

LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 4

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INTRODUCTION

Still don't like the font size, so I've bumped it by 0.5 for this issue. Staying with the blue paper tint.

I actually wrote a page and a half of material for this little fanzine, only to move it over to the next issue of *Perryscope*. I had this idea that I should write something specific for ANZAPA other than just mailing comments but it came across as something I'd rather a wider audience had a chance to see. I fear this is my new reality. So, you'll see it, just not here.

Bruce Gillespie – If I haven't said so already may I congratulate and thank you for all the sterling service you did for this apa during the long period of your recent OBE-ship. It may not have survived if you hadn't put in the work and is certainly flourishing now because you did. Cheers.

Comments on Mailing 319

The Every-Day Book 6 – Derrick Ashby

Good thinking on the Solid State Drive, a much better solution than the old spinning jobby. Longer life, shorter start-up times, all good. ■

As I've been aiming to ramp up my work for Joe Siclari and his Fanac project I went out and purchased a CZUR Aura overhead scanner (see photo) which should allow me to successfully scan books and saddle stapled fanzines without having to dismantle them and re-assemble them later. So far my experience with it has been pretty good. Only trouble is that I have to make a special effort to get it out and set it up on the dining room table to find the right amount of room. That basically means that I have to schedule in a few hours working on the scanning to make it all worthwhile. It is all transportable in its box readily enough and I've trucked it around to Irwin Hirsh's once to work on scanning some old Bangsund fanzines. That seemed to go pretty well and we'll be aiming to do more of that in the coming months. If I am actually allowed out of the house of course.



This is all part of the project that Mark Plummer, Kim Huett, Marc Ortlieb and Irwin are also working on. We are utilising his initial Bangsund bibliography as a database, extending it when we find another publication of John's and noting that it has been scanned. These scanned pdf files are then uploaded to a specific Dropbox folder where they are collected by Joe and Edie and then loaded up to their Fanac website. We have no idea how long this is going to take to get all of JB's work available but it keeps us off the streets

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if nothing else.

So what this comes down to finally saying is that the new scanner isn't as easy to use as my old flatbed scanner but is certainly more flexible when I get it set up properly. ■

ReYCtoMe: I took a punt that Rick Stein's show would turn up on SBS only to find out that it was on the ABC instead. Such is life. ■

Quoz 75 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

Claire – ReYCtoMe 317: As I write this we in Melbourne are nearly finished another 5-day snap lockdown. In this household we are certainly hoping we'll be allowed out by the end of the week as this weekend will be the 6-month anniversary of my 65th birthday that I didn't have. And we have a weekend away in the Yarra Valley lined up to cover the loss of my previous celebration. It's all very complicated and we only hope we'll get there. ■

Probably best to start with C. J. Dennis's *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*. It provides a good introduction to his verse-novel style and contains one of his funniest poems in "The Play". Then maybe move on to *The Moods of Ginger Mick*, which is really a partial sequel to the *Bloke*, and then to *The Glugs of Gosh* which is a strange fantasy, of a sort. I doubt you'll get through all of that by next time but I'd be certainly interested to read what you have to say about them. I'm never too sure if the Australian humour of idiom will carry too far. ■

I don't think you sound like a curmudgeon re Becky Chambers. I agree with you. As stated before, I just can't see what all the fuss is about. ■

Lots of book reading stats here, and I thought I was obsessive about it! There doesn't appear to be a lot of cross-over between your reading and mine, which only leads me to think I need to read wider. But I did agree with your assessment of the Arkady Martine novel. Early reports say that the follow-up is as good if not better, so that is certainly something to look forward to later this year. ■

ReYCtoMe 318: I don't intend to copy mailing comments from ANZAPA zines over to *Perryscope* very often, only if I think they may ask a question that a wider audience might find of interest. And it will probably just be a question about what I'm doing rather than a personal comment. ■

Books: *Comet Weather* is one that has been on my radar for a while. I might be able to get to it, though I'll probably have to wait till it appears on an awards shortlist or two. That might be the impetus I need to move it up the TBR list. *The Dark Lake* is sitting in the bedroom, staring at me each morning. It's starting to get a bit intimidating so that's another I'll have to tackle. And the Garth Nix I should read. It just gets worse and worse. ■

Mark – ReYCtoMe: The prospect of reading a longer version of *Stranger in a Strange Land* feels me with complete dread. I'll give it a miss. ■

Yes, I am aware of Jo Walton's book about the Hugo Awards. I've read it and go back to it regularly as a reference for our Hugo Time Machine episodes on the podcast. I must admit to getting a bit annoyed with her at times. She has a number of sf blind spots, which she openly admits, but which she has no intention of ever re-visiting: Philip K. Dick being the major case in point. And I keep thinking she talks more about the books she hasn't read rather than ones she has. The included discussions about the shorter fiction for each year have been especially useful. More on this in another place at another time – later this year. ■

