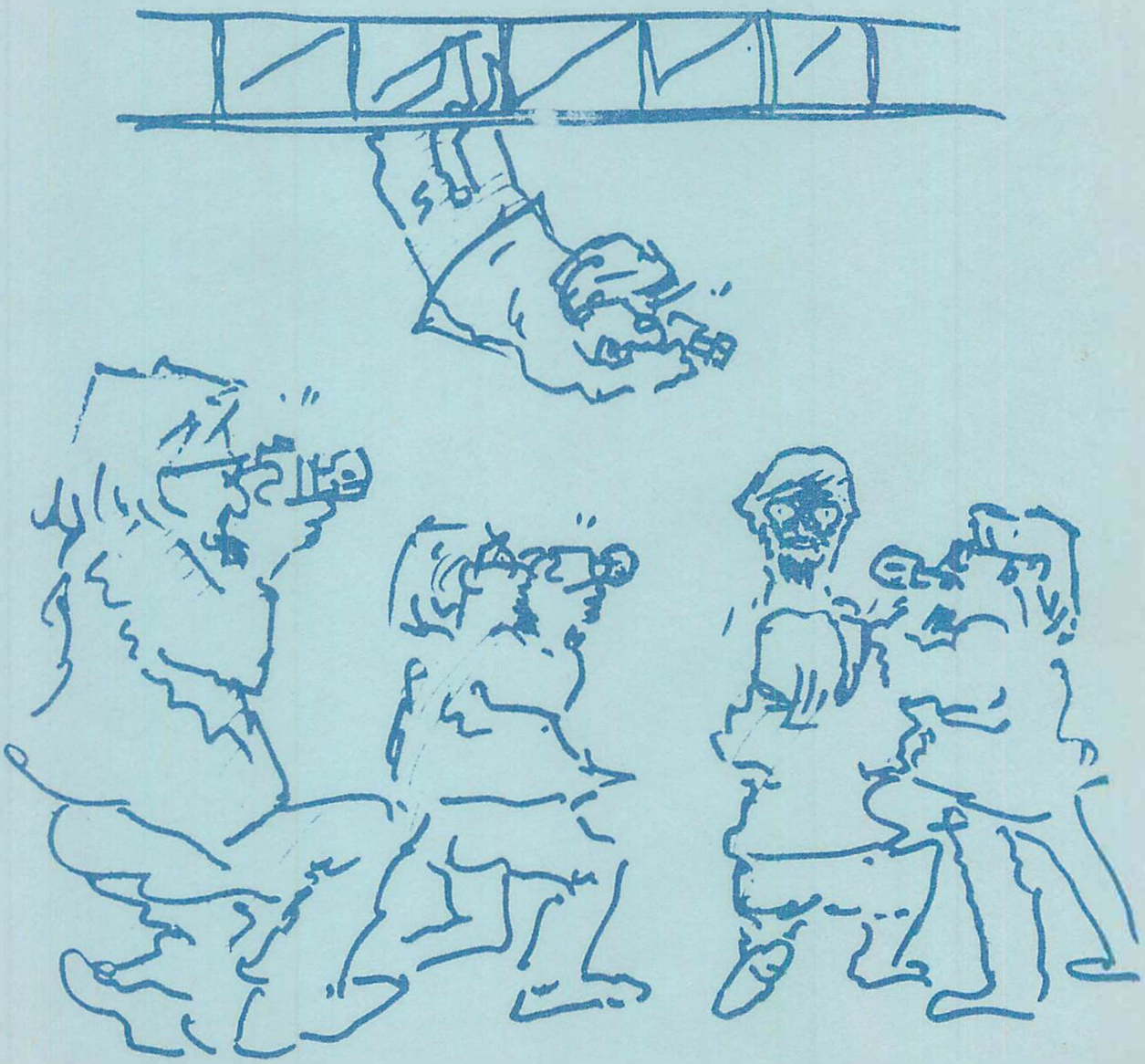

SIXTY PAGES FOR FAPA

SIXTY PAGES FOR FAPA

or, more accurately,
SIXTY PAGES FOR THOSE MEMBERS OF FAPA
WHO HAVEN'T SEEN THEM BEFORE

are perpetrated by John Bangsund PO Box 230 Kew 3101 Australia

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The cover illustration depicts well-known photographer and science fiction author Lee Harding at the launching of his book Displaced Person on 23 July 1979. The depiction was depicted by Gerald Carr at the Epping NSW Girl Guides Hall in 1970 – providing yet another example of the amazing powers of science fiction.

The Rotsler drawing above provides yet another example of the kind of thing that Foyster deplores about my fanzine-publishing activities, in that he's seen it before. It also seems vaguely appropriate to this collation.

What we have here, Almayer, is about half the stuff I have published during the eighteen months I have lived at Kew. By the time you read this I might very well be living somewhere else – a matter touched on with some feeling in the concluding pages of this assembly – but the Kew PO address will still find me. I was tempted to entitle this gathering 'QV' for what I hope will be old times' sake, but I resisted, not wanting to confuse anyone.

PARERGON PAPERS 10 were published first for a meeting of the Nova Mob, and a week later for the Tenth Anniversary mailing of ANZAPA, collated at the first (and so far only) Anzapacon.

THE TIMES BICYCLE PUMP SUPPLEMENT is Parergon Papers 12, the final issue of that fanzine, or Philosophical Gas 49, depending on how you look at it. Foyster said that issue provided excellent reasons for not reading Flann O'Brien. If he'd only told me those reasons ten years ago I could have saved myself a lot of time and ignorant enjoyment.

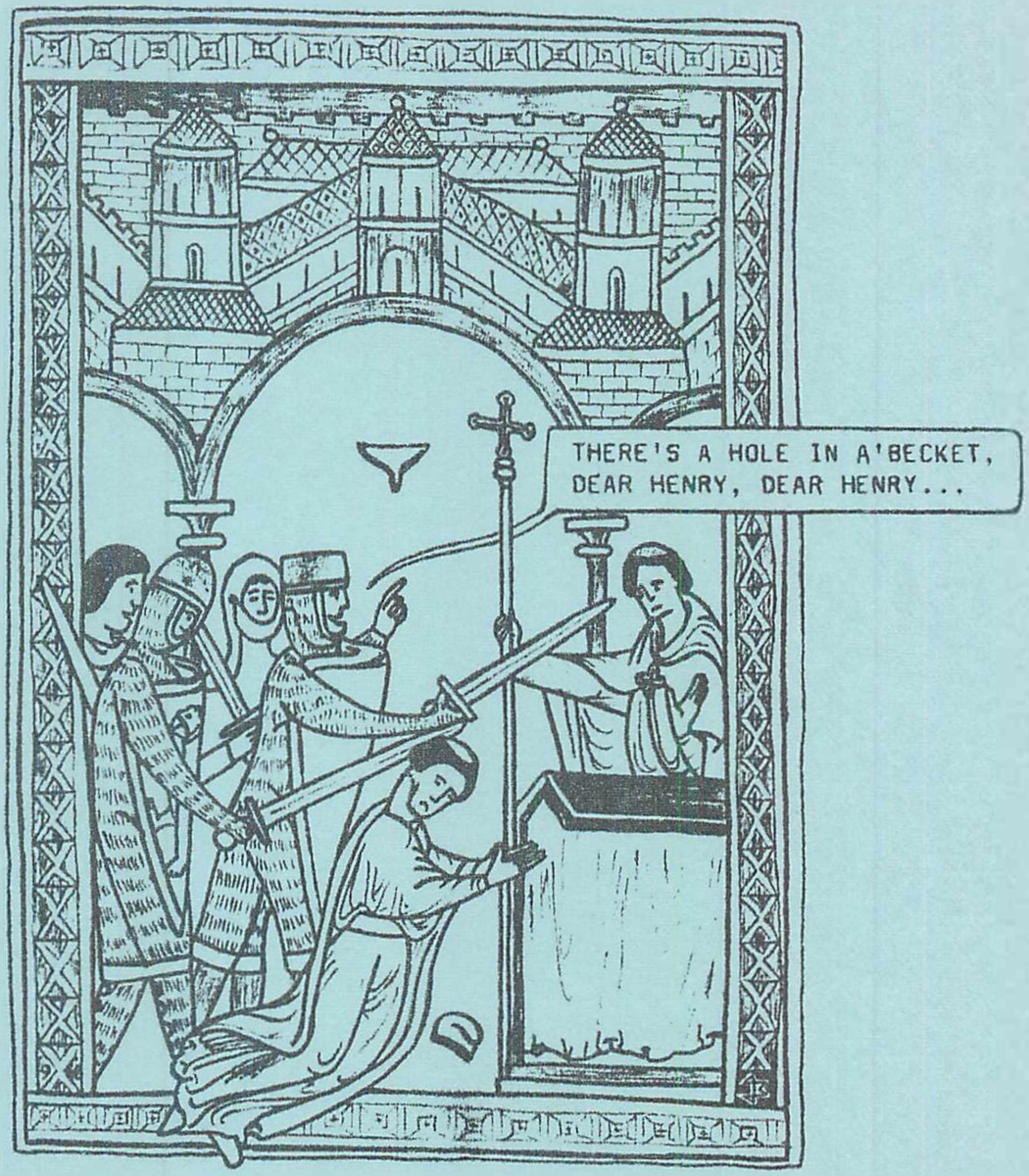
THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS NEWSLETTER vol. 9 no. 5 is fairly typical of the fanzine I've published most regularly in recent years (18 issues in 18 months). It has served my selfish purpose of making myself known to publishers, and I'm hoping to give it up in June, but anything could happen.

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS 50 has a long boring list of everything I can recall publishing since 1966. It also contains a reference to the PKIU, which, to save Jack Speer months of intellectual agony, I will say right now is the Printing and Kindred Industries Union.

And right at the end there is a portrait of Henry Cavendish (1731-1810), philosopher, misogynist, and inventor of the back cover.

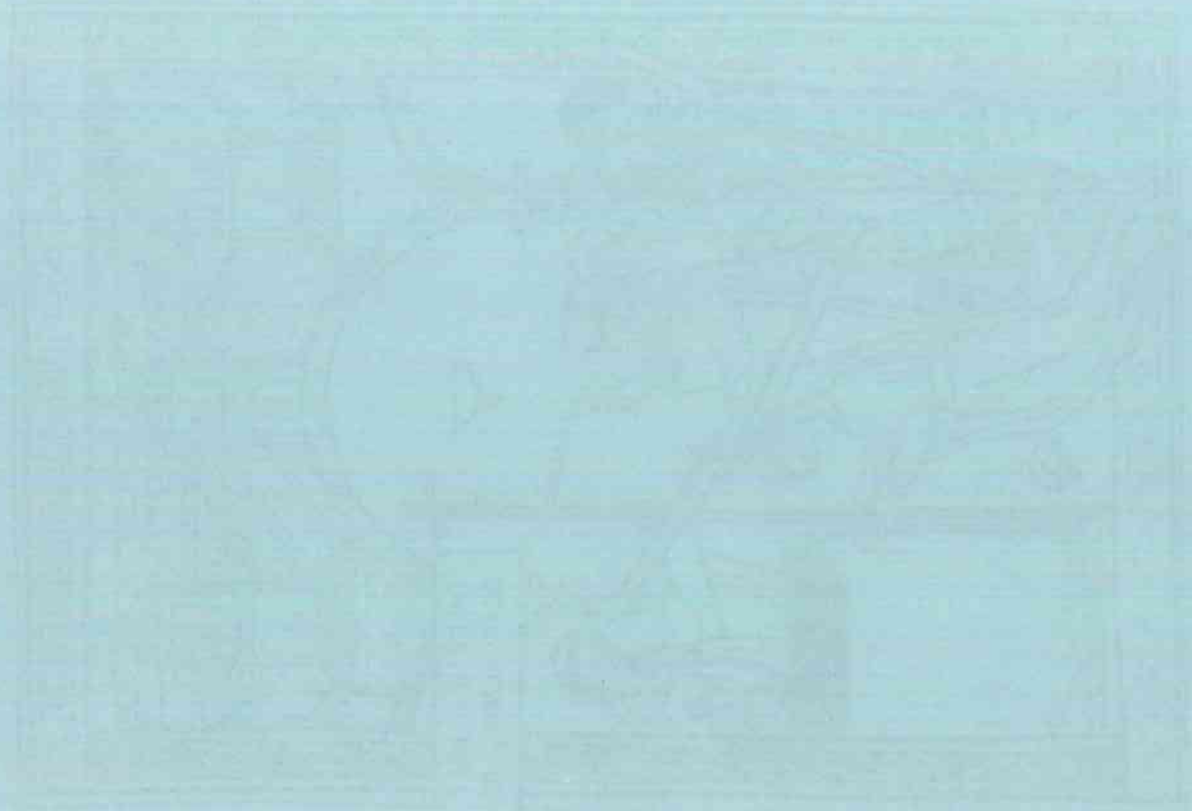
PARERGON PAPERS

Number 10 : October 1978



Registered for posting as a publication – category B

ISSN 0155 0713



George Turner's friend Jim, a devout atheist from Glasgow, had an accident at work last week and broke two fingers of his left hand. His account of the accident was brief, amusing and evocative (my fingers throbbed in sympathy). 'I told God aboot it!' Jim said. And I'll bet His ears are throbbing yet.

The day we met Jim I also met Neilma Sidney, a writer whose short stories I was advised years ago to take as a model for my own writing (despite that, I enjoyed them very much). When I arrived at her door I was greeted first by her dog, whose name, she said, is Fromage. 'Say fromage,' I said to the dog. 'C'est dommage,' said Neilma Sidney, and I knew we were going to get on fine.

Ah, it's great to be back in Melbourne.

PARERGON PAPERS

Number Ten
October 1978

ISSN 0155 0713

are published six times a year by John Bangsund, 7 Derby Street, Kew, Victoria 3101, Australia. The subscription, formerly tied to a mixed basket of recurrencies, is now settled at $5.00 per capita per annum, but I still prefer letters of comment. Her Majesty's Australian Postal Commission advises that theses papers are now registered as a publication, category B. Vivat regina! Well, vivat vancouver, for that matter, but it seemed only polite, Susan.

MOSCOW, June 13. — Former world heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali arrived here yesterday aiming to fight exhibition bouts with Soviet boxers and perhaps meet President Leonid Brezhnev.

> *A small light glows after the ignition is switched on. After between 15 to 45 seconds, the light goes out and*

The Advertiser: TOOTHS TAKE COURAGE
The Age: NSW Brewery Takes Over Ailing Company

> I pondered over the addendum for some time before coming to the conclusion that the allusion to a suspected alimentary disability was engendered by Soapy's undeniably embittered facial expression.
> (*Translation:* Soapy looked constipated.)

The combination of these and other factors found the Sydney and Melbourne Steam Packet Company unable to weather the storm. The business went into liquidation.

> And thus bytwene playn rude & curyous I stande abasshed.
> (Caxton: Prologue to *Eneydos*)

6 September I typed the page before this on 6 August, and since then, among other things, I have acquired a new postal address: PO BOX 230, KEW 3101. Yes, I'll wait right here while you make a note of it.

(Tum te tum. Too-ral, li-ooral, li-addity, singin' too-ral, li-ooral, li-ay, singin' *toorali oorali* ahem. Back already? How many addresses is that you have for me now? Golly.)

Last issue came to a sudden halt just as I was making rude remarks about proofreaders. 'Poorfreading ain't in it!' I was saying, little anticipating that within a few days of writing that I would be working full-time as a proofreader. It wasn't a great deal of fun on the night shift at Southdown Press, reading endless stuff about horse races and tv programs, but it paid well and I liked the blokes I worked with (I've always liked printing-people). After a few weeks there I started having dizzy spells and generally feeling very unwell (I think I just wasn't adapting to night work, eating and sleeping at odd hours and so on), so I left, wondering what I would do next for a living — and suddenly there was work from Anne Godden (publisher of Lee Harding and other great & famous folk), and when that was finished there was work galore from other publishers, so everything seems to be working out. I have at least five books to do before the end of the year, and four issues of the Society of Editors Newsletter, and two Parergon Papers. Without further ado, I'll get on with the first of the latter. Let's start with some letters.

JIM HART
115 Eighth Avenue
Joslin SA 5070
5.4.78

I strongly suspect that you and your Parergon Papers are a dangerous and perversive influence. This letter is evidence enough. Viewed objectively my life has more than enough demands already without writing to you, especially when I could just as (or more) easily phone or speak to you in person as indeed I did this morning when we wrote off several precious minutes of Mr Rigby's time and as I shall most likely do again soon.

I write now to you for the same reason, I suspect, that others do and for something of the same reason that you publish PP: we enjoy the written and especially the printed word. However, while I am reasonably content to deal with other people's words most of the time, you do so only out of direst financial necessity, preferring whenever possible to indulge yourself with your IBM and your stencils. The result I hasten to add is very entertaining. No one else I know sends me 15-page letters, which brings me to my next point.

I write to you because you wrote to me, or at least I feel that you did. I now know about some of your recent life: the frustrations and joys (mostly the former) from Rigby books, your neighbours' architecture, your recent correspondence, evenings with Aldiss, etc. Obviously you like to write these things down and so share them with the seventeen poets and Kafka's mate, and that it would seem is what PP (and for all I know, ANZAPA?) is all about: writing to other

people but without the restrictions/limitations/inhibiting factors of a straight one-to-one letter; because with a multiple readership you have editorial autonomy and can write about scrabble scores without apology.

As I said, no one else writes me 15-page letters. Mainly because none of them has the time. And certainly no one else I know stencils his letters and distributes them complete with ISSN. (Does the National Library ever write? Dear John, I am fine and hope you are too. You wouldn't believe some of the things that have landed on my shelves this week. Yours sincerely, National Library.)

And this is the first time for many years that I have written to someone who is within telephoning distance (business/formal letters excluded). I suspect the last time was about ten years ago when I and a young lady corresponded quite regularly and often for a few months even though we lived only about a mile or two apart and saw each other quite often enough to catch up on essential developments. It was mostly just daily trivia — what the man over the road was doing, scrabble scores, books we'd read, movies we'd seen — but there was a pleasure to be gained from writing for someone who liked to do the same. Which again is what PP seems to be about.

There are other letters I could be writing now: one to our friend Suzy in Melbourne, another to my parents. Neither is likely to be done tonight. Suzy is worth mentioning here because in her latest letter she raises an interesting point. There are currently two men in her life: a Scots soccer player in Melbourne and an American psychologist in San Francisco. The soccer player obviously has the home-ground advantage (take a rabbit stamp for metaphors, Hart) but has lately turned to Baha'i and now leaves little tracts whenever he visits her house; in the previous letter he was rated quite well but I strongly suspect that his stocks have now dropped and that shares in soccer players are selling below par. The psychologist on the other hand has lately been sending endearing letters and although he is far far away he is likely to visit later this year. However, his letters have revealed a flaw in his credentials — he can't spell. And the lady laments that try as she will she finds it very hard to love a man who cannot spell.

It's not a problem I've had to face but I can see that it could be one of those insidious niggling things that could lead to divorce. (Please your honour, if I told him once I told him a thousand times — i before e except after c — but does he listen?) And without correspondence one might never know until it was too late. What I wonder is the answer? Does one make prospective mate sit for a spelling test, or write an essay (which could also test for grammar, which is another tricky area for any relationship), or does one adopt a more subtle approach such as checking discarded shopping lists?

This reminds me of the time when the father of a young lady with whom I was then walking out asked me to spell 'phoenix'. I was slightly taken aback — we had barely been introduced — but it was

his house (and his daughter) so I did as I was asked. When I had done so he let on that this was not really a spelling test at all: it was to see if I said aitch or haitch, which in turn indicated whether I was protestant or catholic. This religious/pronunciation differentiation was new to me at the time and like I say it was his house so I didn't argue the validity of the test; besides I'd obviously passed the test (I hadn't been thrown in the dungeons or burnt at the stake on his eye-level rotisserie grill) and I wasn't about to do anything to spoil my winning run. But it struck me as a trifle odd; partly perhaps because it would never occur to me to say haitch, nor to enquire if anyone else did.

