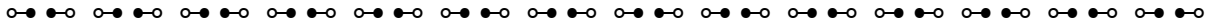
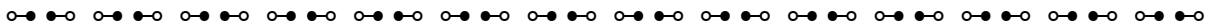


LITTLE BLUE NUMBER

1



LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 1, October 2020, is an issue of a mailing comments zine 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



INTRODUCTION

The last time I graced the halls of ANZAPA I had a little comment zine titled BLUE. I had intended it to be printed on blue paper and, given my sense of humour, the title seemed appropriate. Now I find myself in need of another comment zine and another title so...

Mr Ortlieb will probably get the reference.

If you aren't mentioned in the comments below it's just because I have no comments to make.



Comments on Mailing 316



OBO – Bruce Gillespie

No Bruce, I was never an OBE, just co-President with Helen Swift back in the early 1980s. Looking back on some of that stuff now I firmly believe it was due to her writing rather than mine that we were elected to that position. ■ I'm sorry to see Spike leave us. However, in the current economic climate, finding a new job is as good an excuse as you can get. ■

The Every-Day Book 3 – Derrick Ashby

The Conservative side of politics in Australia has always resented the opening up of the Universities. For the past twenty years they have slowly been undermining the sector transforming it from an educational basis to a far more commercial one. Unfortunately Labor has also been complicit in this. Not everyone needs to, or should, go to university. On the other hand, everyone that wants to or has the skill to do so should have the opportunity to attend without the lifelong burden of debt. ■

Quoz 72 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

Claire – I was able to work my way through all of the four major Hugo fiction award categories

this year, helped by the fact that I had read 3 of the nominated novels and 2 of the nominated novellas before the ballots landed. I wasn't overly impressed with either the short story or novelette categories and there were only a couple of novellas that passed muster. I gave four of the novels a rating of 4.0 out of 5 or better, which is pretty good. ■

Mark – I don't get all the fuss about Becky Chambers's work – it's pleasant enough, inoffensive but hardly ground breaking. I keep thinking I've read it all before. ■ Bear Gryls sounds halfway reasonable. There has been a fair bit of discussion here in Australia lately about the role James Cook had in the “invasion” of the country. I think we need to follow Gryls's words here: be aware of the past, learn from it and don't repeat the crap. There was a lot of crap to be sure, though I don't think that Cook was the cause of it. ■ The Australian COVID tracking app has been a complete waste of time. It was put across as being part of your civic duty to download it and use it. And yet there doesn't appear to have been any cases tracked using it. It appears the initial requirements weren't articulated properly and someone forgot to ask the wifi/mobile guy if it would actually work. He said “Nah!” ■ Re your comment to David Grigg about me: I set myself reading targets to try to keep reminding myself to stay on track. The gender-balance quota came about because I went back over one year's reading and found that I'd only read one book by a woman. I just hadn't been paying proper attention and hadn't noticed the disparity in numbers. Am I going to hit that 50/50 mark any time soon? Probably not, but I reckon I'll get closer to the target if I keep it in view. You should see some of the other targets I set. Probably as incomprehensible. ■

Duo Enim Pretium Est CII – Leigh Edmonds

The term “zine” seems to have been appropriated by “young people” these days who seem to think they invented the things. Ah, well, good luck to 'em. It might have bothered me 20 years ago but not any more. I've moved towards a preference for “fanzine” as well. ■ Thanks for your kind words about the podcast. An interview with KUF Widdershins would have certainly been on the cards if he was still with us. I suspect he would have spoken to me as a teacher to student again. Something that I would not have been unhappy about. I suspect he was more of a major influence on my fannish “career” than I have previously acknowledged. ■ Regarding web cameras and microphones, most of them plug into a spare USB port. Don't have enough spare ports? Then buy a USB hub from Officeworks for a few bucks and you're away. It's a useful thing to have anyway. ■

brg 111 – Bruce Gillespie

The joys of train travel are many and varied. Not the least of which is that it gives you the opportunity to just sit and watch the countryside go by from the relative comfort of a decent seat, without the necessity of driving. As a non-driver I'm guessing you miss this aspect. Having to concentrate for 4 or so hours on staying alive and under the speed limit is becoming more tiring as I get older. While I enjoy arriving somewhere, the journey, if it is by train, is a special treat. Robyn and I have been attempting to get some train travel into all of our overseas trips over the past few years. Sometimes it doesn't work, but it sure beats airports, which, frankly, are a total pain. ■ I saw Rob Jackson at a distance in Dublin but didn't go up and introduce myself. We tended to find a spot in Martin's bar and just sit there, waiting to see who wandered past. ■ I've always been amused by the (probably) apocryphal story that there is a railway station somewhere in a big city in India which is way too small for its patronage. The story, as you might recall, is that the plans for the station in Flinders Street and this forgotten