Yes, 2019 was a very good time to visit Iceland as Robyn and I did. It will be good to visit again at some time in the future but not, I think, by us. Too far, too expensive, too many other places to get to. ■

Centum Greges CVIII – Leigh Edmonds – Moving! God, I'm not looking forward to it when the time comes to move out of this Hawthorn house. ■

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Like yours, and everyone else's I suspect, my superannuation took a bit of a hit in 2020. But it seems to be bouncing back very quickly. During my working life I stayed in a poor fund for too long. Then discovered an industry fund almost by accident and things just took off. I was getting around 8-9% returns each year with very few fees. In 2020 I went backwards but this year the annual return rate is up over 12%. I'm very happy with that. My wife Robyn is still working so I'm only pulling a small amount out of the pension fund (there is a minimum amount you have to take) and that arrangement seems to be working quite well. I do have to admit that my wife and I have both been in well-paying jobs for some years so we won't need the pension. Wouldn't be eligible for it anyway I suspect. ■

Masscon: I couldn't get to this as I driving somewhere or other that day. I would have liked to have attended to hear the discussion about AUSFA if nothing else. With our international and, occasionally, state borders being closed as much as they are we've taken to driving around Victoria just to get out of Melbourne for a few days. Being a retired gentleman I can wander off when I like but Robyn is restricted to those times she has booked in for her holidays. And when you have them approved you'd better take them! Needless to say we had two or three holidays booked last year (New Zealand, Mildura, Southern Europe), and one this year (Bateman's Bay) which all had to be cancelled and which need to be re-booked. If we had been able to take those holidays then Robyn's Leave pile would have been much less than it is now. As it is we're now almost scrambling to get the holidays in so that her work doesn't just pay out her Leave entitlements. It's an odd position to be in. ■

brg 114 – Bruce Gillespie – I have written previously of the need to stay away from current affairs programs on TV and radio as they only lead to misery and despair. Same goes for the lot of the stuff that comes down the tubes on FaceBook. Mostly I'm not interested unless it has a funny side. I won't be venting my political views in public, though I'm sure my comments make my political positions quite plain. That's enough. The SFC page is a good forum. I'm glad you set it up. ■

I see a lot of similarities between *The Queens Gambit* and *The Hustler*: talent and obsession being the major ones. You don't need to know anything about pool to enjoy *The Hustler* and similarly for chess and *The Queens Gambit*. ■

I think Nils Lofgren got to the point where he felt that he wasn't going to be appreciated as a solo artist and thought he might as well take the opportunity to get a bag of cash from playing in a large successful band. Not a bad fall-back option. The music business is mostly a matter of luck. You need the talent, sure, but after that it depends on which door you happen to walk through on a particular day. You get to an age when you stop fighting it and just accept it. Anyway, playing Springsteen songs nearly every night can't be all bad. ■

As with books I'm not buying CDs any more. My major music intake comes via Spotify these days. ■

The Fretful Porpentine 36 – David Grigg – I fear I may have corrupted you, good sir, regarding the recording of books read and the many stats that you can obtain from that recording. Keep going, I say. ■

ReYCTo Roman: The David Tennant podcast is definitely worth listening to. He does interview Gaiman and a host of other people. Excellent for a driving trip. ■

Necessity 158 – Jack Herman – 500 publications – Gawd, you have been busy. Speaking from a FANAC perspective I hope you have maintained a bibliography of those 500. We may need to get to you at some point. A bunch of us (Mark Plummer, Irwin Hirsh, Marc Ortlieb, Kim Huett and I) are helping the good people at FANAC (Joe Sicalri and Edie Stern) to scan in as much John Bangsund material as we can. John Foyster looks like being next on our agenda – Mark has already put together an impressive bibliography. After the two Johns I can see us moving to more of the 1960s and 1970s fans. Slowly but surely. ■

Regardless of Trump's behaviour his conspiracy theorists will always find a way to incorporate the new events into their long-running saga. It's quite a creative exercise if you can look at it dispassionately. I for one am enjoying his long silence. Long may it continue. ■

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Cricket – frankly the Indians outplayed us. As they have subsequently done with the English. There was a lot of talk about the pitch for the last three Tests in India being set up specifically for the Indian bowlers. Well, duh! That’s been going on for years all over. Why do we play the first Test in Brisbane, usually? So it has some spice and zip and bounce to scare the crap out of the visitors. Didn’t work this year as they played the match too late in the season. As was stated about the Indian Test pitches, both teams had a chance to play on it. If India produces a spinning pitch and has better spinners then so be it. The thing I objected to, and which I think is the true determination of whether a pitch is suitable for Test cricket, is that the game should be able to run as near as possible to five days. Finishing in less than two is just ridiculous. And it will just add fuel to the arguments about reducing Test matches to four days. Something I would definitely argue against. ■