See what I mean about insidious? Dangerous and perversive? I should have gone to bed an hour ago but your wretched Parergon Papers have got me going. There were other things I was going to write about but I think I shall have to leave them for another time. (Already I am assuming that there will be another time — a pox upon you Bangsund!)

You're welcome any time, Jim. Your ideas about the function of fanzines (at least, the kind of fanzine I enjoy publishing) correspond closely to my own, and are therefore shrewd, perceptive and well thought out. In this issue there will be material of a rather heftier class than thoughts on inner-suburban renovations (though we'll have some of those) and scrabble scores, as there have been in the last two issues, but this is accidental. Jim, meet John. He's in publishing, too.

JOHN BROSNAN
23 Lushington Road
London NW 10
2.5.78

Greetings from grotty London. It's a rainy, miserable day and through the window I can see a parked truck belonging to a building company called Usher Brothers. An omen, I wonder?

Peter Darling and Elizabeth, plus child, dropped around for a visit a couple of months ago. They arrived looking suitably aghast after having walked through some of NW10's more colourful beauty spots on their way from the station. I don't know if it was the meal or the effect of being in NW10 but I didn't hear from Peter again after that. I presume he's back in Australia now.

I don't know anything about 'The Alchemist Head' bookshop in Dublin. Yes, I do read the Irish Times occasionally. It's not a bad paper apart from those annoying lapses into Gaelic gibberish. Their tv is like that too — an announcer will be talking normally and then suddenly he'll switch to Irish, often in the middle of a sentence. Very frustrating if he happens to be reading the news.

I'm looking forward to Harry (Harrison)'s sf conference which he's holding in Dublin in June. I didn't attend the last one but I heard it was quite a success. Can't be worse than this year's Eastercon which was held at a giant hotel on the edge of Heathrow airport. Totally the wrong kind of place for an sf con — much too big and

expensive. At one point I was accused by the hotel security thugs of being a fire hazard while standing in a corridor outside a room party. *Me*, a fire hazard?

Haven't heard anything about the Melbourne con. Did Aldiss behave himself?

John, I do believe he did. Others I'm not so sure about, but by now you will know that.

BRIAN ALDISS
11 Charlbury Road
Oxford OX2 6UT
11.4.78

There was something admirably idiotic about our meeting. You were laid on for me much as Moostoopha Pasha was laid on for Kinglake ('The English talk by wheels and by steam'). An hour was to be allowed, no more: and during that time, friendship was to be cemented, and communication puttied in. Unlike Kinglake, I had the additional pleasure of meeting Sally. Well, somehow I feel we managed the tasks set us by our dragomen. Managed them, and greatly exceeded the norms established for us.

After Adelaide, Canberra and Sydney. It was a tremendous time for me. I left Sydney last Wednesday, which already seems a century ago. Now I'm over jet lag and sort of settling back at my desk, battling with a compulsion to describe to Margaret obsessively every last detail of what happened to me when I was away.

I shall preserve carefully my copy of *Australian SF Review, 12th Anniversary Issue*. Grateful thanks for that. A dramatic gesture which had its full effect on at least one recipient. If I might be allowed to respond to your two reviewers, John McPharlin and Cherry Wilder, and their rhetorical questions: whatever my failings, I at least continue with a firm hand on the plough: for the third volume of the Stubbs saga is now published, and I am working on the second and third volumes of the Malacia trilogy. It will take time, but they will appear, God willing.

Good to meet you, John. My best regards to you and grey-eyed Sally.

And good to meet you, Brian, after all these years. You mentioned in Adelaide (and I repeat here for anyone interested in another of John McPharlin's rhetorical questions) that *The Brightfount Diaries* are being reprinted. I've ordered a copy from Keith Curtis, demon booksearcher of Brickfield Hill (PO Box J175, NSW 2000: free plug, Keith), and look forward to reading this work of the eolithic Aldiss. For anyone who just came in, I will mention that the *ASFR* referred to was in fact Parergon Papers 8; my account of meeting Brian was in no.7 (published after 8 — I got caught up in the cryptozoic); both issues are still available.

TERRY HUGHES
4739 Washington Blvd
Arlington
Virginia 22205 USA
23.5.78

Since the Victorian Government is turning the meat market into an arts and crafts centre, you should ask them to place a plaque there commemorating your days of employment (there). :::

Your account of the changes on Hughes Street struck a resonance with me. In the summer of 1972 I was living in a fannish household in Columbia, Missouri. It was easily identifiable as a fannish mecca / student ghetto by the run down buildings, but the area had a certain charm. For example, the street our house was on was only two blocks long. The street sign at one end claimed that it was Pacquin Street. The street sign two blocks distant claimed that it was Paquin Street. The street that divided it was Waugh Street, and the sound of that name gave rise to an underground drug information sheet called The Waugh Street Journal. It was a fine place to live. Magic was in the air (or at least in our minds).

One of the nicest things about the house was that it had a porch with a comfortable swing hanging from the roof. Many an afternoon, evening and night were spent out there. There always seemed to be someone passing by to talk with, enough light to read by, and in general it was a great spot from which to watch the parade of life.

Across the street was a marvellous house, much larger than our tiny place and one that I associated with Pacquin Street. As I said, it was an area of run down houses and the property values were climbing because of the area's close proximity to the university, and that combination generally leads to the houses losing out. That's what happened to the fine old house across the street from our porch. The land was sold and the house was to be torn down and the grass would then be paved over and a new parking lot would spring into existence. So I spent my last summer in Columbia in that house on Paquin watching the house across the street die a little each day as it was taken apart board by board. It was taken apart in that fashion because a group of young people (followers of Stephen Gaskin, if that means anything to you) got the bid to tear it down and they intended to re-use the materials to build a house out on their farm commune. For a house it must have been like going to heaven, shedding one form and one lifetime of experiences, then being rebuilt (with some fresh parts) and getting set to share the lives of a new group of people.

When eventually the old rambling house was replaced by a sleek modern parking lot, sitting on that porch became less enjoyable. At least the houses on Hughes Street in Mile End have remained houses, even if one or two have undergone operations to make them look more modern. :::

ASFR was a clear example of just how good serious science fiction fanzines can be. Aldiss must have been very happy.

1 October October? Good grief. Slow down, 1978, d'yer hear me! The time dilation effect, it's called. I read that in some book. As you get older you find yourself spending a fortune on new calendars. You forget whether you're working up to Xmas or Easter, don't know whether you're coming or going, Arthur or Martha, Joe or Flo, arse or elbow. It's cruel, getting old. Ask Foyster.

Now, um... What am I doing back here on page 149 when only an hour or two ago, before dinner, I fondly farewelled everyone on page 169? Nietzsche had a word for this. It was, um, er, *Entfuhrung*, that's right, *Entfuhrung aus dem Serail*, not so much a word as a mouthful, or perhaps a state of mind, or possibly Mozart. Yes yes, it was Mozart. Where was I? Back on page 149. Eternal recycling? No. Something like that. *Abendempfindung*? No, Mozart again. As you get older you keep on getting back to Mozart. It's amazing. Ask Leigh Edmonds — he'll tell yer. Or Terry Hughes. Terry...? Ah, Hughes, yes. It's all coming back. If this is Arlington, it must be Terryhughesday.

(*blush*)

Aldiss seemed happy about that issue, Terry, yes. And I really do appreciate your comments, and Brian's of course. In fact, if it weren't for your comments and Brian's I might have started wondering by now whether I actually published the thing or only thought I did. No no, I exaggerate. I saw a discussion in John Foyster's fanzine about how good, serious, thick fanzine issues like PP8 get no reaction whatever in the way of letters of comment and what can be done about this. John got lots of letters of comment about that.

Moving right along, I note your note on the meat market and remind myself that I made a note about this. I have it right here. 'Note ref. meat market', it says.

Little did I know, Terry, on that fateful morning in July 1971 when I parked my trusty VW outside the Metropolitan Meat Market — and I haven't changed much since. Little did I know on that fateful morning in September 1978 when I set out in my trusty Renault for No.7, Howard Street, Melbourne, that I was about to revisit the scene of one of my better-publicized places of former employment. But it was true. I was. But I didn't know that. Until I got there, I mean. And by that time I had arrived. All the romance has gone from the place, Terry. 'The place stank,' I remember I wrote about it in 1971. Ah, no more, no more.

As I reported somewhere or other, it is now the home of the crafts people, and in particular the organizers of Arts Victoria 1978: Crafts. One of the things these folk have got up to this year is arranging an exhibition called 'Colonial Crafts of Victoria' at the National Gallery of Victoria, and they got me in there to discuss the editing of their catalogue for this exhibition. This is not the place to talk about work; I edited the catalogue; that's all that needs to be said. But, gee, Terry, isn't it a small world, eh? Incredible. Nietzsche had a word for it, I reckon.

Alonso Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
Arise, and say how thou camest here.

Miranda O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
That has such people in't!

Prospero 'Tis new to thee.

The Tempest, v.I.

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GEORGE TURNER'S 'BELOVED SON'

SOME NOTES CRITICAL HISTORICAL AND CRYPTOPHILOSOPHICAL BY THE AUTHOR AND HIS READERS

@@

BELOVED SON may well be traced back to an article that George wrote for **Australian Science Fiction Review** no.12 (October 1967) called 'Nothing to lose but the chains'. Writers of science fiction, George said, 'have built themselves a neat set of cages, which contain and constrain their imaginative faculties, and it is time for them to find their way out'. One of the tightest of these cages, he suggested, is the conventions of sf. 'I propose now to stick my neck out, put my hat in the ring and list a few of the conventions due for scrapping, plus some suggested lines of thought for the rejuvenation of the basic ideas behind them.' And he did: telepathy, psi talents, sub-space, the all-female world, robotics and automation, werewolves &c, re-education of criminals, population explosion, one-world government — the sloppy thinking, or lack of thinking, behind the treatment of these subjects in sf was neatly and quickly exposed.

I enjoyed publishing that article, and not least because readers reacted (as I had hoped they would) by asking who the hell George Turner thought he was, what sf had he written anyway, and when did he intend to put his money where his mouth is — that sort of thing. I knew the answer to the first question: George not only thought he was George Turner, but insisted on being George Turner. That's not meant to sound facetious. Whatever George may have in common with St Paul, he is not 'all things to all men'. Accommodating, yes, but never (at least in the twelve years I have been getting to know him) anything else but himself. Before I met him I had been aware of him as, for example, 'among the two or three finest novelists now practising in this country' (Stephen Murray-Smith, in **Australian Book Review**). The late John K. Ewers, in his *Creative Writing in Australia* (1962), had written that 'several of our younger writers — in particular, Randolph Stow, Elizabeth Harrower, Thea Astley and G. R. Turner — are bringing to the Australian novel a pleasing degree of depth and sophistication'. With this awareness, and meeting George as a fellow sf enthusiast, can you blame me for trying ever so gently to nudge him in the direction of writing the stuff?

Well, it took a while, and George might dispute the gentleness of the nudging — in which I was soon joined by many folk, fans and writers, here and overseas — but the objective was achieved. One day in 1971 George told me he'd been giving some thought to a science fiction novel — and went on to detail certain problems he

was having with theoretical astronomy, biology and the like, which had never occurred to me as being problems before, mainly because I don't go in for that kind of thing, but I listened, and made sympathetic noises, and kept his glass filled, and if I said anything at all apart from 'Golly!' or 'Yes, I see what you're up against', it didn't put him off the idea, because he kept on coming back to talk about it. (Some time later, after I moved to Canberra in 1972, he said something to the effect that we had been talking a novel into existence. At the time I was reminded of Howard Schoenfeld's story *Build Up Logically* and was pleased. These days I think of Malcolm Fraser talking-up the Australian economy, and I shudder. I suppose it depends a lot on who is doing the talking. When I moved — I have never verified this, but I think I'm right — Robin Johnson took my place as sympathetic listener. Robin *does* go in for things like theoretical astronomy and biology, and he has read vastly more sf than I ever want to, so I don't feel too guilty about leaving George in mid-idea and moving off to make my fortune editing politicians in Canberra.)

GEORGE TURNER
19 April 1972

Have you really been in that aseptic tank for six weeks or more? It seems only yesterday that we strolled arm in arm among the grog blossoms. Since then I have given up smoking. ... (The novel) progresses at a fast crawl. Section 2 — some 10 000 words in type and a good 50 000 in the wpb — is now disposed of, and nothing seems to be much further forward. In fact I have thrown in a couple of random ideas which must now be worked into the plot to justify their existence. And there the matter rests until the next flash of genius. Do you realise how frustrating it is to be a little, tiny, uncertain hanger on of the skirts of genius? You spend all this time waiting for something to be genial about. And then it turns out to be unworkable. And all these big snotty geniuses knock off masterpieces with one hand while, presumably, they masturbate with the other. No, I don't think I want to grow up to be a genius after all — at least, not a little, frustrated one. I would like to be just normally intelligent and reasonably competent — like, say, John Russell Fearn. Hear that, God? I don't ask much. ... Robin Johnson and I sank a bottle of gin last Sunday night and exchanged some shameful confidences. See if I don't get him into a book some day!

6 October 1972

I have been moving among the intelligentsia, and was recently invited, along with some thirty other similarly poor types, to address a seminar at La Trobe U, where they are studying (if that is the word) capacity and education. My part was to give a talk on the novelist at work. ... You could, when your paralysis lifts, tell me how it affects you. *(I published George's address in Scythrop 28. — JB)* Just remember that I don't listen to criticism but react strongly to even the most mindless applause. What in God's name *are* you doing in that farflung outpost of relegated civil servants and disgraced politicians? ... You will recall that on seeing the name of biologist John Heathcote in my sf novel you asked me to insert a mention of Gangoil? Well, you know my objections to private jokes and all forms of Tuckerisation — but I did promise,

didn't I? So here is the relevant passage. *(And I'm not about to reproduce it here. Look it up: page 112.)* ... So you see that I have given you your reference and salved my literary conscience by turning it into a part of the plot. Satisfactory?

30 November 1972 The Trollope business, which began as a private joke, has developed some life of its own, emerging in the character of a gentleman who lives in a replica of a nineteenth century drawing room and is never sure which century he is operating in. And, believe it or not, I have dug up some biological and psychological justification for his existence. I think John Heathcote will tickle your fancy, and may give you pause at the thought that the things done to him are the subject of laboratory experiments today. Just to leave you pondering, I will reveal that he is the original John Heathcote of 1980, but in 2032 is only twenty years old — and has not been the subject of rejuvenation or time travel or anything else you are liable to think of. I hope.

From *Philosophical Gas* 28, Winter 1974: (7.5.74) ... I am on leave for another three weeks and working fairly solidly on a novel called 'Second Chance', which you may have heard of as 'Amateur Hour' or something else before that. (Probably 'Skylark of Space'.) With luck I may get the draft finished before I go back to making beer. At any rate I have discovered what it seems to be about — and have forgotten what it was once supposed to be about. It is a very bad novel, structurally, but may get by on its individual bits.

((I thought it was about the philosophical bases of morals, the concept of individuality, liberty, social responsibility in science, and the worth of Anthony Trollope — but it's a while since we last talked about it. And it started out with the title 'That Has Such People In It'. Are you still writing the same book?))

— Of course he was. I was just being funny. But oddly — or so George told me — I seemed to have hit on some of the things he really was writing about.

From *Philosophical Gas* 31, July 1975: (14.4.75) At the moment I am engaged on correcting, titivating and feeling generally disconsolate about a 130 000-word novel called BELOVED SON, which may or may not stir a chord in your memory.

((Not so much a chord as a distant but distinct drum. And in the last couple of weeks I have read *Beloved Son*. Some time ago I said that this book would turn out to be as difficult, as important and as magnificent as *Last and First Men*. Having read it, I still say that (but you are a much better writer than Olaf

Stapledon: need I say that?), and I am glad you didn't write something else.))

— Before I published that issue of PG there had been this note from George:

28 May 1975 In approximately the same mail (as this letter) you will receive a typescript. It is not a submission for Scythrop, or whatever that kaleidoscope is called this week. It is the third carbon, almost illegible, of a novel you outlined to me several years ago under the provision title of 'Harry Heathcote of Gangoil'. I have changed the title to 'Son of Trollope' but otherwise retained your scenario intact — plus, of course, a few decorations of my own. (Just can't resist meddling with other people's ideas.) Since all other copies are in the air en route for England and America, yours has rarity value. Which means I may want it back in a hurry for editorial reference. At any rate, please bring it back with you in August, if I don't send a frantic SOS before then.

— 1975: ah, that was a year! Labor was in office (but not in power) and all was almost-right with the world. One day in July Ursula Le Guin stayed with us in Canberra, and I showed her George's manuscript. I think she said she liked the look of it, but so much happened in that week we spent with her — it was less than twenty-four hours actually, but it seemed like a week — that I can't recall exactly what she said. Then we had a World Science Fiction Convention in Melbourne. Meanwhile, other people had been looking at *Beloved Son*.

HOWARD MOOREPARK
444 East 82nd Street
New York 10028
23 July 1975

Dear Mr Turner,
I have read BELOVED SON, and am sorry to say that I do not think it would be saleable here — apart from being twice as long as a s-f novel should be.

In my opinion, it moves slowly, cumbersomely, and the characters are so dim that I couldn't find any of them interesting enough to care.

It goes back to you by seamail. I'm sorry.

CARL ROUTLEDGE
176 Wardour Street
London W1V 3AA
20 August 1975

My Dear George,
I am very sorry about this. I enjoyed reading the novel, but then I am in a special position vis a vis yourself: I am interested in you, and also in Barnard's Star, and all my desire is to like it. But that doesn't alter the fact that it is a long book (it would have to be priced £5 in the UK — nearly £10 in Australia) and it is a long slow read, and you need your wits about you. I can't imagine the Woolworths readership going for it, next door to Michael Moorcock and Azimov on the SF shelves, in paperback, can you? ... Try for publication in Australia. I am very, very sad.

JOHN BUSH
Victor Gollancz Ltd
14 Henrietta Street
London WC2E 8QJ
26 November 1975

Dear Mr Routledge,
I am afraid we cannot make an offer to publish George Turner's BELOVED SON despite the fact that there is a great amount of good in the novel. Basically, it is far too long for its own good and if it were only half the length — for my taste a lot of the long dialogues about philosophy, sociology, science etcetera could go — it would be very promising.

So, regretfully, would you like to pick it up?

— George was in London during 1976, collecting art galleries and operas and sitting at Ursula's feet in Golders Green. I saw him next in August, at Bofcon in Melbourne. He had taken his manuscript to Faber's, he said, dropped it on a desk, and fled.

CHARLES MONTEITH
Faber and Faber Ltd
3 Queen Square
London WC1N 3AU
3 August 1976

Dear Mr Turner,
I'm just off on holiday but before I go I wanted to write you a brief note to say how very much I enjoyed and admired BELOVED SON. It's an excellent science fiction novel — and I've already made an offer for it to Mr Carl Routledge from whom you'll doubtless be hearing very shortly. As we all realize, the real problem, commercially, is its jumbo size — but I don't honestly think (and I'm sure you'll agree!) that it would be easy to make any major cuts in it without doing it a major injury since one of the most attractive features of the whole novel to me is the closeness of the plotting and structuring.

I hope — indeed I feel confident — very shortly after I get back to the office at the beginning of September I'll be able to settle all final details with Mr Routledge; and all I need to do in the meantime is to congratulate you again on a first class book and thank you for having sent it to me.

— *Beloved Son* was published in January 1978 — and this is where the story really starts, because now the book was read not only by agents, publishers and friends of the author, but by what the inimitable Peacock called 'that very large class of literary gentlemen who are in the habit of favouring the reading public with their undisguised opinions'. The following selections from reviews are presented in no particular order.

