launch of *Aliens & Savages* by Janeen Webb and Andrew Enstice in the building on 19th September and it was obvious that they now have a smaller space for such events. Pity. But I shouldn’t complain; as least we have such a good bookshop so close.

Comments on Mailing 334

OBE Stuff – David Grigg

Love the cover. I can completely identify with the old codger, afternoon naps are the best. So long as you don’t sleep too long. The current hack I’m using is to have a cup of coffee just before you life down for the nap. The caffeine takes about 30 minutes to get to the brain and kickstart that back into life so that’s about long enough. ●

DAJA VOO #SINK – Derrick Ashby

That’s an impressive amount of time between losing contact lenses. But your story – and the cringe-worthy nature of the scratches on the cornea – gives me yet another reason why I have never considered the idea of using contacts rather than spectacles. I have misplaced my glasses, but never actually lost or broken a pair, as far as I can recall, in the 56-odd years of wearing them. ●

I can now sympathise with the renovation problems. We are aiming to have our main lounge room re-plastered and re-painted some time soon. The problem is we have to move everything out of that room and place it somewhere else in the house. The plasterer will need about a week (well, he said 3-4 days but...) and so will the painter. We only want to make one move out and one move back, so we are now trying to figure out when their schedules fit with ours. 2025 is looking quite good! ●

ReYCtoMe: Blue font on a white background? You intrigue me sir. Though I suspect a certain OBE might object. ●

I will also be voting YES to the upcoming referendum but I suspect the fear and loathing generated by the No campaign will sway the day. ●

Quoz 90 – Claire Briailey and Mark Plummer

Claire – Thanks for the thoughts about me being GoH at this year’s Natcon. I suspect I shall be writing about this event at some time. Though usually when I say that I find I have nothing much of interest to say. ●

ReYCtoMe about “childbirth”: Quibble accepted. I maybe should have used “during” rather than “in”. ●

ReYCtoAlan re drinking: I have to note here that I differ from you in that I don’t really care what I eat when I’m drinking beer. I don’t usually drink beer with a meal – unless you count a BBQ as a meal – and when I’m down the pub it’s usually no more than a bowl of chips or wedges. I’ve read beer reviews written by wine writers who insist on trying to find

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the most weird combinations of food to have with a certain beer style. I find it a bit of a ridiculous notion. If, however, you wish to combine the two then go right on ahead. I suspect your pairing will be far more to my liking that “slow-cooked Moroccan lamb cutlets” or somesuch. ●

Where Does the Time Go? – Leigh Edmonds

ReYctoEric re ANZAPA in a hundred years time: The prospect that some quasi-AI will be generating a full mailing with contributions written in each of our styles fills me with absolute dread – even dread of the Lovecraftian variety. Any more of the crap that I foist on people will be just far too much.

I have tried playing around with these AI text generators a little: the major piece for the next **Perryscope** will be my thoughts on the Elvis Costello song “Pump It Up”. I asked ChatGPT to write me 1000 words on the subject, which it did. It got some things right but didn’t say anything that I thought was overly interesting and, in fact, quoted some lines from the song which just aren’t here at all; probably pinched from some other similar song by Costello. The worst thing people can do with all of this stuff is to blithely accept it as being correct when it patently isn’t. Still it’s always amusing when a solicitor gets caught out trying to peddle ChatGPT stuff as his own, only to discover that it is absolute nonsense. ●

ReYctoRoman re nuclear submarines: I can only hope that the production process is so long and complex that Australia decides to move onto something else before delivery day. I think every government, no matter how hopeful you are for their performance, will make some decisions that just boggle the mind. This is the first by this Labor Government. I can only hope it will be the last, but suspect otherwise. ●

Rhubarb 102 – Diane Fox

Like you I have seen **Oppenheimer** but have so far balked at **Barbie**. My wife and kids, who have seen both, thought they were two very interesting films. The general consensus was that I was rather stupid not to have taken the chance to go see **Barbie**. My response was that I’ll wait for it to hit a streaming service later in the year. I’m starting to come to the view that I will see it, just not sure when. ●

I hope you and John get over your current medical ailments, of one sort or another. ●

Anita Brookner’s **Hotel du Lac** was a novel that I hated when I first read it back in the 1980s or 90s. But I rather enjoyed it when I read it again in 2018. That was at a time before I was allocating point ratings though I suspect it would have been up around the four mark. And I think that’s the only book that you list this mailing that I’ve actually read. I have been meaning to get to the Lanchester but haven’t succeeded as yet. ●

Frabjous 2 – David Grigg

I do think that the idea of Christmas in July is a good one, especially if you want to do the full roast and trimmings style of lunch. We still tend to have the roasts at Christmas for the family but temper that with salads and some seafood. So not the “whole hog”, just judicious bits of it. ●

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You have done a large amount of work over the years for Standard Ebooks and it was very good to read that others in the organisation appreciated your work. Now I just need to get back to my proof-reading. Too many projects. ●

And, after all these years, you finally decide to tell me how you choose the titles for our podcast episodes. Dear, oh dear. Good story though!!

