

LITTLE BLUE NUMBER 9

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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

No, didn't like the green, so we're back in blue. Staying with Georgia as the font however. It has pretty much become my default.

GOINGS ON IN THE GROVE

Last time I mentioned that we'd had a flash rain event in early November that flooded our front verandah. Roll forward two months and we had another on Friday January 7.

As I also stated last time, thirty years ago such events were rare, but have started to become more common. This one was the worst we've had since we moved in here in December 1993.

The rain started in at around 6pm that evening and by 6:15pm it was pretty much all over; the rain that is, not the cleanup. By 6:05 when I went out to check the front verandah the front door mat was floating in the water and torrents of the stuff were pouring into our front yard off the street. The drains just couldn't cope. My son had gone out to collect some takeaway food for our dinner but couldn't make it home and had to sit in the car for a while until the water levels in the gutters started to go down. He told me later that he passed at least three fire engines racing off to emergency calls.

With the amount of water coming down the hill behind us all heading down to Glenferrie Road and the major drain near there, we were flooded in no time and the water started to climb upwards towards the top of the front door step. I went and grabbed as many towels as I could and then headed back for a blanket. The water was just coming in under the front door when I got there – which was a first for us – but we were able to stop it getting more than about a metre down the hallway. That hall is floored with polished wooden floorboards covered in some long carpet runners. Only one of the runners got a bit wet at one end and we were able to keep the water out of the bedrooms so none of the carpets in those rooms were affected.

As before, the “visiting” cat sat on a chair on our front verandah, watching the waters rise as I ran around trying to steer the water down the side of our house and towards our backyard. And again, it frankly didn't seem to be bothered in the slightest.

Next door's backyard was flooded and they had some water into their house at the back, and I heard from a friend a few streets over that they had some water get into the house down a wall and had a stream of it through their garage. It wasn't too good.

Added to the problem of the water was the extra dirt and silt that was washed into our place from number 28, two doors up. Sometime in the past month or so, as a part of his continuing house renovations, he had decided to dig up his nature strip (see below) and replant it with new turf.

Little Blue Number 9

Unfortunately he hadn't gotten around to the delivery of his new lawn by the date the rain hit, so the bulk of his newly laid soil/sand mix for the bed for his new lawn ended up being washed into my garden and verandah, and into next door's. It was just unfortunate timing – next day I saw him out in the street laying his new turf which had just been delivered.

Two big rain events in two months is too much. I know they aren't that big in comparison to others', but they are getting to be too big for us.

Definition: For those unsure what I'm talking about when I mention a "nature strip", it's a small strip of land about a metre wide that lies between the footpath (pavement) and the street. [The photo to the right shows next door's nature strip between the footpath and the road, and further up in the photo you can see where number 28 has replaced his nature strip lawn and installed an orange, plastic mesh barrier to keep people off it.] Each house in this area has one, and they run between driveways leading into those houses. Generally they are covered in grass with a number also being the bed for a street tree or two. The land is council owned but it is the house owner's responsibility to look after the strip, to keep it tidy and mowed if required. It's also where we put out our rubbish bins each week for collection.



Comments on Mailing 324

Official Organ – David Grigg

I am liking these covers of yours.

And a very hearty congratulations to **Claire** as our new El Presidente.

Chez Ashby 4 – Derrick Ashby

All I can say is that I hope Christine's and your medical problems don't escalate. Your descriptions indicate that they must be more than a bit harrowing. Good luck. •

Quoz 80 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

Mark – I'm not sure why you think that your contributions to the ANZAPA mailings are too long or that people will complain about them. Haven't seen that so far and doubt that I will. Keep 'em coming I say. •

I would like to be able to attend a Corflu at some time but I doubt I can persuade the other half to tag along or to add it into our holiday schedule. •

Claire – As noted above, many congratulations on becoming our esteemed President for the upcoming year. •

As to your reading: 1. **Black Sun** – I think I liked this better than you did; 2. **Time Was** – I was hugely impressed by this and have no idea why it seemed to be ignored by so many awards. A better novella than the similarly themed **This is How You Lose the Time War** a year or so later, which did pick up a number of awards; 3. **The Honjin Murders** – as you note I'd also like

Little Blue Number 9

to be able to read other entries in this series, though I have no idea of when they will be appearing; 4. **Gideon the Ninth** I enjoyed, though it took a while to settle down into its proper “voice”. **Harrow the Ninth** I found almost impenetrable. I think your approach to reading the second straight after the first might have been the only way I could have found any understanding of it. But that is not a path I will be taking. •

The Fiery Participle 26 – Leigh Edmonds

Well colour me confused: #26 in December following #47 in October? I’m guessing you have a reason. Hopefully. •

ReYctoClaire regarding flags: I always take the presence of the Union Jack in the top left corner of the Australian flag as being an indicator, according to the flag’s original designers, of the country’s origins. Well, it was one of them, but not the true long-term one, as we are now all fully aware. So, if we decide to retain the sentiment of the inset positioning and replace it with the Aboriginal flag then I reckon we get something I’d be happy to look at. Just a thought.