GEOFF MUIRDEN
The Herald
Melbourne
6 June 1978

It's good to see a science fiction novel set in the Melbourne of the future... (Arthur's) waspish tongue serves unerringly to lay bare the social fabric, so that he is a central element in the story. ... The product of a mature but cynical mind.

TOM SHIPPEY
The Guardian
London
23 February 1978

Mr Turner needs a few gaffing lessons from Mr Pohl, but his ideas keep hopping out. The trouble is, we don't know which ones will come true. But some of them are bound to. It's a relief to get to George Martin's *Dying of the Light*, a first novel, but...

GARY TIPPET
Sydney Morning Herald

Turner is obviously worried about some of the directions of the modern world in science, politics and personal liberties, and has extrapolated his fears into this novel of a frightening future. It is a powerful, stimulating first book.

TOM PAULIN
New Statesman
26 May 1978

And what *Beloved Son* is essentially concerned with is the danger of genetic experiment, 'the power latent in a process of endless, controlled duplication'. Once the geneticists are allowed to release that power they can create regiments of group-indoctrinated, uncomplaining serfs who believe that 'everybody's replaceable, it's the race that matters'. ... George Turner is consistently witty and intelligent in his depiction of outmoded starmen blundering through the brave new world of Australasia, 'all Earth itself lost in the paradoxes of time dilation and slow metabolism'. And often his prose has a lyrical and energetic wonder, as when Raft gazes from the windows of a plastic barracks at 'soft stars in familiar constellations, in clear air lovelier than the diamond dust fields of space'. But the form of Turner's novel, like Raft himself, is too much of a baggy monster at odds with a bright efficiency — the narrative tends to sprawl in places and this sometimes makes the story-line seem oddly precarious and absent-minded. Nevertheless, this is a compelling and often brilliant fiction.

The Sunday Press
Dublin
2 April 1978

I went off science fiction after a time and George Turner's fine novel is the first work in that genre I've read for many years. If it is a true reflection of what is being done in that area then I've certainly been missing something. *Beloved Son* is a tightly written, complexly plotted novel of adventure and suspense; its characters are believable... the ideas postulated are serious and well thought out; the writing never descends to the banal... The whole thing adds up to an immensely readable and diverting work of fantastical supposition.

ALEX DE JONGE
Spectator
1 April 1978

A long, dense and sometimes difficult work... The plot is elaborate, complex and comes to a conclusion so remote from the point of departure that it renders this quite unnecessary. In other worlds *(Spectator's typo — JB)* it could do with cutting. But that being said, it reveals a profound sense of politics, some of the best dialogue and characterisation to come from science fiction in years, and is both vivid and absorbing.

DAVID PATERSON
Newsagent & Bookshop
London
February? 1978

Here in this great block-buster of a novel (375 pages, at least 150,000 words of pure SF) and from the hand of a complete unknown, out of the blue, just like that, is a huge chunk of world-mothering creativity, a damp gust bringing rain to the waste land of British SF. ... Don't expect me to give you a summary of a plot that George Turner needs 150,000 words for, not very many of them wasted. ... The science is good, with a few minor quibbling points — for example, communication between Earth and a sub-light-speed spaceship is surely possible over much greater distances than a miserable 10 million miles? ... Turner is not yet at home with common speech and it shows in a slight stiltedness such as we sometimes find in translations from a foreign language. ... Probably he's very young (and if so we've a genius on our hands)...

JOHN FOYSTER
The Age
Melbourne
15 April 1978

When he deals with the society he has created, George Turner's writing is powerful indeed: very few science fiction novels so richly repay a re-reading. And there's the rub. *Beloved Son*, whether intentionally or not, dramatises the main problem of the science fiction writer and his craft. George Turner, like most readers of novels, is interested in human beings and how they behave. Science fiction elevates ideas above human interest, and science fiction writers who try to avoid that prescription run into trouble. And because *Beloved Son* is so much better written than the average, the scientifictional warts are all the more obvious. These disfigurements arise whenever 'science' (biological or otherwise) is pressed into the service of the plot. No, that is unfair, for all of the scientific content arises naturally (given the novel's structure). What is certain, however, is that when a chunk of science is introduced, it disrupts in a painful way the reader's interaction with the characters and the spirit of the novel. Whether or not this is an essential fault in science fiction, George Turner has shown that even a good novelist cannot avoid it.

DAMIEN BRODERICK
24 Hours / The Critic
Sydney
August 1978

My emotions reject almost all the characters in *Beloved Son*. The least acceptable is his protagonist, an Australian with the unfortunate name of Albert Raft, whose descent into psychopathic megalomania is so unlikely that it is craftily ascribed to the misfiring application of psychochemical interrogation. That is, the pivotal psychic change in the book results from an accident, not from growth, response or revelation of character. ... (The characters) tend to hiss and spit poisonously at one another, which lends a peculiarly prissy tone to the confrontations of allegedly hard types. Indeed the only agreeable character is Arthur... an exemplar of the controlled baroque melodrama which provides the book's best scenes. ... Turner's loving indulgence in set-pieces foreshadows the rediscovery by his innocent demagogues of manipulatory political

theatre. But finally that rediscovery seems to me contrived, essentially an artefact, a *function* of Turner's auctorial dynamic. ... I began by hailing *Beloved Son* as a gratifying turning-point in Australian science fiction. In case my remarks convey a different impression, let me emphasise that a book of such merit deserves close attention.

JAMES CLAYTON
Birmingham Post
2 March 1978

George Turner brings a depth of understanding that is rarely found in science fiction, but his writing style is so flat as to be dull. Despite the fascination inherent in the subject, it's a difficult novel to get along with.

JIM MACKENZIE
Nation Review
Sydney

It is not clear what the central problem of the book is — I conjecture biological research, but it may be the exceedingly interesting (and ambivalent) society of 2032, and the culture clash between it and the crew members... It is also not clear what we are intended to think of the ending, with the political situation that is developing when the book closes. Is it merely that fascism of one sort or another is always a danger, or is there some idea more complicated than that? I don't think books should give easy answers, but if Turner's intention was to raise questions they need to be more substantive than 'What is this book trying to get at?' One additional negative remark — a few of the puzzles are too easy. And that's all I can say against it. It is engrossing, vivid and thought-provoking. The characters are complex and interesting even if rather grotesque; the ideas are exciting and so is the plot. ... A fascinating book.

PETER BRADLEY
The Oxford Times
27 January 1978

It's a work of breathtaking complexity founded on a deceptively simple theme: the homecoming of the first starship after an absence of 40 years... Central to its argument is a prediction by Professor Fred Hoyle that in 20 years' time it will be the biologists, not the physicists, who are working behind barbed wire. ... Yet 21st century society is not especially vicious, corrupt or evil. In many ways it is preferable to our own. It is one of the strengths of *Beloved Son* that Mr Turner, unlike many a more famous sf writer, has not created a preposterous pasteboard world in order to knock it down in favour of one more like ours. His world picture is plausible, consistent, attractive — and doomed from the moment our forgotten starmen from the past arrive in it.

MOIRA McAULIFFE
Australian Book Review
July 1978

As a novel George Turner's *Beloved Son* is primarily concerned with two things — with creating a believable story with believable characters, and with being Australian. As a science fiction novel — a novel of speculation derived from present trends in ecology, biology, psychology and technology — it is

concerned with the general matters that informed *Brave New World*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Chrysalids*. ... the nexus and focus of the book is relationship – specifically family relationship, but, just as pointedly, the parent-child, parentless-child relationship of Turner's future to our present. ... Central to the book is the strangled father-son relationship of Raft to Heathcote... Turner's concern with identity, character, the close future and the plausibility of settings and events tends to clutter and clog the first third of the book; technological details and characters' motivations for quite trivial pieces of dialogue obtrude into the flow of the novel and block off the world that Turner is creating. ... Ironically, however, given the book's premises about identity, the most sharply drawn 'character' is the homosexual clone-brother Arthur, whose sexual preferences aren't allowed to cloud and determine who and what he sees and will understand. As a clone-brother Arthur is supposed to lack individual identity. But as Turner handles him, Arthur is an intelligent human being and shown to be so. ... On the surface Turner's Australianness is sometimes forced and sometimes natural – it produces both unnecessary jolts and unforgettable images of Australian summer and pathetic, destroyed Melbourne, or lovely interflows of dialogue about the meanings of twentieth-century 'gutter-slang'. Turner's prose is undelighted, unpoetic, without the apprehension of paradox and illumination. But the cumulative effect of the novel, the real thrust of his Australianness, is the disturbing suspicion that here, where we live, the beginnings of his twenty-first century may well be shaping themselves.

I think that's a fair sampling of the response of book reviewers to *Beloved Son*. Some of the comments are absurd; some, I think, gave even George a better idea of what his book is about. I particularly liked the reviews by John Foyster, Moira McAuliffe and (for its sheer enthusiasm and honesty) Jim Mackenzie.

I haven't written a review myself, because I don't go in for that kind of thing, and I haven't even published one yet. Normally when I want a book reviewed I ask George Turner. (And he's always too busy. A bloke must be caught up in awfully urgent and important things not to have time to review Robertson Davies and John James, I reckon. This is the same bloke who claims that I'm forever conning him into doing things he doesn't want to – 'bullying' him, in fact. Strewth!) I couldn't ask George to review this book, so I thought hard about who might be up to it – I was in Adelaide at the time, and in a rush to get a review published by Easter – and I had the happy thought of asking Mike Clark. He met the deadline, too. I missed it.

BELOVED SON

George Turner

Faber and Faber,
London, 1978
ISBN 0 571 11152 1

Reviewed by
Michael Clark

George Turner has written a very large book, and this is not meant to imply merely that it is long: in its 375 pages *Beloved Son* covers more complex themes, and makes more perceptive comment, than many novels twice its length. It is hard to point out a single theme and declare 'This is what the book is all about.' The book concerns more things than one.

In so far as it is possible to state, in the most general terms, the main current of thought in this novel, one might conceivably reason that its disparate elements might be loosely unified in describing the structure and outcome of change in science and society, and the manner in which they interact (as inevitably they must). Such interaction is involved primarily with the manner in which the freedom of individuals – of identity and of association with others – may be encroached upon and ultimately destroyed by a powerful authority (however conceptualized) armed with the appropriate tools, even if it believes it is functioning for the common good. Those who wish to exercise such control in *Beloved Son* certainly believe themselves to be operating in the best interests of mankind, but for all this, their methods are far from libertarian.

This is not to suggest that Turner's book is a dry and hoary treatise on politics and sociology. Nothing could be further from the truth. While *Beloved Son* is a profound examination of many issues that do, or should, concern us today, it is also a compelling narrative, peopled with real, fascinating, truly multi-dimensional characters. In this way Turner has transcended the limitations of the conventional science fiction novel, with its preponderant concern for escapism and adventure. These qualities, virtues in the science fiction genre, are not to be found in abundance here, where Turner's concern is to write a modern novel, dealing with contemporary problems, in a manner in which the sf setting happens to be the most expedient. The issues that Turner analyses are ultimately the fundamental concerns of humanity.

To present a precis of a novel under review is a thankless and usually fruitless exercise, and would be, in the case of this book, an extremely lengthy one. A shorter and finally more satisfactory course is to outline such relevant detail as is necessary for an understanding of individual themes as they are discussed.

Certainly one of the strongest warnings delivered pertains to the potential for society to misuse the findings of science, and for scientists themselves to be blind to the moral and ethical considerations of their work. In *Beloved Son* it is the life sciences – in particular, biology, genetics and psychology – that are subjected to this scrutiny. Albert Raft, commander of the first interstellar expedition, and his crew return from the stars after forty years (eight years for them, the starship having travelled at near light speed) to discover the awesome results of

cloning experiments begun on Earth before they left. Raft finds a large group of identical clones, whom he finds supremely distasteful, regarding this troupe of 'simultaneous dancers' (as one of the book's characters describes them) with utter contempt. However, turning out carbon copies of man by cloning is scarcely the beginning of the experimentation being undertaken in this 21st Century laboratory, secluded from the outside world. The model for this research had been selected because of his strong embodiment of certain physical and mental traits, skills and reflexes — an ideal starting point for the hastening of the evolutionary process, the aim expressed by the leader of the geneticists, Dr David. The kind of improvements in man he aims for are described as:

> 'The usual dreams of men — longevity, an improved immunological system, control of reflexes, increased muscular efficiency, self-replacement in brain cells and others, regrowth of injured members and so on. The ultimate body should be virtually immortal, with total control of its autonomic system and even of cellular structures, but we are a long way from that yet. It will not be arrived at in my time.' (p.307)

What has been arrived at in David's time is frequently abhorrent — travesties of humanity:

> It was about three feet high and mostly head, and it moved with the smooth flow of tiny footsteps on stumped legs under the floor-length gown. As it skittered between the benches it held aloft a kidney dish, like an offertory vessel borne from one research assistant to another. ... The tiny mouth and splayed nose were lost in the dish-shaped visage; the face was a disk of skin under sparse hair, for there were no eyes, none at all, nor depressions where they might have been, only a soft pudding-crust of featureless flesh. (p.301)

And so these geneticists proceed; in the conviction that they are operating for the ultimate benefit of mankind, they act out of the grossest inhumanity, ignoring and dismissing any immediate social or moral responsibility for their actions. Their myopic view of their role is typical of the blind, reductionist attitude to science, which is all too prevalent today (although mercifully the awareness of this seems to be growing). This method was practised with great success in the early days of the physical sciences, and was incorporated in to the philosophy of the life sciences as a matter of course. Broadly, it holds that by dissecting a phenomenon into its component parts, analysing these until they are understood, and reassembling them to form the original whole, complete knowledge may be had of the phenomenon under study. This notion is simplistic, and it does not work. Complex structures do not fit together like jigsaw puzzles: they are arranged in different levels of function and complexity, and the levels interact in a way that cannot be accounted for by examining each level independently. The basic inadequacy of reductionist principles was recognized by atomic physicists decades ago, yet, despite an abundance of evidence (for

a biologist's viewpoint see, for example, the chapter by Paul Weiss in Koestler & Smythies, *Beyond Reductionism*), researchers in the life sciences cling to them as to a divine law.

The biologists and geneticists of *Beloved Son*, in their zeal to produce a prototype of ultimate man, do so by piecing together and developing the traits and features they wish to enhance. By neglecting the way in which the individual components impinge upon each other in countless interactions, they ignore what it is that gives man his essential humanity. They seek to create highly efficient containers for human tissue, which hold not a grain of humanity.

If the geneticists' abuse of their knowledge is practised in seclusion from Turner's 21st Century society, that of the psychologists is not. The star-travellers have returned to a world in which advances in psychopharmacology have made possible the most subtle psychological manipulation. Aberrant traits and habits can be identified and eradicated; a personality considered undesirable can be erased and replaced with one that is more compliant. For those who think that such a society may be admirable, there are of course problems – the same problems that afflict such a world as envisaged by B. F. Skinner in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. In a society in which the use of drugs and techniques of conditioning and psychotherapy allows those in power to exercise control over people's minds and behaviour, who keeps watch on the custodians? When attitudes and beliefs can be directly influenced, it is not only possible but probably inevitable that authority will degenerate into totalitarianism.

The world of *Beloved Son* is a new world being rebuilt from the ashes of the old. It is a world in which nearly everyone is young. Under the watchful eye of Security, the young are brought early to maturity, largely by psychological techniques, and led to develop and use their intellectual potential to a maximum. They are intellectually mature, but only in a limited sense. They are spoonfed with knowledge, and encouraged to proceed to research, so as to assist the construction of the new society. Scientifically they are sophisticated, but because Security appears to solve their social problems for them, they cannot profit from experience. As a result they are terribly naive socially; if ingenious, they are also ingenuous. Society uses them up mentally, but does not allow them genuinely to grow, and their view of society is a simple and uncomprehending one.

The inevitable consequence is that, despite Security's assurance to the young that they are helping to build the new world, they feel directionless, powerless and alienated. They are depressed and often angry, yet are unable to perceive exactly what makes them feel the way they do. In sociology this social condition is usually called *anomie* – a term not easy to describe exactly. Robert K. Merton suggests that anomie be defined as a condition of breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the ...

capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them'. (*Social Theory and Social Structure*, p.185) Alternatively, Emile Durkheim, who originated the use of the term, describes anomie as a condition in which 'the norms of society are unstable and malintegrated, and in which the individual is prone to states of malaise'. (*The Division of Labour in Society*, p.368) Sociologists generally agree that the existence of anomie in a society renders it ripe for upheaval – certainly the case in *Beloved Son*.

The social parallels between the 21st Century and our own, which Turner implies, are often most impressive. It is made quite clear that the maladies that afflict societies are not the product of a single, unique, constant group of causes – different forces in different societies may operate to produce the same effects. The young people of *Beloved Son* are alienated partly because they are told that the work they do is helping to build a new world, yet they feel remote from it and cannot see how their actions have any influence. This is in perfect accord with Erich Fromm's description of the alienated man as one who

> does not experience himself as the centre of his world, as the creator of his own acts – but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. (*The Sane Society*, p.29)

Perhaps one of the ultimate points that Turner makes is that all societies, however organized, share common fundamental problems, whose assessment, as Marcuse suggests, may be distilled into two basic value judgements:

> 1. The judgement that human life is worth living, or rather can be and ought to be made worth living ...
> 2. The judgement that, in a given society, specific possibilities exist for the amelioration of human life and specific ways and means of realizing these possibilities. How can these resources be used for the optimal development and satisfaction of individual needs and faculties with a minimum of toil and misery? (*One Dimensional Man*, p.10)

In *Beloved Son* authority has misused its resources, with the result that a society has been produced that not only is incapable of dealing with its needs, but is largely unaware of exactly what its needs are. A symbolic hint of this is given early in the book, when Raft is confronted with a Security Headquarters building:

> Plain, ugly, efficient and temporary, it was uncompromisingly an administrative block. Like the rest, like this entire civilization if he understood Jackson correctly, it was there only to serve a passing purpose and be torn down. It symbolized with repellent neatness a world with an immutable past and a hopefully solid future but only a ramshackle, disposable present. (p.81)

The allusion to the world's 'immutable past' is indicative of one of the most striking aspects of the new world – its abhorrence for

the old world, and its conviction that no information of value for the organization of a new society can be gained from a study of mistakes made in the old. Their refusal to learn the lessons of history leads them into ways of error that might have been avoided had they been possessed of a historical perspective other than one that assures them that the past can teach them nothing but folly and terror. The essential innocence of this juvenile society makes its members easily manipulable by those with dreams of obtaining power. And indeed the malleability of the young is exploited to this end, but to illuminate the way in which this is done will first require some digression.

A most noticeable feature of *Beloved Son* is the transformation that most of its characters undergo during the course of the action. Not one of its major characters does not emerge a significantly changed person by the conclusion of the book. Raft, for example, is initially a bitter, perhaps slightly disturbed man, who by degrees becomes a megalomaniac with delusions of self-deification, until psychological treatment turns him into a 'well-adjusted' individual, by the standards of this society. In this connexion, though, the most important metamorphosis is that undergone by Ian Campion, who at the opening of the story is the Commissioner of Security in the Australian Sector, secure in the conviction that his work is justified and focused in the right direction. Campion is a remarkable individual; in a surprisingly short time he comes to appreciate, at least partly, what is wrong with the way in which Security is supervising the creation of a new society. The moment of realization is superbly depicted:

> As if he were not embroiled in complexities enough, another came to him with the urgency of fate, the one which was finally to strip a lifetime's blinkers from his brain ... Never before in his life had he found himself in the position of observing his world from the viewpoint of one who dwelt in it. Security dealt in masses and movements, watched from the eagle's eyrie and never saw from ground level; the new perspective shamed and frightened him and finally stripped him naked. (p.201)

It finally comes to Campion, as it has already to Raft, that it is he who is to be the saviour of the new world. At this point the religious implications in which the book is rich become explicit. In a session of psychological interrogation Raft is asked why he is prepared to assist Campion. His reply, most significantly, is 'Because he is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.' (p.187) His use of this quote from the Gospel of Matthew is the first sign of his incipient megalomania. While there is a suspicion of a blood relationship between Raft and Campion, Raft's conception of himself as deity makes plain the deeper meaning of this statement: Campion is to be the messiah, his beloved son, sent to save this new and dangerously tottering world.