Indian location were drawn up at the same time by the same bloke in the British Commonwealth Office, which had civic control over the two foreign cities. When the time came for the plans to be dispatched the story goes that they were swapped and sent to the wrong places. It tends to fit. Flinders Street is in dire need of a full makeover. The transport authorities have recently refurbished the outside public face, but the interior now needs a fair bit of work. I rarely pass through there any more now that I'm retired. And certainly not at peak hour as I used to. ■ You mention that the Melbourne rail network is largely intact. I'm guessing that the State Government is regretting the decision after WW II to shut down the circle line. You can still see remnants if you know where to look. And let's not ever forget that it is now only 25 years since the conservative Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett did his best to shut down even more of it. ■ Always interested in the book talk, as you will gather by the mentions in my other apazines in this mailing. Le Carre's latest is on the very long reading list. Might just get to it by the time I hit the author's age. ■

Snippets 6 – Michael F. Green

The decommissioning of the Hazelwood power station was the first in what is, hopefully, a long line of such closures. I've long been a fan of generating power near to where it is needed, reducing the power wastage due to transmission leakage. Now that the technology is here, a quiet but effective revolution is under way. A good thing I say. ■ I haven't bought myself a web camera as yet, though I did spring for a Yeti Blue Nano microphone for web meeting and podcasting purposes. Mostly I am more interested in the sound than the visuals. The laptop built-in camera seems to do the job perfectly well for the needs I have of it. ■

The Fretful Porpentine 33 – David Grigg

I have decided that I need to be a bit careful about reading your book notes – I'd rather hear them first-hand when we record the podcast. That way I'll have initial reactions rather than pre-determined ones. And you're always much more serious than me. Comes from thinking about these things more carefully I reckon. I think I tend to get the emotional response first and then find a justification for that feeling. But I may be changing as we go. Yet another thing I can blame you for! I'm keeping a list! ■

Necessity 155 – Jack Herman

As you say, "it's been a hell of a year", with much more to come I fear. ■ I also fear that the ex-Fairfax newspapers are rapidly sinking to lowest common opinion status. I still get THE AGE delivered on weekends but am struggling to find anything to read in it these days. Not sure if this is just me or a product of the newspaper offerings. I may soon be without a newspaper subscription for the first time since the very early 1980s. ■ I did like Ian Chappell's story about Barry Jarman. He recalled turning up to SA State cricket training when Les Favell was captain, and Jarman the wicketkeeper. Chappell had just been promoted to Australian vice-captain, and was probably thinking a bit of himself. Favell took him aside and said something to the tune of: "Look son, you might be the Test vice-captain, and maybe even the next Test captain, but when we're out on the ground and I want some advice about the bowling or field changes, I'm asking Jarman. Not you!" By the look on his face I reckon Chappell thought that was priceless. ■

Sketchy 2 – Christina Lake

“It was a beautiful mellow atmosphere, and a real pleasure to sit outside and talk and enjoy the fact that we had been able to get away somewhere different for a couple of days.” Oh yes, half your luck. In the small period, in Melbourne, of Stage 2 restrictions between two Stage 3 lockdowns we were able to get to one restaurant and have a two people round to our house for dinner one night. It all seems such a distant memory now. ■ I will check out your podcast. ■

Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay

Interesting comment: “I just don't do remote” when talking about streaming television. Yes, it does mean getting a subscription to some service or other but it also allows you to pick and choose when you watch anything. A liberating experience I think. Being a slave to the vagaries of free-to-air television schedules is certainly not my idea of a good time. ■ With podcasts I need to do more walking to keep up. When I was working I had the bonus of 10 minutes' walk each end of the train and 20-30 minutes in each train journey to listen to podcasts. Helped me to get through quite a lot. One of the disadvantages of being retired – you need to change your routines. ■

From the Lair of the LYNX 112 – LYNC

My wife and I renovated the back of our house in 1997 (started the day Diana Spencer died) and the problems associated with that, though relatively minor, have just about put me off the idea for life. Hope it all works out okay for you. ■

Crash of the Hard Disk 49 – Gary Mason

One hopes one takes the opportunity to change one's photo ID to include the “Lord” salutation. I gather service in public places improves markedly. You may be aware that Glasgow is bidding for the SF Worldcon in 2024. Might be a good side visit while you attend your “plot”. ■

Life on Earth 29 – John Newman

The change from print to PDF or whatever is always a bit of a hurdle first up. I had the same feeling about making the change when the family bought an e-reader a few years back. I thought I'd always read on paper but I changed my mind when I realised how convenient it was going to be – reading on the train to work, at work, and on holidays. Not that the massive ANZAPA mailing exactly fits that description. It's more a matter of changing your perceptions. And, as you say, printing 500 pages is just too much. ■

You really know you're home when you find a wombat in your bed 188 – Cath Ortlieb

I was sorry to hear the news but happy that it appears to have all worked out as well as can be expected. I fully agree with the idea of keeping this sort of news quiet until you get on top of it all. Stay well. ■

Les Chattes Parties 169 – Sally Yeoland

Thanks for the news about John, even if it isn't great. I hope he improves and gets over the

current illness. Make sure that you're looking after yourself as well. It is very easy to neglect yourself in these situations.