I have discussed this with other people, probably over a beer (Alan?) and it was pointed out to me that this was the flag sewn onto the uniform of Sam Neill’s character in the film **Event Horizon**, in which he played an Australian physicist. And, yes, I had seen the film, and, yes, I had noted the flag. That’s probably where I got the idea. •

ReYctoBruce regarding National Library: Thanks for the reminder that I need to make sure I deposit copies of my fanzines into the National Library. I’ve done that now and added them to the mass distribution list. I had clean forgotten about this until you mentioned it. •

ReYctoGary regarding driverless cars: It would appear that having driverless cars on the road – electric or otherwise – is actually going to increase the number clogging the highways and byways. The general view is that someone will drive their car to work, or rather have the car drive them to work, order the car to drive home and plug itself in for a charge and then to come back and pick them up at the end of the work day. So four trips between home and office rather than two. I suppose the only way to avoid that would be to ensure a “congestion tax” was levied *a la* London. Maybe people would then just get their cars to drive them to the local railway station instead. I doubt whether I will see this, or if I do, be impacted by it. I haven’t been into the Melbourne CBD in months, and when I do it’s generally just a trip to the State Library. •

ReYctoMe regarding house prices: I didn’t mean to imply that the current market value of this house is not substantial, just that it is not as substantial as the house a few doors down. Their land area is double the size of ours. The “market price” of this house has increased eight-fold since we moved in in 1993. I very much doubt we could afford the mortgage on this place now. •

ReYctoMe regarding pets: I think of myself as neither a dog nor a cat person, rather as a no-pet person for preference. My wife quite likes the cat outside, I’m ambivalent. I’m quite happy to give its head a quick rub as I go by and to fill up its water container, but that’s about the extent of it. I wouldn’t feel worse if it weren’t here, which may be all the explanation you need. •

Re the FANAC Zoom session: it all worked out okay in the end. Most of what I had to say in the beginning was a complete muddle and I’ve forgotten most of it already. Don’t forget, we have one more of these to do at some time in the future!! What fun.

Little Blue Number 9

Rhubard 93 – John and Diane Fox

Diane – I agree with you regarding the comedy series *Upright* — truly excellent stuff. •

ReYCtoMe regarding the outdoor cat: I'm trying to discourage the rest of the household from taking too much interest in the furry one. I suspect that building a cat-box out of bricks on the front verandah would be: 1) making current arrangements too permanent for my liking; 2) would upset of the layout of the stuff on the verandah (it is rather small being about 1.5m by 6m); and 3) would give me more work to do. All of which I would not like. Thanks for the suggestion, but no thanks. •

ReYCtoMe regarding the Zora Cross: the major problem you are going to have in attempting to read this author's works is the fact that the bulk of them are no longer in print, in any form. I may make an attempt to rectify this in the future by creating new editions of the books and then trying to get them published, in e-book form, through Standard Ebooks — yet another project. Any such attempt will have to wait until later in the year, however, as David and I are working on a SEKRIT PROJECT for that organisation. More on that in the future as well.

You can track down most of her poems as they were originally published in various Australian newspapers and magazines that have now been digitised by the National Library's Trove project. Of the 10 novels by her we've found so far, only three (*Daughters of the Seven Mile*, *The Lute-Girl of Rainyvale*, and *This Hectic Age*) appear to have received one published edition after their initial newspaper serialisation. Which is not a great track record. Likewise her four poetry collections: two had two editions, the others only one. It's a great loss to Australian letters in my view. •

brg 119 – Bruce Gillespie

ReYCtoMe regarding the Geoff Dyer: I'm not sure when I first saw the film version of *Where Eagles Dare*, though it was probably as a matinee back in the 1970s. The local cinema used to run double-features on Saturday afternoons for \$0.20 a ticket as I recall. I saw a lot of westerns and war movies on the big screen that way.