It is not surprising that Campion chooses religion — largely ignored and dismissed as cultism in this society — as the central theme of his crusade to win over the masses. He is assisted by Parker, the

Controller of Police, who turns out to be a most unlikely religious fanatic, and Lindley, the 20th Century psychiatrist of the star-travellers, who introduces them to forgotten techniques of crowd persuasion. Lindley comes to deeply regret his decision to help, when he sees the direction that the new movement is taking. For Campion, religion is an expedient way to win the bulk of society to his cause, but while espousing it, he does not himself particularly believe it. He has a dream of an ideal society, and religion is a means to achieving that end. Parker, the religious zealot, preaches a society of love and peace, and is uncompromisingly prepared to use any means to achieve this end. Lindley's disillusionment is contrasted with Parker's true position in a conversation near the end of the book:

> 'I am oldfashioned. I love truth.' *Is this Lindley talking such bull? But it's true, it's true.*
> 'Don't shit me, Doctor.'
> 'Tut, tut, Controller. In the cathedral!'
> 'What of it? God isn't petty.'
> Nice to be certain. 'That's as well for an honest policeman who'll acquiesce in anything promising power and authority.'
> Parker leaned forward. 'You think that of me?'
> 'Of both of you. Power-grabbers lining the kids up as blind babes!'
> 'You know better than that. We see the possibility but we won't let it happen. They're ours, yes, but they *think* when they're away from us. They don't follow blindly.'
> Talking hurt but he could not contain the overflow of insight and betrayal. 'After today they'll have no chance to think. You mean to frighten their wide-open wits out of them. But if you think you can balance between fears and ecstasies forever, forget it. You've loosed a beast you can't chain and the next step is what we called totalitarianism — revealed truth demonstrated by violence, and argument disallowed. May your morally obliging God preserve you from it.' (p.361)

Lindley is right. Campion and Parker seek to win the young by giving an aim to their directionless lives. Each believes in the expendability of the other, once the end is in sight. As Lindley says, the end never justifies the means. The ideal society envisaged by Parker and Campion is a utopian fantasy with the potential to become a nightmare, and when pursued with such self-righteous hypocrisy is doomed from the outset. Turner is indeed skeptical of the appropriateness of religious fervour as a basis on which to organize a well balanced society.

While the strength of the book lies in its deft handling of complex themes, this strength derives largely from the force of Turner's characterization. Raft is marvellously depicted — a genuine multi-faceted personality whose actions, like those of real people, do not allow for exact prediction. The transformation that changes Campion's basic character is handled with a sureness and subtlety that renders it totally believable. And Lindley, the

embittered psychiatrist from the 20th Century – perhaps the book's most sympathetic character – is an eloquent demonstration of the old dictum that the cynic is the ultimate optimist. *Beloved Son* brings to life a host of compellingly authentic characters, and it is refreshing to read a novel whose people are so real.

There are a number of other details that add to the merit of this book, some of which deserve passing mention here.

Turner has a nice taste for irony. The star-travellers discover that in the 21st Century America has become Communist, Russia has become an obsessively religious state in which prayer has been elevated to a form of art, and England has been destroyed and is uninhabitable – perhaps to show that there *won't* always be an England.

An aspect of the book that is noteworthy is the manner in which the development of the narrative is perhaps more in keeping with the techniques of the theatre than with those of the novel. There is relatively little on-stage physical action; the bulk of the story's development occurs by way of conversation. It is this technique, allowing the interactions between the characters to emerge subtly and unhastened by contrived events, that gives *Beloved Son* such power in dealing with its complex thematic material.

In conclusion, this is a novel that deserves to be widely read, by traditional readers of science fiction, and perhaps more importantly, by those not accustomed to reading science fiction. *Beloved Son* is intelligent and lucid in its discussion of issues that concern us all, and is both humane and stimulating. It is a remarkable achievement.

– Michael Clark

Some pages back I said that I couldn't ask George to review his own book, which is true; but in a way, without being asked, he did review it for me.

When we were talking about the current project a few weeks ago, I reminded him of a letter he had written in 1975 and forbidden me to publish. 'None of this material must appear in your touchingly communicative publications. It is not meet that a writer talk about his work before publication – save to those few with some right to information – particularly as there is always the chance of publication never happening.' Well, publication happened (I argued). After only a little gentle nudging, George agreed to let me publish the following.

87 Westbury Street
East St Kilda 3183

20 July 1975

Dear John,

Finishing a book always leaves me with a couldn't-careless feeling, as though, having rid myself of an obligation grown intolerable, I would see the result of it burn or drop into the ocean without a regret. Which probably accounts for the frivolous reply I gave your last note. The next stage is, inevitably, one of complete disillusionment with the thing, a stage wherein all the work's faults stand out stark and I know that the years of composition have been total waste. I've been through it so often now that even at the worst of the depression I know it will pass in a day or two or ten, but it recurs, dead on time, without fail. Talk about being creatures of habit! Then, of course, some sense reasserts itself and at last I am able to think sensibly about it.

Despite you, it *does* hang together, but the continuity is of ideas and inevitability rather than of overt structure. Structurally it is clumsy and no doubt plenty of people will tell me so, but they will be mainly the ones who looked for space opera and got a lecture instead. What I have said is:

a) There's little point in giving present-day man a second chance (that is, if he muffs this one) because he'll muff it again, and for the same reasons.

b) At the end of his technological and ecological tether, man's only chance lies in spiritual rebirth, in the creation of a philosophical rather than a technological civilisation.

c) There can be no spiritual rebirth until he throws away our present civilisation entire. What dooms the Ombudsmen from the outset is their attempt to preserve the luxuries they thought were necessities.

d) The first necessity is an absolute honesty, the kind that could stand up even to telepathy and for that, as the clone-queen points out at some stage, some practice will be necessary.

If you have understood the novel in something of this fashion, I can stop worrying about structure and sequence, because it will have succeeded. If not, then it has failed. There is a sense in which it deserves to fail: it never quite makes up its mind whether it is a novel or an adventure story and in the end is a little less than either. I *could* have done it without such matters as the murder of the Ombudsman or the idiotic death of Raft or old Mother Mantrap and her art gallery, but I'm just not the bloke who can relinquish such lovely scenes once they pop into my mind. In they go, and to hell with the consequences. Even Raft's first mention, under question-therapy, of the 'beloved son' was almost a matter of automatic typing; having set down the words I sat and stared and wondered, 'Where do we go from here?' It was while I was thinking this out that I went back over chapter 1 and

realised that I had set Raft up as a really classy repressed paranoiac. It at once became obvious that he had murdered Fraser, and why. That led without any trouble to his decision to dominate his son and be the power behind the throne in the new world, if not its eventual ruler... From then on it was just a matter of keeping him out of Gangoil until I was ready for him. But killing him off was also a spur of the moment thing — the scene was too good to cut off with less — and that left me with all the closing action to go and a dead protagonist. So I breathed a sigh of relief that some good fairy had caused me to give the psychiatrist (already I can't recall his name) a prominent role, and reefed him in to carry the denouement, no matter what the purists may say about swapping thoats in mid-Barsoom.

In any case, a man of action would have got himself out of Jim Thingummy's troubles in the last chapter, whereas it needed an intelligent, thinking type to become patsy to his own indecisions. So wasn't I lucky to have one waiting in the wings?

And now you know just how these watertight plots are planned meticulously in advance.

The Gangoil business was, of course, your fault. But I must admit that once it had got out of hand I was content to let it run and see where it would end. But it wasn't supposed to end in killing off the main character. And who would have thought that a mild joke would involve a dissertation on artistic appreciation, a clone of queens without fear of man or beast and a Heathcote who literally didn't know who he was at any time or which of the possibilities at any given minute — the sort of man who had to say something in order to find out what he thought.

If, on the way, I have managed to point out that all the people who have so far written about cloning, the next war and telepathy (I didn't finally decide to let telepathy in until the last minute when it had to be introduced or another plotline developed) have missed some of the obvious things that should have been said in sf many years ago, then I am very happy.

Throughout, of course, all sorts of opportunist techniques take the place of good writing. This was essential for the saving of wordage; proper expression of the major premises would have required a book of twice the length. (This compression to market-requirement length has been the ruin of much good sf writing. There are plenty of signs that people like Blish, Aldiss and Disch have suffered by it.) Nonetheless I think that it is not badly written. You will be better able to judge that than I. I am aware of individual weaknesses and faults but cannot judge the overall impression.

Curiously, I had from the first thought of the thing as ending on a note of hope, with a new vision of civilisation. It wasn't until I realised just how practical (and practicality is the small brother of opportunism) these Ombudsman-bred kids would have to be that I saw where their training would lead them. After that the last chapter wrote itself. No success, except of the kind they could better do without, was possible.

I have certainly learned the hard way — though I realised it theoretically before — why there is so little memorable characterisation in sf: there is so much to be presented that is not 'people' in the sense of individuals. The temptation to use types instead of characters must be overwhelming, especially to the bloke writing for a living, who can't afford the time to ponder his moves while the characters make the running and the plot waits for them to tell it where to go. I don't think I cheated anywhere, but the writing was painfully slow at times where it looked as if everybody had reached the end of their immediate tether and the whole thing must collapse in futility. The difficulty is not in finding things to happen (Raymond Chandler: 'When in doubt, have someone come through the door with a gun') because any ass can introduce a new menace or an accident or some such; the difficulty lies in finding some useful continuation which arises out of the natures of the persons concerned. Things must happen not so much *to* them as *because* they are the kind of persons they are. (And that, in passing, is as good an indication as any of the nature of both characterisation and plot.)

Dear me; here I am lecturing like mad, which wasn't at all the reason for this letter. ...

And that, I think, is about all for the moment.

Too right. Nineteen pages about one book isn't too many, but it's rather more than I thought I was embarking on back on page 151, and my typing arm isn't what it used to be — certainly not what it was in the good old days when I was belting out forty-page ASFRs every month or so, and not even what it was before last weekend when the diabolical Foyster had me out playing tennis, of all things. I'm sure I sprained a margin or two that day; certainly I discovered italics I didn't think I had.

I didn't really intend to publish a second instalment of *Australian Science Fiction Review : Twelfth Anniversary Issue*, but that's obviously what this is. Not quite so obviously, this issue is also published to mark two special occasions. Next Tuesday — 3 October — the Nova Mob will be meeting at Foyster's place to discuss a novel called *Beloved Son*, a work of sky-fi by some local chap, and it seemed an idea to provide some ammunition for that discussion.
And the following week we'll all be going to Foyster's again, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of ANZAPA. If you think you've seen the back cover illustration before, you could be right. It appeared on the front cover of my very first apazine, *The New Millennial Harbinger* no.1, October 1968. Ah, it seems like only yes that's enough. See yez.

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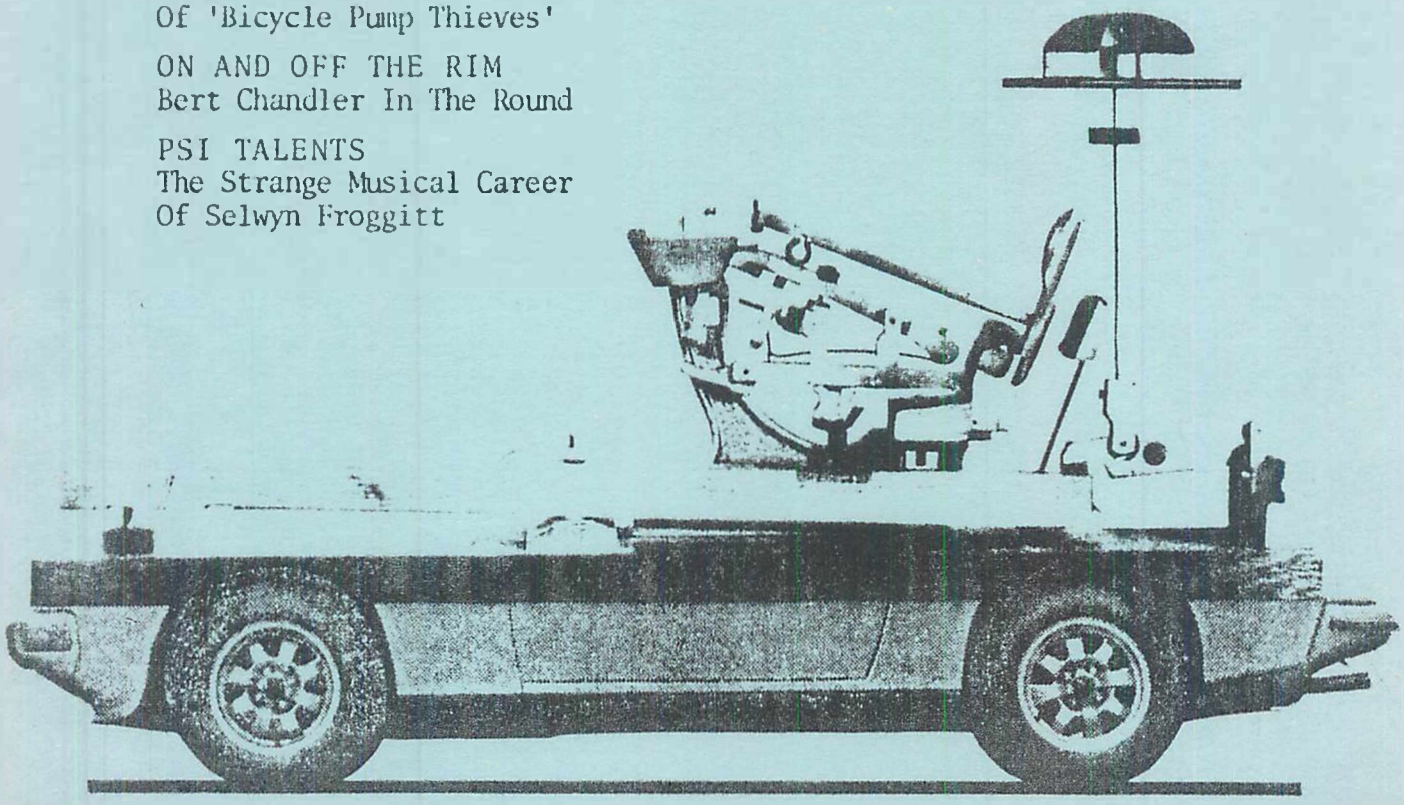

PARERGON PAPERS

Registered for posting as a
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KEATS AND CHAPMAN once got tired of standing-by for cheap air fares and stowed away on a tramp steamer, which, it turned out, wasn't going where they wanted to go anyway. Two days out they were discovered and offered the choice of working their passage or leaving the ship instantly. Some days later, while they were scrubbing the decks, Keats (who was in a foul mood) snarled at Chapman, 'Where's the bloody soap?' Chapman said, quite cheerfully, 'By jove, it does, doesn't it!' Keats said a rude nautical word and threw his bucket at him.

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PARERGON PAPERS are published in what he laughingly calls his spare time by John Bangsund PO Box 230 Kew Victoria 3101 Australia. They may be had in exchange for your own publication, by joining ANZAPA or FAPA, by writing interesting letters to the editor, or by donating a substantial sum not exceeding $5 to the Parergon Foundation. Sums below $5 are not regarded as substantial. This is the twelfth issue, nominally dated February 1979. It incorporates parts of the eleventh issue, which was seen only by members of ANZAPA and a few other people because I messed up my first attempt at the cover.

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14 February There was a fanzine in the mail today from John Rowley, *Turn Left at Thursday* 1, in the course of which he mentions getting a fanzine in the mail from Mike and Pat Meara over beyond in Spondon, Derby. There was a time when I used to get fanzines from Mike and Pat Meara, and a whole host of other people all over the known globe, but these days I — well, John Rowley sends me his stuff, and it's very kind of him. All afternoon I caught myself thinking 'I must pub an ish!' or something to that effect. More important, I must get round to distributing the issues I publish. I mean, Terry Carr asked me in this very room a few weeks ago whether I was still publishing fanzines. Naturally that spurred me to dig up a set of Parergon Papers for him, and some other things, dating back to 1971, that he'd never seen, and I checked his card in my addressing system while I was about it. 'You've, um, moved from New York, Terry, haven't you?' I said. 'You're a fakefan, Bangsund,' Terry Carr said. Terry said that a fair bit to me while he was here. Full of fun, he is, in a quiet sort of way. I like him. I must admit that I was predisposed to liking Terry Carr, for two reasons. Many years ago John Bush of Gollancz told me that I looked like Terry Carr. What a fine sort of chap he must be! I thought. He doesn't look like me at all, as it happens, but never mind. And Terry is one of the most delightful writers in fandom, author, or at least recorder, of the immortal sentence 'Ah'm Efemandee Busby, and this is mah child bride Elinor.' (I quote from memory. The line was spoken by Burbee during the making of a fan western movie. An appreciation of such things, I like to think, is the mark of the trufan. Maybe Terry started calling me a fakefan because I asked him to explain it to me.)

SELWYN FROGGITT, concert secretary of the Scarsdale Working Men's Club & Institute and all-round genial idiot, came bumbling onto our TV screens about this time last year, and I loved him. It's a cruel thing to say about Bill Maynard, the very accomplished actor who plays Selwyn, but he looks for all the world like Doug Anthony's smarter older brother. Sometimes when the Deputy Prime Minister and Parliamentary Leader of the National Country Party, Member for Richmond (NSW) and Minister for Trade and Resources, the Right Honourable John Douglas Anthony, P.C., appears on telly, much to Sally's annoyance, but I can't help it, I give him the old double thumbs-up and cry *Magic!* with a Yorkshire accent.

Selwyn is a tallish, fattish, baldish, smiling chap with a heart of gold and a head of, I dunno, maybe putty, but he has ideas, oh yes, he's full of 'em. Since he has some pretensions to culture — loves Beethoven, he says, reads the Times Lit Supp and is interested in archaeology — his ideas tend to be a bit on the ambitious side, like inviting Andre Previn or Elvis Presley to perform at the club's bingo night. Selwyn is such a large comic figure that he needs no less than seven almost-straight characters to support him: his mother, his brother Maurice, Maurice's girlfriend Vera, the barman at the club and the club's other three committee members, who are mean-minded, pompous, self-important (but quite likable) bastards.

One night the three con Selwyn into believing that he is going to be the guest on *This Is Your Life*. Every comedy series you can think of has used this weary plot idea, sure, but you've never seen it done like this, believe me. Selwyn falls for it completely, not so much because he is vain (he is a bit) but because he thinks it just and probable. When he wavers a bit they remind him that the show often has quite ordinary people as guests — sometimes the only thing they're notable for is that they play a musical instrument. Selwyn admits that he doesn't even play a musical instrument, but he can get a bit of a tune out of a bicycle pump. That's it then, says one of them, They probably saw a note about you in the Times Bicycle Pump Supplement! (So now you know about the cover. That, I thought, is a publication that should not go unpublished.) The evening wears on. Selwyn's mum sends a message that he can't be on *This Is Your Life* because she's watching it, and it's the Archbishop of Canterbury. Wonder what instrument he plays, says Selwyn. Magic!

Yorkshire Television comes up with some first-class series from time to time. *Oh No, It's Selwyn Froggitt!* is one of the best of them. Other series I have enjoyed during the last year or so, to give you some idea of my weird taste, are *The Glittering Prizes*, *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*, *All Creatures Great and Small* and the much under-rated New Zealand historical series *The Governor*. I am apparently alone in disliking *I Claudius*.