Television: David Grigg has also enjoyed *The Boys* and has recommended it to me. Just need to find the time to fit it in. I still need to finish *His Dark Materials*, season 2 of *The Mandalorian*, season 5 of *The Expanse*, and a new season of *For All Mankind* looms large. ■

Podcasts: yet another entertainment input. Thanks for the history suggestions which I will attempt to get to. David and I may need to re-evaluate our Hugo Time Machine episodes as 1966 looms large. In that year the Nebulas started and it just wouldn’t be right to not mention them. They started out with 4 fiction categories which will make our reading lists even longer. And I guess that’s why we didn’t get to the dramatic presentations so much in our 1965 episode – there is just only so much you can cover in the time available. The solution might be to run the discussion about the awards for a year over two episodes. We’ll give it some thought. ■

Re *Glory Road*: maybe we should aim to publish reviews with opposing opinions. I’m certain that John Hertz in California will agree with you rather than me. I know because he’s told me I’ve missed the point of the book. I’m not sure it had one. ■

Plague of the Living Dead 17 – Kim Huett – ReYCTo Jack Herman with an aside to me: FANAC is particularly interested in newszines and we will be looking into expanding the Australian publications in due course. Just a matter of priorities and time. ■

ReYCTo Me: I think the Hugos started to become more of a big deal when publishers started putting references to it on their book covers. The arrival of the Nebulas in 1966 would have also had some bearing on the matter. The Delany story might have been allowed to slip onto the Hugo ballot if the administrators thought that it had not had widespread distribution to their voting membership as a result of being first published in a UK SF magazine. Just a thought. And I do agree with the suggestion that the Hugos were just a part of the convention rather a major deal in their own right. ■

The idea of making a “little extra” when running a Worldcon is one that all committees should aim for. Unforeseen real world problems are bound to crop up at large conventions and fixing them costs money. Having a surplus makes fixing the problem easier. That said, the problem then arises as to what to do with those surpluses. That has basically been solved these days with the requirements laid out by WSFS regarding pass-along funds, surplus distribution and reporting requirements. It is probably still possible to sort the system but it is also easier for someone to find out. ■

The membership fee jump from \$10 at Aussiecon (NOT “Aussiecon I” by the way) in 1975 to \$50 at MidAmeriCon 1976 is indeed a big one. I hadn’t realised it was that big. Makes me feel a bit better about the size of the attending membership rate for Aussiecon III. ■

I for one am happy that you are providing documentary evidence for your fannish historical claims – eg the origin of the term “Hugos”. It seems the right and proper thing to do. ■

Sketchy 5 – Christina Lake – Thanks for the advice re the film adaptation of *The New Mutants* – I shall attempt to check it out. It seems to have just passed me by somehow. Like you, it seems, I am a fan of Sienkiwicz’s work. And I must have a number of New Mutant comics in the house somewhere. I know the room! Just not the location on the shelf. ■

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Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay – Every house move is a hard one. Above and beyond the actual physical work is the emotional stress of it all. But it sounds like you and Jean have it pretty much figured out, which is good to hear. I suspect you won't miss the drive between Townsville and Airlie Beach for long. ■

Regarding blank pages in fanzines: I do the best I can to get to an even number of pages but find that I can spend a large slab of the available time for fanzine production just on that one little chore. I realise I need to do more work in this regard but find myself thinking it just too hard as I get to the end of a calendar month and another issue of *Perryscope* nears completion. I'm not having the same problems here, so far. ■

I'm enjoying LibreOffice so far. It has a couple of quirks that I need to figure out (such as its insistence on putting small illos where it wants to put them when you add a bit of text to a paragraph) but mostly they are minor. I really don't push the software very hard. My requirements are rather basic and the package handles those fine. ■

From the Lair of the LYNX 115 – LYNC – Everybody seems to be moving, one way or another. Hope the setup of the library and new household goes well. The "fall" doesn't sound good but, as you say, could have been much worse. ■

Crash of the Hard Disk 52 – Gary Mason – Throughout the whole of the 2020 pandemic I was always amazed that the NSW outbreaks seemed to be contained so easily and yet, in Victoria, someone sneezed and we had hundreds of infections. Anyway we seem to have it pretty much under control as of mid-March 2021. I'm sure there will be further outbreaks as this virus will keep mutating and become better at infecting people. It is the new world situation that we will need to get used to: masks for all of 2021 and ongoing annual vaccinations for the new strains. So it goes. ■