I will be interested in your thoughts on the film as it is nothing like *Stalker* in any way. Think of it as another secret intelligence war movie in the manner of *The Guns of Navarone*. •

ReYCtoMe regarding the interment of my father's ashes: no luck so far, but the current plan is to have the functions over the weekend of March 12/13. I've been holding off finalising the arrangements as I didn't want the whole thing to be planned and then be cancelled, again. As I sit here, at the beginning of February, it appears that that the weekend will be going ahead. It will be good to finally get to it. •

ReYCtoMe regarding my home town of Laura: Garry Disher's hometown of Burra is about 100 kilometres away from Laura. Burra is about 40 kilometres from Clare. We would still consider all of this to be in the Mid-North region of South Australia and the countryside around Laura is very similar to that of Burra. •

The Fretful Porpentine 41 – David Grigg

As much as Townscaper looks interesting I can't see myself getting into it. If I did it would just be another time-waster, and I certainly have enough of them. •

ReYCtoMe regarding photos of me: These have really only come about in the past few years as Robyn has started using the camera on her smart phone. Now I seem to have more photos of me than I know what to do with. I have to sort through heaps. It can be very tedious. •

Little Blue Number 9

Necessity 163 – Jack Herman

Good to see that the camping trip to Broken Hill, and surrounds, went well. I think you were rather brave to travel all that way to go camping for the first time with that new equipment. I guess that, if it all went pear-shaped you could always have retreated to a motel. The drive would be okay, but I fear we are not the camping types. •

Gaston J. Feeblehare 22 – Kim Huett

ReYctoDavid regarding PDFs/Epubs: I tend to agree with you that a PDF version of a fanzine is far preferable to an Epub. I put things in a particular place and I expect that they will stay there. I have enough “fun” trying to bend the word processing software to do what I want, though I really tend to think any problems are caused by my lack of understanding of the basic concepts of the software rather than deficiencies in the software itself. Most problems with my fanzines are mine and mine alone. •

Great quote re Ellison: “it seems unlikely he stayed up to date with the work given that eventually he was too ill to continue and then too dead.” Being “too dead” would certainly make things difficult.

Maybe only the stories in the upcoming anthology will feature their original Kirk artwork. Hopefully, if that is the case, then Straczynski will have engaged Kirk to illustrate the newer stories as well. Also, hopefully, Kirk was paid way back when. •

ReYctoGary regarding Adelaide: Even though I am an atheist I think I would prefer to have Adelaide described as the City of Churches, as opposed to the City of Strange Murders. Murray Bail, in his novel *Eucalyptus*, described Adelaide as being a City of Eucalypts. Maybe that could be a fall-back designation. •

Re J. M. Walsh: AustLit (the Australian Literary Bibliography) has the following to say about J. M. Walsh:

J. M. Walsh had written twenty-two novels and dozens of stories for newspapers and magazines by the time he moved to London in 1929. Known particularly for his mystery, thriller and crime writing, Walsh was also a prominent contributor to the Australian science fiction genre in the 1930s.

The bibliography website lists 10 sf works by Walsh: 3 novels and 7 short stories. •

Sketchy 10 – Christina Lake

Re Wendy Hirsh: The note from Wendy Hirsh certainly sounds like her. Her eyes tend to glaze over when the conversation around her turns completely fannish. Which is probably why she gets on so well with my wife, Robyn, when Irwin and I start talking about fanzines, scanning, convention and other fans. She’s at least got someone to turn to for a conventional conversation. •

ReYctoMe regarding Australian fanzine blue: it’s hard getting the hue just right, so I’ve pretty much decided to let it sit as is. I’ve tried yellow and green, but keep coming back to blue. Which must say something, though I would prefer not to think what. •

Crash of the Hard Disk 57 – Gary Mason

Regarding the Australian government dropping the importation of comics in 1941: as part of the indexing work I do for AustLit I tend to look at a lot of newspaper. I’m currently working on

Little Blue Number 9

various papers (*The Australasian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Sydney Mail*) from the 1930s, all of which have a healthy smattering of poetry and short stories included in their pages. While I haven't checked this closely I do believe this started to drop off as the Second World War progressed. I'm not sure if this was a conscious decision to keep the readers focused on the serious side of world events or if the papers themselves were on paper rations and could only publish the "real news". I shall report on this further as I get closer to the relevant years. •

You Really Know You're Home When Yo Find a Wombat in Your Bed 196 – Cath Ortlieb

Thanks for the photo of me, I think. I look like I've been dragged through a bush backwards, as my mother would have said. •

Knot a Benny – Marc Ortlieb

Re our discussion about high schools in the country of South Australia: I've now been informed, by my brother, that Gladstone High School – the nearest to our home town of Laura – only taught up to Year 11 in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I haven't yet been able to figure out when they added classes for Year 12, but it was some time between 1968 (when I started high school) and 1972 when I finished. My primary school colleagues started at Gladstone in 1968 and continued on to Year 12 there in 1972. Three of them ended up in tertiary education; two with me at the University of Adelaide and one at the South Australian Institute of Technology. More digging required. •

ReYCToMe regarding genzines in ANZAPA: you could always send me a LoC when you get the zine via email. That way you could replay to the other letters of comments and be included there. Just a thought. •

...oooOOOooo...

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

Stay well.