CRAFTY COLONIALS Sir Roderick Carnegie requested the pleasure of my company at the official opening of the Colonial Crafts of Victoria exhibition at the National Gallery, and Sally's of course, and later at a reception in the Great Hall (Music by the Wedderburn Old Timers, Colonial Refreshments, You are Invited to wear Colonial Dress), but we had to disappoint old Rod on account

of a prior engagement and not being sure we had the keys to our colonial dress. As it turned out there was nothing in the paper the morning after about it, not even a photo, so it's probably just as well we couldn't go. Nothing worse than standing there in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria, sweltering in your sackcloth and leg-irons, and not a reporter or photographer in sight. And we managed rather better than colonial refreshments at the Lotus Inn, where we dined with Robin Johnson, Robin Johnson's parents and some of Robin Johnson's friends. The Chinese do rather well for themselves, don't they? If that's the sort of food they eat (didn't go much for the crab claws, but the other dozen or so courses were fine), you can't believe everything you read about China, can you? Anyway, as I was saying, flash sports cars.

Ever since I was five I have wanted a Lamborghini Espada. That is not a Chinese dish, but (as I was saying) a flash sports car, and I was somewhat ahead of my time, wanting a Lamborghini Espada when I was five. In 1944 even Issigooni hadn't thought of wanting that car. As I grew up my ideals changed, and in 1951, at the Melbourne Motor Show, I saw the car I really wanted — the Alvis TA21. I had one of those for a while, in 1964-65, and I wish I still had it, but it wasn't what you would call a practical sort of car for a young man with little money and less mechanical knowledge. These days I think just about any car would be fine if it was paid off and running well (the Renault is running well and will be all mine in August 1980, lord willing and weather permitting), but I still have a bit of a hankering after an Espada. Or a De Tomaso Pantera. Any of those.

Reading the catalogue of the Colonial Crafts Exhibition, as I did at least three times in the line of duty, I was struck with the way these old crafty colonials *made do*. If they wanted a flash Italian sports car on the farm, say, to milk the chooks or shear the kangaroos, would they sit around moaning about not being able to afford one? Never! They'd get a gum tree, a discarded anvil and a length of post-and-rail hoop iron, and in two shakes of a dingo's tail they'd have knocked up something near enough. I can't tell you how inspired I was, how proud of my colonial heritage and so on, when I read that kind of thing in the book. Yes I can. That was only a figure of speech, a periphrastic circumlocution of a divagatory or roundabout nature, preparing you for what I did next. What I did next was this. Using only an abandoned piano, the chassis of a discarded Porsche 924, a disused coin and a few pieces of bent string, I constructed my own flash Italian sports car. That's it on the cover. Goes like a beauty. One touch on the keyboard (one tickle on the ivories, I would have said, but I couldn't find an abandoned elephant to complete the job) and away it goes, roaring off in all directions at speeds of up to 24 decibels in E-sharp minor and other fancy clefs you've probably never heard of. It's not much to look at, sure, but Sally finds it very handy when she's doing her Chopin.

I lie. I didn't build that whatever-it-is at all. It's just something I took a sneaky photo of over Leigh Edmonds's back fence. And I wasted my time: the CIA and ASIO said they knew all about it already, and wouldn't give me anything for my trouble. They said it was an abandoned prototype Orright Ornithopter, designed for use in

extended long-range oil-damped pianoforte quodlibets, with or without double-loop grapevine-stepover hydropneumatic synthesizing capability, but it didn't work so Edmonds had chucked it out. I'm not at all sure what that gobbledygook means, but there you have it.

And what has all this to do with bicycle pumps? Blessed if I know.

862 1493 Ah, that rings a bell! I answered and a girl said 'Have you got the tail-pipe in for the Mercedes yet?' I had to admit that I hadn't, but before she got mad with me I gave her another number to ring. I get lots of wrong numbers, mainly because this one was previously owned by a firm called Parts Of Europe, and before them by the Country Roads Board. When people ring and ask for Parts Of Europe I am always tempted to say something like 'Yes, which part would you like? We've got a special on Bosnia this week.' Likewise, when people start by saying 'I want a permit' I'm tempted to ask what for, and when they tell me they want to dig up Cotham Road or whatever, to say 'Nah, you don't need a permit for that! I'll just make a note of it, and you go for your life.' So far I haven't done that, but golly it's tempting. One day an elderly-sounding woman said 'Is that Mrs Cooper?' and some demon urged but did not quite persuade me to say 'Of course it is, dearie. I always sound like a baritone when I've been drinking.' Does Mrs Cooper, I wonder, deal in permits or tail-pipes? I'll probably never know.

16 February The past week or so has been a confused and often sad sort of time. John Foyster rang on Monday and said that Ron Graham had died the previous day. That brought back some tangled memories and feelings. Ron was a great supporter of science fiction and fandom. In the first letter I ever had from him, in 1967, he said he liked Australian Science Fiction Review and wanted to contribute to it, but with money, because that was easier for him than trying to write. I took him up on it, and asked him to lend me the price of a secondhand Roneo — which he did by return mail. I started paying him back, but after a few months he told me to forget the rest. The list of fans (and pros) he helped would read like a who's-who of Australian fandom. I liked Ron, but we never understood each other. I felt I was beginning to understand him during a long conversation we had in Melbourne in 1974, the only conversation of any substance we ever had, but we didn't get any further. We fell out completely over *Vision of Tomorrow* ten years ago, because my idea of good sf was different from his, and different again from Phil Harbottle's idea, and because Phil's remarks about what I was doing (or what he imagined me to be doing) worried Ron and caused him to think that in some way I was undermining the whole project, and finally he asked me to resign (resign what? — neither Ron nor Phil would tell me precisely what my duties were, or even my title), and I declined, and he sacked me. That soured our relationship for some years. He never invited me to see his fabulous library. Maybe he thought I would sneer at it; maybe he thought I wouldn't be interested. He told me his philosophy, or part of it, in '74. Aim higher than you think you should; you'll hit something; then aim too high again. Another part I knew well already: no comfort to the enemy. For a time I was the enemy, or so he had decided, and I had

more than a taste of what Ron meant by 'no comfort'. In 1971 John Campbell died, and I had no hesitation in asking Ron to help me with the publication of *John W. Campbell: an Australian tribute*. It was typical of our relationship that he sent me $200 immediately, that he asked me to write his memories of John Campbell, and that I ignored this impossible request entirely. He was quite pleased with the book, and I was delighted to hear that: I was concerned until then that he might think I was getting at him in some way in what I wrote about him in the introduction, and start discomfiting me again. I was tickled pink at the World Convention in 1975 when I invited Forry Ackerman up to the dais to present the Big Heart award – and he presented it to Ron. I don't know what Ron regarded as the greatest moment in his life, but from where I was sitting it seemed to me that that was it, and I was as happy for him as he was. Our paths didn't cross again after that convention, so my last memory of him is of that great and unexpected occasion when he was honoured, and rightly so, by his peers in fandom.

John Foyster's news didn't have quite the impact on me that it should have had, because a few days earlier Sally and I had witnessed death at closer quarters, and frankly, we still haven't quite got over it. The ambulance men said we would probably be hearing from the police, so that night I wrote an account of what had happened. The following, as far as the asterisks, is what I wrote for the police; the two paragraphs after the asterisks I wrote for myself.

> 8 February. I was typing when my wife arrived home, about 5.40. We talked for a while and ended up arguing a bit about a book I wanted to buy. She left the room and I went on typing. About 6 I moved from the typewriter to the desk, and worked there for three or four minutes. My wife came back and apologized about the book. Then she said 'Do you know there's a man on our lawn?'
>
> Normally I notice every movement in the street, and from the typewriter I am certain I would have noticed a man coming in the gate and lying down on the lawn. From the desk the view is not as direct to the corner of the lawn where he was lying, so I can only think he must have come in between about 6 and 6.05.
>
> My first thought was that he was drunk, my second, when I noticed the handkerchief in his hand, that he had had some kind of stroke or had fainted. I went out and said 'Are you all right, mate?' When I got close to him I saw the foam at his mouth. He did not respond to my voice, nor to my touching his shoulder. I said 'Christ! You're not all right, are you!' I came inside. My wife rang 000 for an ambulance, and I rang Dr Weiss to ask him what we should do. There was a recorded message at the surgery. I wrote down both the emergency numbers given and rang the first of them. Mrs Weiss told me I should turn him on his side and keep his head back. I ran out and did that, feeling stupid that I hadn't earlier. My first reaction had been 'If in doubt, don't move him.' I rolled him on to his left side and tried to feel a pulse at his right wrist. I said to my wife that I thought he had gone, and I was still holding him when the ambulance arrived.

* * * * *

Afterwards I rang Mrs Weiss again to tell her what had happened. She said I should have a stiff drink. I said 'I intend to. But don't tell your husband that — I'm supposed to be off it!'

Sally said she had never seen a dead person before. All the time I was with the man I had been thinking of my father's dying, and feeling the same tenderness and cruel inadequacy I had felt then, fourteen years ago.

Yesterday I was listening to the radio when the 1 o'clock news came on. 'The Premier of South Australia, Mr Don Dunstan' — *is dead!* I thought he was going to say, from the tone of his voice — 'has resigned...' All over Australia people reacted as Sally and I did. We could not have been more shocked and dismayed if he had died. He was one of the most brilliant and capable politicians Australia has ever had, easily one of the most colourful (his opponents said flamboyant) and probably the most popular. In a survey two or three years ago he scored an amazing 82% approval rating, at a time when Malcolm Fraser and Gough Whitlam were lucky to score 30%. The man seemed indestructible. How close he came to destroying himself we learnt last night. He is 52, and burnt out, physically and emotionally exhausted. Readers in Adelaide will understand exactly how Sally and I feel about Don Dunstan; you had to live there to appreciate the man, and we had that privilege.

Add to what I have written above the fact that in this week Gough Whitlam's book about his sacking on 11 November 1975, *The Truth of the Matter*, was launched and discussed endlessly, reviving bitter memories for me of that time, and that yesterday my sister's divorce went through, and you will see roughly what I meant about the last week or so being a confused and often sad time.

On the bright side: We went out and bought that book I mentioned. For the last two or three years it has been the one book I wanted above all others, and we have it, and I am content. It is Matthew Flinders' *A Voyage to Terra Australis; undertaken for the purpose of completing the discovery of that vast country, and prosecuted in the years 1801, 1802, and 1803, in His Majesty's Ship the Investigator, and subsequently in the armed vessel Porpoise and Cumberland schooner. With an account of the shipwreck of the Porpoise, arrival of the Cumberland at Mauritius, and imprisonment of the commander during six years and a half in that island.* In two massive volumes, with an atlas — and I hasten to assure John Foyster and other informed readers that I have not traded the Renault and half our possessions on the original edition of 1814. This is merely the Libraries Board of South Australia facsimile edition of 1966, and it cost only slightly more than a fortnight's rent. I will probably have a little difficulty explaining this to my Macedonian landlord, but I'll think of something.

The other major acquisition of recent months is *Westall's Drawings*, a wickedly extravagant volume that complements Flinders. It literally towers over every other book we have: it measures 19 by 13½ inches, and makes even the Flinders volumes beside it look diminutive. An interest in Australian history can become a dangerously expensive hobby, but I've heard of people spending much more on science fiction.

I wrote this story a couple of months ago. When I ran short of material for the February issue of my other fanzine, *The Society of Editors Newsletter*, I decided it was time to expose its readers to Keats and Chapman anyway, and bunged it in. So far no-one has called for my resignation, but to protect myself I have called for more contributions. The people who read the newsletter provide me with a living, and I can't have them thinking I'm slightly odd.

KEATS AND CHAPMAN once went on holiday in Italy with a bohemian singer named Michael Balfe. In Milan they met another acquaintance, the famous campanologist Sir Nigel Batt, and the four spent many happy hours together in the sunny villages and vineyards of the north. Batt was investigating the local bells and belles (there was more than one string to this beau); Balfe was indulging an interest of his youth, looking at fortifications, earthworks, gun emplacements and the like; Chapman was doing a bit of research for some footnotes he was writing about the Roman Census in Imperial Times; and Keats was just mooning about as usual, jotting down the odd rhyme, making the odd delicious moan upon the midnight hour (this was when he drafted his celebrated 'Lasagna Recollected in Tranquillity', you may recall) and that sort of thing.

At a pub in Cremona they fell in with Louis Bettson, an earnest drinker and gifted conversationalist of uncertain origin, who kept them amused with his witty tales of art, life and Italian politics for as long as they cared to ply him with grog. One drowsy afternoon Keats found himself alone, *alone, all, all alone* — and was about to jot that down until he remembered he had read it somewhere — and he began to wonder where his companions were. Sir Nigel is probably up a bell-tower somewhere, he thought, and Balfe will be looking at some boring old gun emplacements, and Chapman will be wearing his brain down to the knuckle deciphering old Roman statistics. Keats sighed, and wondered all over again what he wanted to be when he grew up.

Just then, Chapman stumbled into the room. He had obviously been drinking, and there was an odd gleam in his eyes. 'What have you been up to!' exclaimed Keats, 'And where is everybody?' Chapman paused for a moment, then said, all in one breath, 'Bettson the bar-fly says Batt's in the belfry and Balfe's in the battery!' 'Good heavens, man!' cried Keats, 'Have you taken leave of your census?' Chapman tripped over a pot of basil and lay on the floor, giggling his head off.

BENEDICT KIELY, in his introduction to *The Various Lives of Keats and Chapman, and The Brother* (Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976: A$15.00), sums up the whole Keats and Chapman business in his first sentence: 'It is a game.' The fun of it, he says, after you've read Myles's stories and studied the method, 'is in trying to do it yourself, in drawing out the tale, accumulating the fantasy to the point of sadism, then in crashing home with the flat desolating pun'.

I have been writing apocryphal anecdotes of Keats and Chapman for eight or nine years now — I started not long after I recovered from

my first reading of *The Best of Myles*, the most hilariously funny book I know — but until I found a copy of *The Various Lives &c* and read Kiely's piece it never occurred to me that other people would be silly enough to drive themselves to distraction trying to imitate the inimitable Myles's K&C stories. But of course they have done that. Kiely quotes a couple of them, and they're awful. They are not more awful than mine, and they are not more awful than a lot of Myles's, but to match the best work of the inventor of this odd genre is something one might hope to achieve once in a lifetime, with a lot of luck, so I am not surprised that I find all the imitations (my own especially) inadequate.

I must digress a little. Of course I know that other people have tried to write K&C stories. When I published my little piece about Brian O'Nolan/Flann O'Brien/Myles na Gopaleen in Scythrop 22, back in 1971, I urged readers to do just that — and I have since published stories by Robert Bloch, Archie Mercer, John Julian, Jack Wodhams, George Turner and Elisabeth LeGuin (and others? — they're the people I recall offhand). But they were responding to my stories, not to Myles's. Jack's story in particular (vintage Wodhams, and delightful) was a long long way from the source.

Kiely (a novelist well worth your acquaintance, by the way) says that generally the Keats and Chapman story starts with a pun rather than a story, 'but then that's a matter of accident, inspiration, individual style'. That is my experience, too. I make lots of puns — perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a lot of puns happen to me — but I don't write many Keats and Chapman stories. Usually the story comes when I have a pun that I can imagine Keats and Chapman being party to. More often than not the pun that occurs to me doesn't suit them at all, and I have to save it up for one of my impromptu displays of wit in conversation (or, if it's too awful even for that, sell it to Phillip Adams). I have my own mental picture of Keats and Chapman, and I think the two men in my head are rather different from O'Nolan's. Mine are somehow gentler, more dignified, than his. His Keats and Chapman quite often are little better than con-men, mixed up in all sorts of shady business, and he treats them accordingly, with little respect and occasionally something approaching cruelty. I tried in the story that started this issue to write a more Mylesian piece, but you can see that I failed. Stowing away on a tramp steamer is the most criminal thing my Keats and Chapman have ever done, and I tried to bring out a blacker side of Keats, but the whole attempt collapsed the moment Chapman spoke. Any old pun at all seems to have been good enough for O'Nolan's Keats and Chapman to perpetrate, but mine are quite finicky. In Parergon Papers 6, you may recall, they advised that they would have no part in a proposed story about the faking of statistics by a prominent evangelist who recently visited Prague and other middle-European cities, on the ground that it would involve them in the fraudulent conversion of Czechs. Myles, I think, wouldn't have hesitated: his Keats and Chapman would have been right there in Prague masquerading as evangelists from the first sentence. To what unfortunate character trait should I attribute my refusal to accept Keats and Chapman for what they are? I grieve for my lost youth and retained innocence.

There are eighty-five Keats and Chapman stories in *The Various Lives of Keats and Chapman*, and if you read them all in one go you'll make yourself sick. I don't know how you can avoid this, unless you have the four Myles collections and a great deal of will-power. Then you could try limiting yourself to three or four pages from each volume each day, preferably at random, and this might give you something like the feeling of having read a brilliant newspaper column — but frankly, I haven't got that sort of self-discipline. Kevin O'Nolan, Benedict Kiely and the publishers would be doing us a great favour if they took the 800-odd pages of Myles from the four books and rearranged the material to form one gigantic column. They are unlikely to do this.

The four books: *The Best of Myles*, published in 1968 by MacGibbon & Kee, subsequently reissued as a Picador paperback. 400 pages. This is the collection to have if you can't afford the lot. There are forty-odd Keats and Chapman stories, but they account for little more than one-twentieth of the book. There are twenty-odd pages in Irish, which you will no doubt find as frustrating as I do. If I have given you the wrong impression of Myles by going on about Keats and Chapman, consider the following. There has been a plague of ventriloquists at the theatre. Originally hired as escorts for stupid playgoers who wish to make intelligent conversation during intervals but don't know how, they have got out of hand entirely and threatening cards like this are commonplace: 'Slip me a pound or I will see that you ask the gentleman beside you where he got the money to pay for his seat. Beware! Do not attempt to call for help! Signed, The Grey Spider.'

> 'I was standing smoking when a small gentleman said to me: "Excuse me for addressing a stranger, but I cannot help assuring you that it is only with the greatest difficulty that I restrain myself from letting you have a pile-driver in your grilled steak and chips, me bucko!" Instantly he produced a card and handed it to me:
>
> > "So help me, I am a crane-driver from Drogheda, and I have not opened my beak since I came in tonight. Cough twice if you believe me. Signed, Ned the Driver."
>
> I coughed and walked away. Just for fun I said to a lady who was standing near: "Hello, hag! How's yer ould one?" Her reply was the sweet patient smile that might be exchanged between two fellow-sufferers from night starvation. What a world!'

The Various Lives of Keats and Chapman, and The Brother was published in 1976 by Hart-Davis, MacGibbon. I've often wondered what happened to Mr Kee. 160 pages, not exactly crammed with material. As well as the 85 stories there is *The Brother*, a monologue adapted by Eamon Morrissey from Myles's writings about that fabulous character, first staged at the Peacock Theatre, Dublin, in 1974. I would love to see this performed. It's superb. Even the confirmed addict will have hard feelings about paying $15 for this book, especially since many of the stories appear also in *The Best of Myles*, but it's quite indispensable. You can blame the price on the Australian book trade. In England it costs five pounds.