I notice a couple of comments to various regarding Taiwan in your contribution. I would think that China will be making a move for it in the next 5-10 years so I'd better get my skates on if I want to visit – which I do. I've been trying to interest Robyn in a holiday that entails a week in Taiwan, a week in South Korea and a week in southern Japan. (The "week" here might actually be a bit over 7 days in each, it all depends on itineraries.) Not seeming to have a lot of luck in that regard. I keep getting her to watch documentaries about Taiwanese street food but even that isn't doing the trick at this time. I remain hopeful. ■

Sparrowgrass & battle-twigs 72 – Roman Orszanski – The one-day Zoom-based online conventions have all sounded interesting and I would have liked to be able to attend all of them. But real-life has intervened and I've found myself driving somewhere or other at the start or end of a longish driving holiday and been unable to join in. Hopefully next time. ■

You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat In Your Bed – Cath Ortlieb – Thanks for the descriptions of the procedures. I hope the outcomes are good and that the side-effects are not overly onerous. ■

Knot Likely – Marc Ortlieb – Are you aware of the Galactic Journey website/blog? They look at sf (film, tv, books and pro mags) 55 years in the past with the idea that each reviewer/contributor will write their reviews as if they were living at that time. They are currently "living" in 1966. I found their 1965 commentary very useful, especially as I'm working on a piece about "Short Sf in 1965". Keep up the good work with the F&SF reviews. I may well need them in the next year or so. ■

Debussy 12 – Margaret Riep – Front page, middle photo, top row: I reckon the people are John D. Berry, Shayne McCormack and Mike Glicksohn. Bottom row right-hand photo: looks like Jerry Kaufman. ■

I am greatly enjoying your Silk Road adventures. It might well be the only way I'm going to get any sort of experience of that part of the world. My wife, Robyn, and I have a number of plans for various trips all lined up but have currently no idea of when we will be able to enact any of them. I fear we shall run out of time before seeing all we want to see. ■

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Oz SF Fan – Lucy Schmeidler – Good to read that you picked up some book suggestions from my fanzine. All the ones you list are worth reading. ■

The Erotic Wombat 18 – Gerald Smith – Along with the wine and churches you can probably add that Adelaide is the home to Australia’s weirdest, and sometimes creepiest, murders., as well as the Australian city with the most eucalyptus trees in its streets. This last point hadn’t impacted me when lived there and I hadn’t really noted it until I read about it in Murray Bail’s novel *Eucalyptus*, a book I can recommend. Once you have that in your hear you’ll be seeing gum trees everywhere. ■

It will also not take you long to realise that Adelaide is really just a big country town at heart. Everyone seems to know everyone else, it is reasonably well laid out, and doesn’t take that long to get around. The problem it has is the weather – not so bad in winter but bloody hot in summer, and those long, hot nights. I grew up in an era without air conditioning and those old stone houses took a few days to heat up and then stayed hot for a week. Sleep was always difficult to come by. ■

I look forward to your exploration of the Adelaide Central Markets. An excellent place to visit and one that I really should get to more often. ■

Aussiecon? What’s that again? I don’t think I heard you. Could you speak up a bit? Not, still not getting it. All I hear is white noise. Ah well, ... ■

Ytterbium 133 – Alan Stewart – You are never going to be able to fit *Outworlds 71* into a suspension file – it would nearly break the cabinet. I’ve got mine on the shelf next to *Warhoon 28* – they make a good pair I reckon. ■

I was in Orbost, Victoria, a month or so back and wanted to visit Sailors Grave Brewing specifically to try the Dark Emu beer you mention. No such luck. The brewery didn’t have drinking area and the only pub in town still open didn’t have it on tap. They did have another from the brewery which I tried and enjoyed, and then completely forgot the name of. ■

Notes on the Podcast: we mentioned Clarke’s *Rama* on the “Megastructures” episode but didn’t go into it in detail as we will be covering it when we get to the Hugo Award sf or its year. Similarly for *Ringworld*. We were looking for things a little less known. David is a fan of Harry Turtledove and may have mentioned him on the Alternate Histories podcast but I don’t think we covered anything of his specifically. We had a limited topi in mind. ■

Les Chattes Parties 172 – Sally Yeoland – Reading the obituary of “Perry Middlemiss” of Canada was certainly surreal. It was just such an odd feeling. ■

I hope to have some more about Dennis over the next year. Just have to find the right hooks to star off a piece. I have a few ideas which will be coming up. ■

Thanks to all the other contributions in this massive mailing. I keep reading them but am not finding anything to comment about.

Stay well.