Actually this trip through your artistic process is rather an eye-opener as it gives me something of an insight into how you work. And that's always a good thing to be aware of as it can help to shape your own analytical processes. ●

ReYctoMe re Wikipedia: I have decided that I truly am a sucker for punishment as I'm back editing Wikipedia in a big way again. If I stay in my own little patch I should be okay. That patch being Australian literature. Luckily there are only a very few of us playing in that space. The trouble comes when some other editor drifts in, finds something they don't like and deletes it, or attempts to.

I have been lucky in being able to "rally the troops" (read "other sf fans") to the cause and they have provided a lot of help on a few occasions. It seems most people are daunted by the task of learning how to edit Wikipedia properly, and so don't try. That's a pity as it's not that hard. The hardest part is to find the required level of second and third party references to support factual statements. You can't just state, for example, that such and such a book won "that" award, you have to have a reference from somewhere else that states it. And I'm okay with that, just so long as I'm given enough time to edit the contentious page to put in the references.

I did tell Leigh Edmonds over the Natcon weekend that I was waiting for him to finish his history of Australian sf fandom history to 1975, so I could use it to help re-instate the ANZAPA page that was deleted many years ago. We'll get there. ●

ReYctoMe re travel: a week or so after you read this I will be winging my way over to India for three weeks – more on that elsewhere. But I will not, I repeat NOT be caught singing. ●

Re your book reviews: I think I comment on these enough on the podcast, so you are, no doubt, fully aware of my views, where I have any. ●

Re transcriptions of our discussion: I groan when I read what I've actually said: repetitions, evasions, lost and abandoned sentences...It really is awful. ●

Frank's Even [& Earnest's Odd] – Jack Herman

ReYctoMe about **Blue**: Oh you tease me sir, a blue-coloured font throughout? Yeah, I could do that. But, then again, I have to live with David – in a podcast sense – and I fear the tongue-lashing. He's a fearsome man when roused. ●

ReYctoMe about Morocco: Rabat looks rather like Canberra in that it is neat and clean without a lot of soul, though I doubt I would describe it as "nasty". Will I ever get to a description of the places we went to and the things we saw? Maybe, but most probably not.

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Gaston J. Feeblehare 31– **Kim Huett**

Thanks for the fanzine numbers from the 1930s to 2020s. I'm guessing these numbers represent individual issues rather than titles? ●

ReYcto Marc: The apa in Adelaide was APES (the Adelaide Publishing and Editing Society). ●

Sketchy 20– **Christina Lake**

ReYctoMe re Morocco: We had a number of women on our tour group (more than 50% as a guess) and I didn't get the impression from any of them that they felt hassled at all. The Moroccans seemed particularly friendly and certainly not into the pressure selling the same way that some Balinese shop owners are. ●

And Joseph is as Joseph does. ●

Kingdom of the Bland– **Eric Lindsay**

It is rather hard to tell what is happening with the Outer Suburban Loop. Some of it seems to be going ahead but the Airport connection has been put on hold. Which is a pity as that was the one everyone wanted first. I'm not keeping track of all the various reasons why things are happening or not, so I can't really comment. All I know now is that we have a new Premier and I suspect she will make a move on some of the old premier's projects and shut them down. That's what new managers do isn't it? Certainly seemed to be that way when I was back in full-time employment. ●

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

It seems rather odd to me that the ladies you went with to *Ladies in Black* didn't like the film. I have to admit to not having seen it but loved the book and, so my wife tells me, the film adaptation is fairly accurate. Yes, they are right in that nothing much happens, but what does is wonderful. ●

ReYctoBruce G re John Bangsund: There have been various groupings of John's writings reprinted over the years but not, I think, a single volume. Something to contemplate. We have the bulk of John's publications up on FANAC but there are certainly some items that allude us. A number of us made a special push to scan as many of John's fanzines as we could a few years back but we were rather stymied by COVID and its impacts so I'm guessing we need to make another substantial push to finish them off. ●

ReYctoMe re apazine title: The title **The Wollongong Pig Breeders' Gazette** just came to me one day out of who-knows-where. I am not a pig breeder nor have I ever been to Wollongong, as far as I'm aware. Let's just say it had a certain ring to it. ●

Not Falling, Flying 10 – **John Newman**

You are perfectly correct in your assumption that Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is a rather depressing book. You do need to be in a rather stable frame of mind when you tackle it. ●

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ReYctoMe re Wikipedia: Truth is always of concern when dealing with Wikipedia. The problem is finding the references that allow you to prove it. The wiki doesn't encourage original research to be published on its pages which is certainly fair enough. The problem I find is in the weighting of the concept of "notability". As was mentioned earlier in the mailing I recently had to do some scrambled hurried work to rescue the Greg Pickersgill page. Part of the argument against notability was that he was representative of a small community and therefore did not meet the generally accepted definition of notability. But when you try to argue that he is as notable as others, over which there is no argument, the deletionists get a rather testy and attempt to finalise debate and delete the page, after which there is no further debate. And that I find very annoying, but have yet to figure out a way to answer. One solution would be to dive headfirst into that area of debate and learn all of the argument points and in-and-outs, but that way madness lies. ●

The Erotic Wombat 28 – Gerald Smith

Typo of the mailing: "allowing time to try some of the hot breakfast – yummy bacon and eggs with mushrooms and sausage – and toe.." Yummo.

And that's it for mailing 334: thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but...here's an illo to keep you going; stolen from who knows where.