Further Cuttings from Cruiskeen Lawn also appeared in 1976 from H-D,MacG, by then part of Granada Publishing. 190 pages, and good

value even at $15. The first among my favourite pieces in this book is in the section headed Politics. Like Perelman, O'Nolan was a master of the humorous article that starts with a simple juxtaposition of apparently unrelated ideas and progresses quite naturally to the hilarious extremes of absurdity. It looks so easy when you read it, but it's a technique that eludes me. Part of the trick is knowing when to stop, and part is being a comic genius, neither of which I'm any good at. Puns come as easily to me as sonatas came to Scarlatti, but with such articles as these the pun grows to Mozartian stature at the least — and to write a novel like *At Swim-Two-Birds* demands a positively Wagnerian understanding and application of the art. This insensitive introduction of composers into the conversation allows me to stumble into Myles's story, which starts with a reported statement by Yehudi Menuhin about the need for a world government. Two can play at this game, says Myles, and forthwith we are launched into a debate in the Dail on the Estimates for the Department of External Affairs. A dull speech by Mr de Valera provokes some interjections, including a remark by Mr Lehane that Mr MacEntee is 'a notorious Bartok merchant'. There are calls for order. Mr MacEntee denies any interest whatever in Bartok, or in any other atonal practitioner. We take up the story at the point where Mr de Valera mentions that he has a document...

THE TAOISEACH (Mr Costello): The Deputy is no doubt aware that he may not quote a document unless he lays it on the table of the House?

MR DE VALERA: There are certain rules and regulations. There is the question of order and formula.

MR MACBRIDE: Let him read it, whatever it is.

MR DE VALERA: I have here an affidavit which I will lay before the House in due course. It states that at a meeting in Skerries Golf Club in 1935, the Minister put his name to a document asserting that consecutive fifths were admissible in serious music.

MEMBERS: Withdraw!

MR DE VALERA: There are various avenues by which the truth may be approached and while individuals may choose this way or that, if they reach the truth in the end the path of approach is not material. This affidavit is signed by Frank Gallagher and I have no reason to doubt that what it says is true.

MR MACBRIDE: The Deputy need not distress himself. I still see no objection to consecutive fifths.

MR MACENTEE: I suppose the Deputy sees no objection to that Chopin Polonaise in A?

MR MACBRIDE: I must ask for the withdrawal of that remark. I am entitled to be protected by the Chair.

CEANN COMHAIRLE: I did not hear the remark. There are too many interruptions.

MR O.FLANAGAN (producing oboe): Is the Minister aware that these articles are being openly imported by certain non-national entrepreneurs and will he take steps to have this traffic stopped?

MR DE VALERA: I intend to deal with the oboe scandal in due course. I mentioned the threat to those of us who understand and cherish the sanctity of the family as a social unit, the home as that unit's focus, of this projected performance in public of the Beethoven

violin concerto.

MR C.LEHANE: You had sixteen years to ban it. Why didn't you? What about the Haydn quartettes?

MR DE VALERA: There is a certain well-defined method of approach, a means of ascertaining definite facts. I made my attitude to the Haydn quartettes perfectly clear twenty-five years ago. At that time we were concerned to find, in the first place, a means of securing that our people, of whatever walk of life, and without regard to their political allegiances, should have the opportunity, one with the other, of attaining in some measure to the fundamental ideal of—

CEANN COMHAIRLE: Perhaps the Deputy—

MR DE VALERA: I report progress.

I doubt that the inherent comic possibilities of parliamentary debates have ever been more brilliantly exploited. The extract pirated above takes up a little over a page in *Further Cuttings from Cruiskeen Lawn*, which perhaps gives you some idea why I think it's good value.

The Hair of the Dogma was published by Hart-Davis, MacGibbon in 1977, it runs 180-odd pages, it costs $15, and it's a similar lot.

You could do a lot worse than blow $50 on these four books. You could steal them, for example, and develop a conscience you couldn't live with. Brian O'Nolan was a very moral man, and at the heart of his writing is an intolerance for immorality in all its unsuspected forms. Myles's humorous writing, in its wit, invention and profound observation of human behaviour, is unmatched by any other writer I have ever encountered. As I have said in another place, if you don't die laughing you're too good for this world.

To conclude this rambling issue (I simply have to get back to some paying work, and there's a heavy week ahead), here is a list of the other works of Brian O'Nolan — that I know of.

At Swim-Two-Birds	1939; MacGibbon & Kee, 1960; Penguin, 1967	All have been in paperback, but I have no details.
The Hard Life	MacGibbon & Kee, 1961	
The Dalkey Archive	MacGibbon & Kee, 1964	
The Third Policeman	MacGibbon & Kee, 1967	
The Poor Mouth	Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1973	
Stories and Plays	Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1973	

The following I have not seen:

The Viking Portable Flann O'Brien

O'Keeffe (ed): *Myles* Martin, Brian & O'Keeffe, London

Anne Clissman: *Flann O'Brien: a critical introduction to his writings* Gill & Macmillan Ltd, Dublin

I have Jean Weber to thank for alerting me to the existence of the three books published in 1976-77, and my lucky stars for stumbling over *At Swim-Two-Birds* in 1964. Kevin Dillon kindly told me about the books by O'Keeffe and Clissman. John Ryan sent me a copy of Clement Semmler's article about O'Nolan in *Meanjin*, December 1970. Similar kind services by readers will be warmly appreciated by

Yr humble savant, JhB. 18·2·79

THE TIMES BICYCLE PUMP SUPPLEMENT

A Journal of Inflationary Tendencies

181 Keats and Chapman : Terry Carr : 182 Selwyn Froggitt : Crafty Colonials: 184 Parts of Europe : Ron Graham : 185 A man on our lawn : 186 Don Dunstan: Matthew Flinders : 187 Keats and Chapman again : Benedict Kiely : Brian O'Nolan: 189 Four books by Myles na Gopaleen

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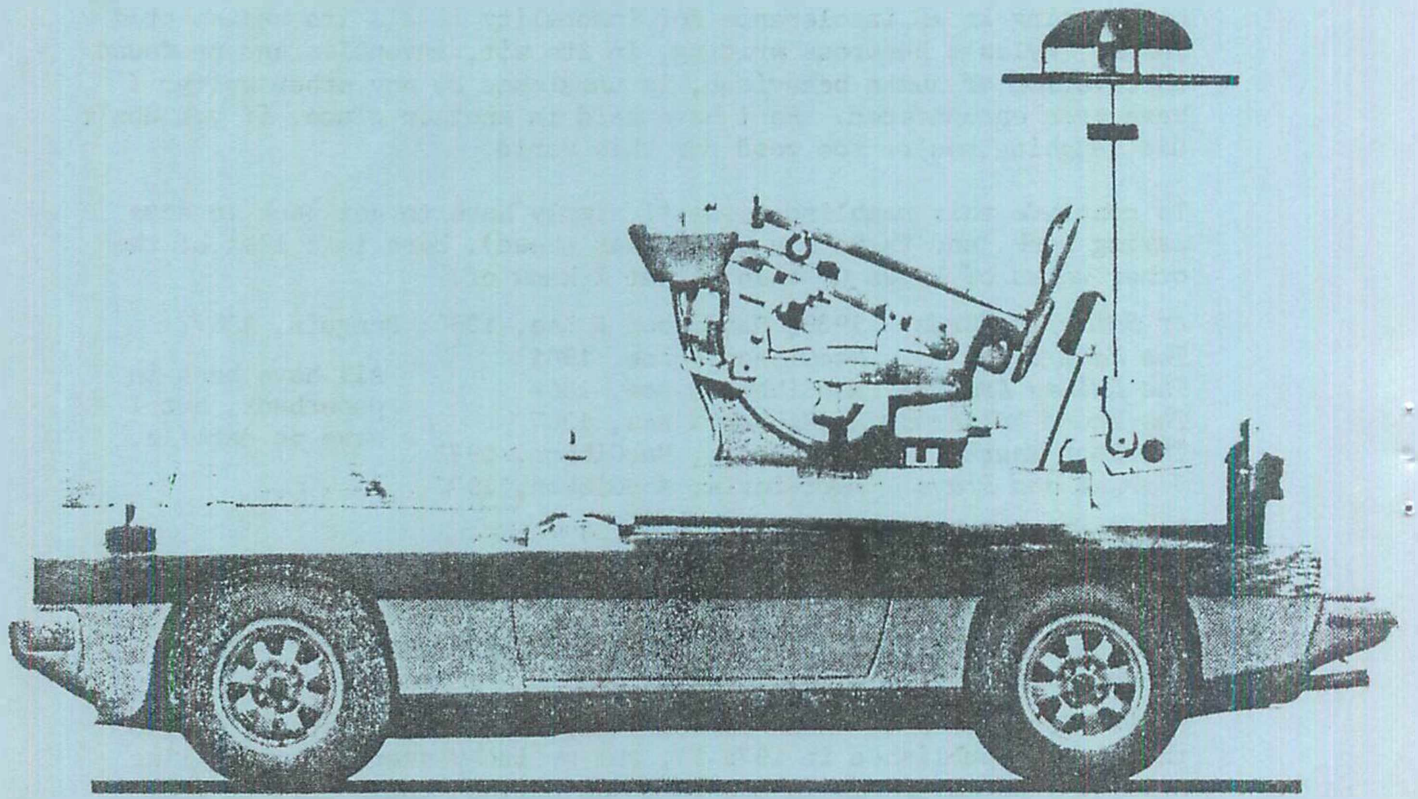
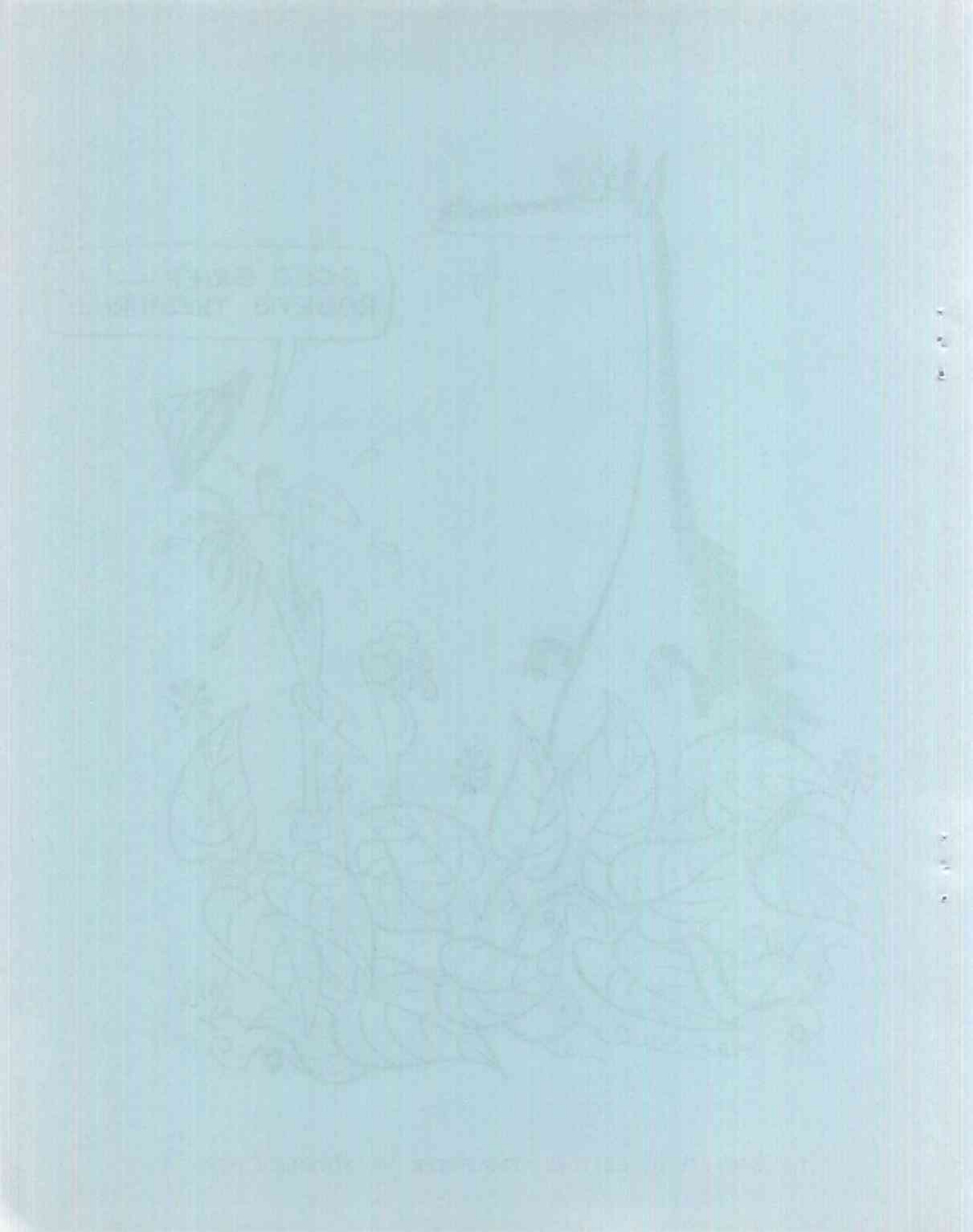


PARERGON PAPERS


GOOD GRIEF —
ROGET'S THESAURUS!



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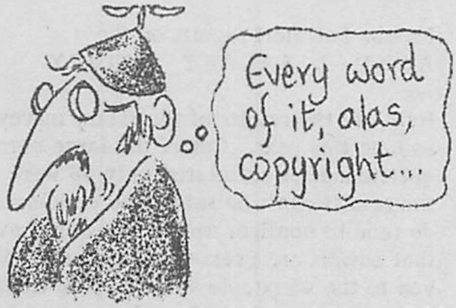

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The next joint meeting of The Society of Editors and The Imprint Society will be held on THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER at the John Curtin Hotel, 29 Lygon Street, Carlton. Dinner ($5.00) is served about 6.30. We meet upstairs: the easiest route is via the bistro. Don't carry a book: the barman will think you're an intellectual and charge you double. Our full-colour audio-visual guest this evening will be RENNIE ELLIS, who will present an illustrated address on Photography & Publishing. As this is our last meeting for the year, the committee has requested Mr Ellis not to treat of his subject in too grave or academic a manner.

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THE PARTY on Boxing Day, rashly announced last issue, is regretfully called off. Your editor is moving to the country (Heidelberg West, actually), lord willing and rapacious finance companies permitting, and knows not whether he will be coming or going, arthur or martha, joe or flo, on 26 December – or for that matter on any date you care to mention before the beginning of March. The PO box at Kew will be kept until April 1981. The new address and phone number will be advised in the next Newsletter, and in the Weekly Book Newsletter.
Your president, who wrote the following anonymous contribution, seems to have a party in mind.

GOVERNMENT FOR MOTHERHOOD
The Honourable Michael John Randal MacKellar, B.Sc. Agr. (Syd.), B.A. Hons. (Oxon), Member for Warringah and Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, obviously reads the Society of Editors Newsletter, or has it read to him. You will recall that the last lines of the meeting report in the October issue read: 'In the mean time, hurry up and have more babies to expand the market.' Barely two weeks later Mr MacKellar had jumped on the bandwagon (or is it hayrick?) and was worrying in public about Australia's shrinking population. Since the Society started it all, and this is indeed a Worthy Cause, there will be a special pre-Xmas meeting of all editors interested in increasing the population in the National Interest. Speakers will explain the mechanics of the process, give practical demonstrations, and afterwards there will be time for private study.

SITS VAC Deakin University has advertised for two editors to help produce teaching material for its off-campus study programme. Salary range $13 535 – 14 731. Applications close 3 December. Phone inquiries: 052 47 1131.

CSIRO advertised for an editor/writer recently, in its Division of Chemical Technology. Salary range $14 623 – 20 295. Applications close 23 November, but you could be lucky. Phone 699 6711.

FREELANCE REGISTER
Gloria Moore advises that she is no longer freelancing. On the other hand, I accidentally omitted from the list last month

HEATHER BRIGGS 64 Bellevue Avenue Highton 3216 052 43 8742	M.Sc. (Melb.), M.Sc. (Lond.) in chemical and life sciences. Experienced editor of scientific, technical, educational and general works. Trained by CSIRO.

THE EDITORS (PO Box 567, Neutral Bay 2089; phone Bruce Champion, 816 2758, AH 43 5970) are having a Xmas Dinner on Wednesday 5 December at the Mosman Rowing Club. It'll set you back $12.50 and you should attempt to RSVP by 26 November.
The Editors' October newsletter has a lengthy and most useful report on their September meeting, at which Irina Dunn and no less than two presidents of the Australian Journalists' Association (Federal and NSW) discussed 'The Editor and the AJA'.
A few copies of the newsletter will be available at our November meeting. Ask Mark Dando. He's your secretary, yes. Phone 329 5199.

Phoebe Palmieri reports on the
ANNUAL SALARY SURVEY

Here are the results of the salary survey carried out in June this year. Out of the large number of questionnaires circulated only 45 were returned, so the results can't be said to be conclusive, but they do tend to confirm what some of us have suspected, that editors are overworked and underpaid. Thank you to the 45 people who took the trouble to reply. The information provided is reported below question by question, and the table cross-references some of the data.

1. What is the title of your present position?

The titles reported were:

Publications Officer (2)
Senior Course Co-ordinator
Assistant Publishing Manager
Managing Editor (2)
Scientific Editor
Editor (8)
Publisher
Senior Editor (7)
Sponsoring Editor
Assistant Managing Editor
Book Editor (3)
Commissioning Editor (2)
Assistant Editor (5)
Primary Projects Editor
Editor/Administration
Publishing Manager

Some people had responsibility in a particular area indicated in their titles, e.g. Editor – Academic and General.

2. Job Description

People were asked to indicate which of the following descriptions most closely described their jobs.

A An employee without previous experience in book editing, engaged wholly or principally to carry out editorial duties under supervision.

B An employee engaged wholly or principally to perform under supervision copy editing functions, reading proofs and other editorial duties.

C An employee engaged wholly or principally to take, subject to control and supervision, editorial responsibility for titles that others have initiated; editing copy, dealing with authors, reading proofs, writing blurbs, preparing indexes, editing art, writing captions.

D An employee responsible to management, engaged wholly or principally in developing and implementing publishing projects; supervising other employees, freelance editors, designers and photographers; may be called upon to make arrangements on behalf of management with printers, typesetters, designers and freelance editors.

E Freelance editor.

Replies are shown on the table opposite against the appropriate salary level, except for the 6 freelancers, who are dealt with separately.

3. Differences from given job descriptions.

These responses show ways in which people consider the jobs they do differ from the descriptions given in our survey. Most people seemed to think the descriptions were pretty accurate.

- little supervision; designs most of books; controls scientific content (C)
- develops publishing projects and takes through to completion (C/D)
- prepares study materials for external students (D)
- does not buy print or commission designers (D)
- commissions, contracts and bids for books from US and British publishers (D)
- no editing experience before 1979; does not prepare indexes or write blurbs (C)
- editor of company's staff newspaper (A)
- slightly less responsibility and more supervision (C)

4. Appropriateness of job title.

Almost all respondents thought their titles were appropriate or nearly so.

5. Annual salary.

See table opposite.

6. What sort of company do you work for?

The choices were Commercial (C), University Press (U), Government Department (G) or Other (O). The replies are shown on the table. Note how they relate to salary levels and job descriptions.

7./8. When was your salary last increased? By how much?

The answers were rather hard to interpret, but it appears that most salaries increase only with national wage increases. Only one person reported an annual increment (of $600).

9. Hours of work.

All fell within the range 35–40 hours.

10. Actual hours worked.

The range was 35–60 hours, with an average of about 40. Those employed by government departments apparently did not include paid overtime in this figure, while those whose overtime is unpaid included it here.

11. Overtime payment.

All 6 respondents who work for government

Table: Summary of answers to questions 5, 26, 2, 6, 15, 16

Salary range	5 Present salary	26 Desirable salary	2 Job description	6 Company	15 Supervise staff	16 Supervise freelancers
18 000 - 18 900	2	3	1C 1D	1U 1G	2	2
17 000 - 17 900	2		2D	1C 1O	2	1
16 000 - 16 900	2	9	2D	2C	2	2
15 000 - 15 900	3	3	1B 1C 1D	1C 2G	1	2
14 000 - 14 900	7	3	2B 4D 1C/D	5C 2G	3	3
13 000 - 13 900	5	7	3C 1D 1D/E	4C 1U	2	3
12 000 - 12 900	8	4	5C 2D 1C/D	7C 1U	3	6
11 000 - 11 900	5	2	1A 2C 1D	2C 1G 2U	2	4
10 000 - 10 900	4		2A 2C	3C 1O	2	2
9000 - 9900	1		1C	1C		

departments were paid for overtime, generally at $9 per hour. Of the remainder, only one person is paid for overtime.

12. Do you have the use of a company car?
Yes - 11. No - the rest.

13. Does the company supply you with a car for your personal use? If so, are all expenses paid?
Three people are supplied with a car; the company pays all expenses for two of them. In addition, two people get free petrol for their own cars, and a third gets an allowance based on km travelled.

14. Do you receive an annual bonus?
$500 (1); week's salary (1); variable (1); 17% holiday pay loading (1). 'Don't know' (1).

15./16. Supervision of staff/freelancers.
See table above.

17. Freelancing by full-time employees.
Four people do freelance work for their own companies (two only occasionally), and six for other companies.

18. Hourly rates charged for freelance work.
The lowest rate reported was $5, the highest $12.50; most were around $8.

19. Freelancers' gross income.
$9000 (1); $8000 (1); $4000 (1); $1500 (1); 'Not sure' (2).

20. Annual leave.
Four weeks (all employed respondents).

21. Annual sick leave entitlement.
5-15 days, 10 days most common, usually cumulative. Surprisingly many did not know.

22. Maternity leave.
Seven people said their employers provided leave, mostly 12 weeks unpaid; one 12 weeks paid; one 52 weeks unpaid. Several did not know.

23. Superannuation.
Almost invariably, superannuation is available but not compulsory. Many don't-knows again. Editors seem generally uninformed (therefore unconcerned?) about terms and conditions of employment.

24. Do you belong to a union?
AJA (18); other bodies (5); no (15). Several people said they hadn't got around to it. Three said they had not joined the AJA because they didn't believe it represented editors' interests.

25. Membership of professional groups.
Society of Editors (25); The Editors (3); Imprint Society (2); Society of Industrial Editors (2); Galley Club (3); Colophon Society (3); Victorian Fellowship of Australian Writers (1); Australian Society of Authors (1); Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (1).

26. Within reason, what do you think your salary should be? See table above.

27. Is there any discrimination on the ground of sex in the industry?
Yes - 1 male, 17 females. No - 5 m, 4 f.

Which gives you some idea of how many female editors there are.

Phoebe Palmieri

(JB: Of course there's a possibility that the one male who said yes to 27 thought there was discrimination against males. Thanks, Phoebe.)

Paul Stapleton tries to recall

OUR LAST THREE MEETINGS

At the August meeting we considered the matter of whether we are publishing too many books, and (whether we are or not) how best to market them.

Our first speaker, JOHN CURREY, managing director of John Currey, O'Neil, said that in the context of literature there can never be too many books. The Industries Assistance Commission's notion of regulating publishing output was absurd, because, even if supply exceeds demand, creativity will never be limited. Could Handel's nine volumes of works be considered over-production?

Another consideration is the book and the non-book. The Women's Weekly Cookbook is regarded as a non-book and as such never makes the bestseller lists, even though it sells very well. John thinks the non-book market may be over-supplied, but even that is uncertain.

The newspaper articles on publishing and over-production (which prompted this meeting's subject) took their information from the same places: Rigby's annual report for 1977-78 and reports from Thomas Nelson and William Collins. But what, John asked, do the companies that are not in trouble think? And does the problem come from the Australian publishers? There are large quantities of imported books lying about the place, and it could well be these that are causing the problem. If over-supply does exist, then it exists at the junk end of the market. 'Outback In Colour' floods the shelves, submerging all the proper books and giving people headaches, and (come to think of it) it was the same twelve years ago.

JIM WALKER, sales manager of Oxford University Press, said that getting the numbers right was always difficult. Small runs are no longer economical, so there is always the temptation to go for the big seller. This is fine if it works, but there is a big difference between selling out a run of 12000 and remaindering 3000 of a 15000 run.

If we accept that there is an over-supply and that it is at the lower end of the market, how did this come about? Several reasons. The general economic situation, the decline in retail sales, the depression in the market, the increase in imported paperbacks, the restriction of marketing outlets for paperbacks – all are responsible to some degree – as are the over-enthusiasm of local publishers (especially in buying rights) and the general increase in publishing activity in Australia. Most of these are normal market forces that will sort themselves out, but dumping, especially by US and UK publishers, is a big problem.

So, there are a lot of books. How best to market them? The easy answer is to do everything better. The process starts with the editor, who must produce better-edited material than the competition's. Restrict your areas of publishing, research the market thoroughly, work closely with the sales force. Use authors for promotion, investigate book-club and export opportunities. The publishing process does not stop when the book is printed. A sustained effort will result in increased sales.

BARNEY RIVERS, managing director of Thomas Nelson Australia, started off with some daunting cynicism. It is difficult to distribute books today because you can't get them out past the ones coming in. We don't sell books: we just put them out on agistment. It's more like a lending library than a warehouse: gone today, here tomorrow. Obviously there are too many books, but the solution to this problem is not easily found.

It could be that at the moment there is an over-availability of books in Australia, rather than an over-supply. The international publishers find Australia a convenient dumping ground for books that they can't sell because of the general recession. This is probably temporary, but Australian publishers could have brought the problem on themselves by creating an expectation overseas about Australia that is not true. In future it is likely that the market will return to its normal size and rate of growth.

Compounding the problem of overseas books is the great number of books of no lasting value, but even this phenomenon will have some beneficial effect. 'Outback In Colour' did get people buying books for the first time, something that may develop into a habit. Next time these people buy a book they may be more discriminating and look for better value for their money. If editors can meet this challenge the end result will be well-edited, well-produced books, addressing significant topics, that will sell well. This attitude will also affect future marketing techniques. As books become more expensive, all buyers will be looking for better value for money. Publishers will have to find new marketing outlets in order to expose their product to a wider audience.

• • • •

This being the last Newsletter until February, I thought I should get the finger out and summarize the last two meetings. However, since some churl stole my tape-recorder out of my office (along with some nice green three-week-old sandwiches), the following will all be done from memory.

The September meeting dealt with copyright, and DAVID CATTERNS came from the Australian

Copyright Council to talk about it all. Copyright protects the author's right to control where and when his work is reproduced, and a Bill going through Parliament now will theoretically extend this control to photocopying. In fact, the Copyright Amendment Bill (No. 2) 1979 makes it easier for the author to extract payment for the use of his work, but erodes some of his control, especially in the area of photocopying, particularly in academic libraries.

September meeting dispensed with, now for October. Three speakers (standard mystical format to add cosmic energy to the proceedings) talked about publishing and marketing secondary social sciences material as an example of educational publishing. Before the meeting I knew nothing about this area, and after it I was confused. That is not to say that the speakers failed. Far from it. BRIAN BARRATT (Publisher, L&S Publishing), BARRY PARKER (teacher, Monash lecturer in social studies methods) and BOB ANDERSEN (Educational Publishing Director, Thomas Nelson) made great efforts to identify and discuss the basic components of an incredibly complicated area. Everyone agrees that social sciences are very wonderful, but no-one has the money or time to produce or buy the material needed to teach it properly. Many organizations are trying to develop suitable curricula and texts, but because there are so many schools with different needs, and teachers with different ideas, it all moves along very slowly.

Maybe someone will buy me a new tape-recorder for Xmas so I can transcribe the tape of the meeting and write a proper account for the next Newsletter. I'm sure that what I've just written has missed the point and gone off the subject, and will bring down all sorts of terrible retribution. 'President of Society of Editors savagely beated by irate school teachers.' Still, it's all good publicity.

DAVID GRIGG
1556 Main Road
Research 3095

I've just finished reading the Newsletter and I thought 'By golly, I'll write John a letter about that!' And then I thought 'Don't be silly, why not just phone him? Cheaper and quicker.' And suddenly I started thinking about the importance of letters and how sad it is that the mails are deteriorating.
Here I am, working for Telecom, an organization that makes an immense (and embarrassing) profit every year, that is dedicated to convincing people to telephone instead of writing letters. People here tend to sneer at Australia Post, making an immense loss every year to maintain a service that everyone here takes for granted will not exist in twenty years time. Yet a phone call always seems to have little, if any, real content. Perhaps there's a law of nature that says that the banality of a communication is in exact proportion to its rapidity. Look at CB radio, that most immediate communication form!
The written word itself is being devalued. Lee Harding recently confided to me that he thought the novel had only another ten years left. After that it would all be video and cassette. Didn't Ray Bradbury write a novel about that? But I can't believe in it, and only partly because I don't want to.
We had an earnest young chap in here some months ago who wanted to get us to involve ourselves in audio-visual presentations of an unusual kind. He had invented this new language, called 'iconography', which utterly replaced the written word, being instantly received by the brain with no intermediate symbols. Of course, he had to give us a written summary of his ideas, and – you've guessed it – the summary was illiterate and incomprehensible. So were his slides. It always seems to be those who are most incompetent in handling the written word who are foremost in telling us that literacy is out of date.

... I can understand how Valma's comment on that panel would be pretty depressing. If it's any help, she reckoned I was sexist, too. I stood up and tried to defend myself during that panel, without much success. It's rather like being called anti-Semitic. 'Rubbish,' you say, 'some of my best friends...' Well, some of my best friends are women. There really isn't any way to defend yourself against that kind of accusation. The best you can do, I think, is to go on the way you usually do, being aware of the danger of being prejudiced. It's all too easy for people like Valma to call others 'sexist' without thinking out what they are saying. I'm still smarting at the accusation that my two children's books are sexist. 'Dammit,' I said to Valma and the panel, 'the girl saves the boy at the end of both books! At least I tried to be non-sexist!' But being sexist is evidently like being black: it don't rub off, no matter how hard you scrub.

(JB) Thanks, David. The only other letter I've had about that issue was from Nick Hudson, and it was so erudite (in four languages) that I haven't worked out yet what he was saying, so I won't publish it this time. Now I think there's just room for me to say that the cover art this time is by the inimitable Vane Lindesay (thanks, Vane) and that

THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS
NEWSLETTER Volume 9 Number 5
was edited in places, written in others, and entirely typed and roneoed by John Bangsund, PO Box 230, Kew 3101, for The Society of Editors, PO Box 176, Carlton South 3053. Official correspondence to Carlton South, please, Newsletter stuff (and anything urgent) to Kew, all complaints to the Mogatollah Thatcher. Glad Yule to y'all.

Hang the expense – let's have another page or two. Back in June I wrote to the Canadian publishers McClelland & Stewart Ltd, grumbling about not being able to find their authors' books in Melbourne. (Canadian friends had introduced me to Robertson Davies, Margaret Atwood, Ken Mitchell and other marvellous writers, and I wanted more.) Lorene Wilson of McC & S wrote to me, commiserating, and said no, she didn't think there was a society of editors in Canada (I'd asked about that while I was about it), but she would pass my name on to some trade organizations. Well, she sure did. Since mid-October I have had catalogues from dozens of Canadian publishers and several delightful letters.

ANN WALL
Publisher
Anansi Press
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I agree that Canadian writing isn't nearly well enough known elsewhere; but then the ignorance of Australian and New Zealand writing up here is also limitless. I've been trying to find out what exciting books are coming out there, but with little success. The Commonwealth anthologies which I've started with generally are 15-20 years out of date, and list as coming from Ceylon that exciting new poet Michael Ondaatje, who we've been publishing as a Canadian since 1970 (and Coach House Press before us, since 1968). ... I'd appreciate hearing from you about any exciting new fiction or poetry you think might go here, since the large publishers generally will pick up the more commercial prospects anyway, and we're trying to specialize in 'quality' (as we see it, anyway). What won't go here (in poetry) are either the quasi-British carefully metrical stuff or the poetry that's so specifically Australian in language that you need a glossary to get through it if you aren't from there. / Or the name of a good general literary quarterly. Or the title of a good critical survey of the writing from the past 10 years.

There isn't an editor's association of the sort you describe here. There is a fairly active writers' association called The Writers' Union of Canada, for fiction and non-fiction writers, and the League of Canadian Poets, which isn't as active as it used to be. The closest thing is a newly formed Freelance Editors Association – which I gather has much the same goals as your organization.

MAGGIE MacDONALD
467 Shaw Street
Toronto M6G 3L4

What a delightful surprise to receive your letter and package of newsletters! One of the nicest things about (the Freelance Editors Association of Canada) is the contact it brings us with the outside world. There is a special look sometimes on the faces of people who come to their first FEAC meeting. Here they've been drudging away, alone in a closet for months or even years and now they have stumbled on a room full of like beings. FEAC is very new. Our founding meeting was in June of this year. Since that time we have come up with a constitution and have gathered 80 members who have agreed to throw in their lot with us. At the moment we are in the last throes of bringing out a directory of members. Each individual will have a page to talk about him/herself plus there will be an index at the back listing things like fiction or mathematics with appropriate members' names affixed. It is really self-promotion which we intend to distribute to publishers in the hope that more work will ensue or at least there will be more chance of the right editor being chosen for the right book.

It is fascinating to me that you folks have voting and associate members as we do. We could have avoided long wrangles if we could have just followed your lead. We cost more though. $50 for a voting member, $35 for associate. ...

What qualifications do Canadian publishers look for? Someone who has low money expectations and a university degree in something (doesn't really matter what). The job market is very tight here at present. Publishers also want someone with experience. It is difficult to break in. Some start as a secretary or salesperson and once in the company they sneak into editorial. The salary at a medium-sized house would be between $9–15 000. That is approximately two-thirds of what a teacher makes in Canada and they moan ceaselessly about how underpaid they are. ... As for training, it is the same here. On the job. Applicants must have taste. Lately, one or two courses have been set up at community colleges (trade schools, not universities) but no one in the book business takes the graduates seriously. They are curiosities more than anything.

In Canada there has never been any association of editors. We (tah-dah-dah) are breaking ground. We cannot be a union (though some of our members would like that) but we see ourselves as a strong association. At the moment, being young, we are very enthusiastic and full of energy. A newsletter (and yet another committee) is a possibility in the new year. We will be having two seminars for sure in the spring, one on proofreading and one on copy-editing. We hope to assume some responsibility for training and retraining our members. ...

I am mystified by the Society of Editors' connection with the Australian Journalists' Association. We divide up the functions between editing and writing and maintain a wary gulf between us as we feel that so far no one has looked after the rights of editors. Our writers get pots of government money and then yell at us if we suggest altering a comma. We intend to cooperate but not if we have to give up much ground. ...

We have a membership requirement for voting members in FEAC. You must be able to prove 500 hours of editing in the previous 12 months. That's peanuts but it keeps the unwashed from voting. We

have also been working on a fee schedule but it is not final yet. We are recommending $9 an hour for proofreading but I know of places that pay $5 or even $4.50 an hour. It is crazy because accurate proofreading is a rare thing. These companies should find themselves crack proofreaders and pay them top money.

Thank you for the newsletters which I shall hand around to inspire the formation of a newsletter committee so we can reciprocate. I would be delighted to swap ideas and comments with you. Who knows? – how about an international conference of editors in some far flung Eden-like area of the world? They are predicting a possibility of snow here for tomorrow.

(JB) By crikey, if I could get a few of those $9/hr proofreading jobs I could just about afford to attend an international conference, provided it wasn't held any further away than, say, Sydney. Thank you, Ann and Maggie, for the fascinating glimpses you have given us of your parallel world. I won't attempt to answer your questions here. I'm sure that many readers will be interested in getting in touch with you.

LEANNE FRAHM
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Slade Point 4741

Isn't it incredible the effect the steely contemptuous gaze of a doctrinaire anti-smoker can have on you? On the last night, when nearly everyone had gone from the hotel (of course I'm talking about the Sydney sf convention, don't be obtuse), two friends of that persuasion came into my room. I immediately hid the ashtray. After half an hour I couldn't stand it any longer, so ended up hanging out of the window on the fifteenth floor to have a smoke. Marea joined me. Within ten minutes the streets below were jammed with police cars, ambulances, fire engines and Jehovah's Witnesses exhorting us not to jump – that's a lie actually. Isn't society lucky that alcoholics and paraplegics and others with afflictions aren't treated the same as those with nicotine addiction?

(JB) Don't ask me, lady. Smoking is a filthy habit. I only do it because a feller's gotta have at least one vice. Do you reckon we could have an international editors' conference in Mackay, Leanne? We can't go on not meeting like this.

'"... My dear Mary I will now conclude." That's all,' said Sam. 'That's rather a sudden pull-up, ain't it, Sammy?' inquired Mr Weller. 'Not a bit on it,' said Sam; 'she'll vish there wos more, and that's the great art o' letter-writin'.'

Newsletter-writin', too. See yez.

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS

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was first published by Scythrop Glowry in 18-oh-dot and subsequently resurrected by John Bangsund (now residing at PO Box 230, Kew 3101, Australia) in 1970. According to Bruce Gillespie (scholar of this town, publisher of the estimable SF Commentary), I am still publishing Philosophical Gas – indeed he has suggested warmly in SFC 55/56 that people write and ask me for copies – and thinking about it, I realize that of course I have gone on publishing that journal; it was but a momentary aberration that I should have misspelt the title (as 'Parergon Papers', an easy enough slip of the pen) on the issues that appeared from time to time during 1977-79, and absent-mindedly numbered those issues from 1 to 12. They were in fact Philosophical Gas nos. 38 to 49, and this is no.50, tentatively dated November 1979. We used to have a quotation from Jack Speer in this colophon, but I have just mislaid it; instead it may be appropriate to quote this time George Turner, who in SFC 55/56 refers to 'Bangsund's penchant for producing erratic magazines under erratic titles at erratic intervals and for writing belles lettres on anything that strikes his fancy, except sf'.

I have never admitted this to anyone, not even George, but I gave up reading science fiction in 1971 when I heard that John Campbell was dead. It was the least I could do to show my respect for the man who made sf what it was. 'Ichabod!' I cried, and have read nothing but fanzines and the Commonwealth Style Manual since. This is my sole reason for not writing about sf. And, it follows, for not rushing out to buy each new Paul Collins anthology as it appears, but instead mortifying myself by ferreting out, paying absurd prices for, and then listlessly flicking through, such turgid old tomes as Flinders's Voyage to Terra Australis and Anthony's Trollopes of Australia. Pardon me, I'll read that again; 'and Anthony Trollope's Australia'. Some of Trollope's stuff, I sometimes think, could give sf writers some good ideas to work on – but no, I have sworn a soilomy swear (thank you, as ever, Rick Sneary) not to write about such things until Campbell Shall Come Again.

A few months ago I wrote a powerful piece for the National Times about how sf writers get their best ideas from Anthony Trollope. If the editor is saving it up for his Xmas Bumper Issue he might have had the decency to tell me before now. Then I sent it to Nation Review, and that journal seems to have died. I showed it to George Turner, who said it was 'erratic', or something like that, and to John Foyster, who said he liked the bit in the middle. 'Which bit?' I said, and he pointed to a sentence that I didn't think was any good at all. It's deleted from the version that follows.

I'LL BET you never wondered before where writers get their ideas from, eh? You probably thought they just made them up out of thin air. Dear me. As long ago as the year before last I found out where writers get their ideas from, and it was an amazing revelation. I had just met an American science-fiction writer named Vonda McIntyre, and I thought, by crikey, here's my opportunity, and I asked her where she gets her ideas from. 'Schenectady,' she said.

On the hottest day of 1977 I took Vonda to a radio station in Adelaide to be interviewed on a talk-back show. In between commercials for plumbing appliances the DJ asked her some pretty stupid questions about 'sky-fie', as he called it. No-one rang up to talk back, so he started repeating the commercials and asking even stupider questions. Afterwards Vonda asked me where he got his ideas from. 'Well, I imagine he watches Clive Hale on telly,' I said, 'but it might be something to do with the water.' 'Uhuh,' said Vonda, who had tried the water. 'Or the salt damp,' I said. 'Terrible thing, salt damp – that and dry rot – they're everywhere in Adelaide.' 'Uhuh,' said Vonda, who had noticed one or both of these things at our place, especially in the spare room where we put visiting writers. If you are ever in Seattle and you see a Chev Camaro convertible with a 5DN bumper-sticker, that's Vonda's. I believe she tells people these days that she gets her ideas from North Adelaide.

The truth is that we are surrounded by ideas. The air is full of 'em. Only recently I found out why this is so. We had this Spiritualist chap drop in on us, a delightful bloke, fascinating to listen to, bursting with vitality and beaming good will – fatter than me, too, something I always admire about a man. He was selling framed prints door to door. I can't recall his exact words, but he said he could sense thousands of spirits in the house. They were sort of chattering away to him from our books. We have quite a few books about the place, and over the years many of them have spoken to me, but not out loud, if you follow me.

My wife innocently said something about hearing mice in the ceiling sometimes, and he said very gently that maybe it wasn't mice. A very thoughtful sort of look appeared on my wife's face – a sort of 'more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, and for all we know, the ceiling' look. Ghost-writers in the sky, I thought, but I wasn't so disrespectful as to say it, or even hum it. Just as well. This chap was dead serious.

As I said, he was bigger than me, and I'd probably

already offended him by claiming to be a Seventh Day Balloonist when he said he was a Spiritualist, so we got talking about books. He said books have had it. Outmoded. Besides that, he doesn't need a houseful of books because he has total recall, and he's a speed-reader into the bargain. Amazing. With abilities like that I wouldn't need books either. (Also I'd be on the Don Lane Show, or Mastermind, before you could say 'Jack, you need an agent!') I thought I'd get off books then, because the subject was dejecting me, and I said how much I liked the enormous framed McCubbin print he had with him. He looked at it as though he'd forgotten what he'd called in about and said 'Oh, I thought it was a Tom Roberts. Obviously you know more about art than I do.'

I'm not sure what to make of that. I don't know a damn thing about art. I'm not even sure what I like.

One thing I do know a fair bit about is sound economic management. Not only do I read the newspapers, but I did a unit in this subject as part of my degree course at Ard-Knox. An MBE, it was. Master of Biblical Engineering, yes – a sort of multi-disciplinary kind of course – and I studied under the great Primo Macellaro, Reader in Sound Economic Management and Abstract Vivisection at Ard-Knox, and to him alone I owe my truly awesome knowledge of the subject. Primo (I started off calling him Mister, then Signor, but we got closer over the years) agrees with me that, despite rampant speculation, Australia is unlikely to devalue the kilometre in the near future. (I did a unit in Near Futures, too. I'll tell you about that some time. There's no hurry.)

What has Australia to gain by devaluing the kilometre?

Obviously there's political mileage in it. (Kilometrage? O, brave new world!) A boon to people who alter car odometers for a living, naturally. But what else? We talked to a few People In The Street about it.

'Well, obviously,' said Malcolm Fraser, an honest farmer we met in Toorak, 'devaluation of the kilometre will mean increased savings for the average decent Australian in terms of miles per gallon or kilowatts or litres or something – I've just forgotten the appropriate details, but they were all clearly set out in a dry, boring old talk I gave on television recently. Much more important, though, and I urge you to consider the question carefully: do you realize that they are holding this country to ransom?' 'Who?' we asked, 'the kilowatts or the television?' 'Them!' he said, and scuttled away in an unmarked Bugatti.

'The proposal, as I understand it,' said Bill Hayden, an honest earnest young cop we met at Inala, 'is that the kilometre should be tied to a mixed basket of international units of linear measurement. If I may explain the absurdity of this, it means that this week we may have parity with the Dutch kilometre and next week with the pre-revolutionary Russian verst or, for all I know, the Tongan pa'anga. Now clearly this will be very confusing to the average Australian motorist. It would not be true to say that he won't know whether he's coming or going, because Labor's policy of universal free rear-vision mirrors did away with all that, and try as it might, the present government will find it pretty hard to dismantle that bit of legislation, but yes, it will be confusing for the average Australian motorist, whichever way he is going, and it would clearly be a retrograde step, in my view.'

'And Medibank?' we cried out, but he had gone.

Bob Viner, an honest conveyancing clerk we talked to in Yokine, said it was a good move in the right direction. 'Look at it this way,' he said to another Person In The Street, who shuffled off in acute embarrassment, 'By tying the kilometre to a mixed bag of foreign miles we can reduce unemployment.' 'How?' we asked. 'Well, all the road signs on every highway and byway in the country will be inaccurate, won't they?' 'Yes,' we said. 'Well, we'll get the dole-bludgers pardon me unemployment beneficiaries out there, on every corner and up and down the nation's roads, holding up signs with the latest gazetted distances on 'em!' 'Yes?' 'Well, it'll solve the unemployment problem and we'll get back in, right?' 'But who will pay all these people?' we asked. 'Not my portfolio, mate,' said this most refreshingly honest chap.

Whose portfolio, then, whose problem? We tracked down an honest politician in a back street at Largs Bay who agreed to act as a Person In The Street only if we withheld his name, because even his closest colleagues don't know about his honest business in Largs yet. 'This would be a matter for the States and local councils, certainly,' he said. 'The federal government's function is to formulate policy and pass it on to the nation, not to work out who ends up paying for it, good heavens, no. The poor blighters have enough to worry about without that sort of thing. Ask your local member, why don't you?'

We tried to speak to our local members, federal and State, but one was chairing an international conference on foreign ministers' retirement benefits in Honolulu and the other was in recess.

So we finished up talking to ourselves, as usual. I said to Primo that the only thing I'd learnt of

any value was that, if the kilometre is devalued, Canberra will be further away from most of us than ever. Primo said that most people would welcome this move, of course, but whether the new scheme takes off or not, he can only see Canberra getting closer to us, one way or another.

I could only agree. People in America feel the same way about Washington (DC), and people in Scotland the same about Glasgow. It's a worldwide phenomenon, and something Captain Cook would never have dreamed of.

Oddly enough, though it has nothing to do with the subject, but I think it's fascinating, one of Primo Macellaro's ancestors sailed with Captain Cook - and several others arrived here during the 1850s, and two turned up only last week from Perugia Talking to people like Primo gives you a - how can I put it? - a sort of sense of history - the feeling that, somehow, somewhere out there, there's a real world. Know what I mean?

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3 November Someone in the New Scientist recently referred to Margaret Thatcher as the Mogatollah. I liked that.
I forgot entirely to mention it last night to Mike Clark, our friend from Adelaide who is on the last leg of his Ph D in psycholinguistics, but who (despite that) remains our friend because he graduated long ago in the Ard-Knox school of verbal gymnastics. In fact we (I should blush to say I) gave him his final assignment in that school by introducing him to the works of Brian O'Nolan, from which, happily, he has not yet recovered.
I asked him what Flann O'Brien and puns and that sort of thing had to do with psycholinguistics.
'Well, nothing actually,' he said, and went off on some line he'd picked up from Norm Chomsky (sometimes incorrectly spelt 'Noam', he said) that eluded me entirely and made me wish I hadn't asked, but it was all very instructive, in an obscure sort of way. We were having dinner with Mike, and Elaine and Bruce Gillespie, at a pancake place in Carlton, and it was that kind of night, you know, awfully friendly and incredibly instructive, but sort of obscure. A bit like life in general, if you follow me.

Then tonight we ran into Jenny and John Foyster at our favourite Chinese restaurant (it had to happen sooner or later, since they introduced us to it), and we got the same feeling. It's a feeling you get a lot in Melbourne, actually, if you have the right sort of friends and are open to any old experience that's going. Well, not quite all - let's be honest - but a lot. And what we have here, we think, is just about all we want. It's a good feeling.

What isn't a good feeling is that, settled as we have come to think we are at 7 Derby Street, we have suddenly got the itch to move. If you could see the mounds and crates of books and furniture and books and papers and odds and ends that we have here, you would appreciate roughly how potent that itch has to be. And it all has to do with the fact that we have new neighbours.

Let's call him Keith. He does. He wears singlets, of all colours (today's was bright yellow), in all weathers, and he's in his late 50s/early 60s and has just retired from a labouring job with the Kew Council. A nice, ordinary sort of Australian. Probably votes Labor even (but I wouldn't dare ask him, in case he thinks about me and changes his mind). He used to live across the street, in one of the little houses owned by the Kew Council. Then, suddenly, two weeks ago, our quiet Macedonian neighbours next door disappeared, and Keith moved in - with his wife and son and cat and Falcon station-wagon and yappy little dog and CB radio and everything. And they're up and yelling and yapping and yowling at each other at 5 am, and keeping it up until sunset, and CB-ing us out of our minds at all hours, and - we're spoilt, we know, dead spoilt, but we're thinking seriously of moving, and it's a damn shame, but that's life. We actually came home from Bruce and Elaine's last night and said how lucky we were that we weren't buying this place.

The thing is, probably, I think, that we haven't worked ourselves out yet, having been together only six and a half years, so we're not prepared yet for rackety neighbours. Sally and I are the kind of couple that really need a desert island somewhere to get ourselves sorted out, before we venture into the wide world of Other People - on a close-up, everyday sort of scale, if you get my drift. The fault (we have this sinking kind of feeling) is not in our stars, but in - well, in something Norm Chomsky hasn't adequately explained to us so far.

Keith's Falcon has driving lights, and a stone-screen in front of the windscreen, and a pack-rack, and a ten-foot aerial, and inside it's littered with all the sort of gear you would expect to need on a transcontinental trip. The furthest I've seen him drive it is two blocks away to the nearest pub.
If I only had the will I could write a brilliant story about Keith and his Falcon and his CB and so on. But with the same will I could ignore him and get on with my work - and I can't! Mind you, I am quite unemotional about the whole business. You should hear Sally. Anyway, that's how we came to give up the Muppets tonight and go out for dinner (two nights in a row: at this rate we'll be broke by January) and run into John and Jenny. The relief should see us through the weekend.

3 December 'Tentatively dated November'? I'm glad I said that. There's been a lot of blood under the bridge in the month that went by as you turned the page. Keith? No, he's okay so far, despite Sally's homicidal regard for him. (It turns out he's younger than I thought, he was sacked by the Council, which is why he had to move, and he's on the dole. He has just bought a new caravan. At least once a day he hitches it to his Falcon and takes it round the block. When he gets back he tells the street how it's running.) Our itch to move has become so unbearable that we've taken Desperate Measures to take our minds off it: we are buying a house. At least, we think we are buying a house. It will be another three weeks before we know whether the building society will lend us the money, and that's a powerful matter to occupy our minds for a start. Will the Australian publishing industry be able and willing to support me for the next quarter-century, so we can meet the repayments, if we get the loan? That's another. The house is quite ordinary, but it's in a rotten suburb. Do we really want to live in West Heidelberg? What do we do if the nice Vietnamese move out of the house next door and Keith's brother moves in? Well, I've thought about that, and I know exactly what we'll do. We'll kidnap the entire staff of CB Action magazine and hold them hostage until he moves right out again.

About the time I started this issue the US embassy in Tehran was taken over by local students, who want their Shah back so they can give him a decent Islamic burial, and they and their hostages are still there as I write. The Shah (it says in all the papers this morning) has been moved from New York to Texas, which you might think would be a fate bad enough for anyone, but the students still want him back. As the world awaits the next dangerous move in this dangerous game I take my mind off it by wondering what those students are studying, and when. Maybe the whole thing is a kind of vacation assignment.

What can you do? Burning a flag or chucking rocks at an embassy or an Iranian won't help. Assassinating Khomeiny won't help either: Mrs Carter's outspoken contrary opinion is as irresponsible as anything the Ayatollah has said. Patrick Cook, in a brilliant cartoon in the National Times a few weeks ago, gave his considered opinion on the matter; under a glowering ayatollah Cook's common man writhes on his sleepless bed and prays:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
Teeth and glasses on the shelf.
If war breaks out before I wake,
Kindly keep it to yourself.

Meanwhile, in Czechoslovakia possession of a duplicator is a crime that carries the same penalty as rape. And in Kampuchea... No, enough.

BIBLIOGRAFFITI

Or: I MUST BE TALKING TO LEIGH EDMONDS
Or: Select Documents in Parergastical History

The Tenth Anniversary Mailing of ANZAPA, all 413 pages of it, appeared (if that's the word I'm scratching about for) in October 1978, and I've been writing a mailing comment on it ever since. The comment isn't finished yet, but I don't think I'll be able to do any more work on it for a while, so what we have here is a sort of mailing comment in progress. Documentary theorists should be able to detect traces of at least eight drafts.

I really was impressed by Leigh Edmonds' little effort in ANZAPA 64. What I set out to do in THE ANZAPA BOOK in 1977, and gave up early as an almost impossible job, Leigh has calmly done in one go, just like that. DIPPING INTO ANZAPA covers only (only!) the first twenty-two mailings, but everything I had planned to do is there: contents of each mailing, membership, and a selection of representative pieces. In the latter respect Leigh has done us a better service than I would have, because I had in mind a 'best of ANZAPA', whereas he has selected material that more accurately reflects the character of ANZAPA. Then, in TEN YEARS - WHO DID WHAT, he lists under members' names every contribution to the first sixty-three mailings. Altogether this stuff runs to 96 pages, and it's easily the most impressive single work of fan bibliography I have ever seen. (Bob Pavlat's FAPA BOOK is the most impressive continuing work.) Leigh claims a 95-98% accuracy rating, which seems about right. It's 2-5% less accurate than he or we would like, but that doesn't detract at all from a really magnificent achievement.

I'm not sure whether I'm more surprised at the number of things I have contributed to ANZAPA (106 items, according to Leigh) or the number of things I haven't. I have no way of checking Leigh's statistics on me, because for ten years I systematically lost or sold my copies of the mailings. Most of my fanzine accumulation went to Murdoch University Library in 1975; the stuff that has piled up since, about two metres of it, is mostly in boxes in the sleepout, neatly sorted into 'Aust' and 'O/S'; and the things I particularly value, from 1963 to date, are mostly in envelopes labelled with their publishers' names. My own stuff takes up much more space, for reasons I don't care to discuss again here.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (20 issues) is represented in the Edmondsyclopedia by one issue - no. 20, in ANZAPA 5. I only put it in so John Ryan could say he'd seen a copy (more likely, because I couldn't afford to post it out).

SCYTHROP (8 issues) succeeded ASFR and continued its numbering. Apparently only no.27 ever got into ANZAPA (when it was published, that is: a number of back issues of various things were in mailing 65).

THE NEW MILLENNIAL HARBINGER (14 issues) was my first apazine, and I thought every issue appeared in ANZAPA. Leigh doesn't list no.14, which most people got as a supplement to PG 29, and I thought this was an understandable oversight on his part until I noticed that PG 29 isn't listed either, which perhaps makes it an overstandable undersight. (Someone may care to check mailing 42, which is where both would have appeared if at all.) The first seven NMHs were in mailings 1-5; no. 8 was done in January 1974 for the Canadian 'apa with no rules'; nos.9-13 appeared in mailings 37-41.

CROG! (or The Chrononhotonthological Review) (9 issues) succeeded NMH and appeared in mailings 6-13. I recall intending to change my ANZAPA-zine's name each year, with the first issue appearing in the anniversary mailing. That obviously didn't work out. At the end of 1976 I decided to change the title every mailing, using a quotation from the current mailing as title for the next (hence Deja Voodoo, Claws, Drooping In At The Horvat's). That didn't last long either.

LODBROG (5 issues, numbered 1-4, 6). No.4 was done for OMPA and printed by Dave Piper in England; it didn't appear in ANZAPA. No.6 did, though it isn't in Leigh's list; it was part of Scythrop 27. I don't know whether I did a no. 5, but it seems most likely that I didn't.

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS (50 issues, including 12 accidentally misspelt 'Parergon Papers', all Bruce Gillespie's fault: he made the mistake, I am but a simple opportunist) started as my contribution to the Nova Mob's short-lived Apa-Nova. I'm surprised that no.1 didn't appear in ANZAPA. No.5 appeared in mailing 17 as part of Lodbrog 2. The issue numbered 5 by Leigh may have been 6, which he does not list, but which was certainly there: it was the first draft of 'John W. Campbell and the Meat Market'. Nos. 12 and 13 aren't listed but were certainly published for ANZAPA: 13 even has mailing comments. No.15 went only to FAPA; 21 and a variant version of 22 were suppressed (some readers probably have no idea how shy I was in those days; I used to get drunk and embarrassed a lot, too, drunk while writing and embarrassed when I'd sobered up enough to read what I'd run off; then I met Sally and gradually became a good citizen). I have no idea why 25, 26, 27 and 29 didn't get in.

BUNDALOHN QUARTERLY (4 issues) was going to be my FAPAzine. Like any neofan, I planned to hit every mailing with it, and each issue would be full of mailing comments. PG would continue as my ANZAPAzine and Scythrop as my genzine; I had it all worked out. Before I could complete the first issue I had moved from Bundalohn Court to Canberra. That's why I never got round to publishing my fantastic new fanzine QV. Maybe I could fit in a quick issue before we leave Kew, but it wouldn't be the same really, knowing in advance. BQ 2 and 3 were exclusively FAPA mailing comments; no.4 says it's for ANZAPA and OMPA, but I don't think it ever got to either.

God, this is boring. Is it true that bibliography is what clever people do when they've run out of cryptic crossword puzzles? I ask only because I've never run out. In fact I'm still working on one I cut out of The Australian in 1974. That was just before I cut out The Australian.

REVOLTING TALES OF SEX AND SUPER-SCIENCE (7 issues) was started for Africapa, but no.2 went to FAPA, no.3 to OMPA, no.4 to FAPA and some unanswered correspondents, nos. 5 and 6 to ANZAPA, no.7 quite possibly nowhere. Leigh lists 1, 5 and 6. No.4 got more response, in the way of letters and mailing comments, than anything I have published since ASFR, and if success in fanzine publishing may be measured by the ratio of response to circulation, this is the most successful fanzine issue I have ever published. I've often looked at it since and wondered what I did right.

STUNNED MULLET (7 or 8 issues) lived up to its name from the start. No.1 was printed offset. The printer went on holidays. I couldn't wait for him to return, so I did the other no.1 on the Roneo. How was I to know that he'd done the job before he went? Leigh lists no.1, but not no.1. He also lists no.2, which I'm pretty sure I didn't publish, but you never know; certainly I don't have a copy. No.4, not listed, I think was part of Philosophical Ferret, which I think was a modified version of PG 33; I have a copy of SM 4 but not PF.

PARERGON PAPERS (12 issues) started in July 1977 and were yet another attempt to confine all my fanzine publishing to one title. I don't really blame Bruce for confusing it/them with Philosophical Gas; at their best and at their worst they were very similar. The name no longer means anything: depending on how you look at it, none of my time is spare time these days, or all of it is.

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN: I have done 7 of them, for mailings 8 and 56-61. Not my most interesting fanzine, but at least it appeared regularly. You could say the same about THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS NEWSLETTER (18 issues), which gets into ANZAPA at my expense, not the Society's.

Still there? Good. We're just getting to the really interesting part. There's a deliberate typing error on this page. It's there mainly for Derrick Ashby's enjoyment, but you can look for it too if you want to. Derrick is a librarian by trade. I think he's employed to count the pages in each book, then do an analysis of the ratio of printed pages to purchase price to publisher, modified by authors' surnames and star signs, the result of which he presents to his chief, who passes it all on to the town clerk, who says the library must buy more westerns, because that's all he reads. In his spare time Derrick keeps records of scrabble scores, car number-plates and contributions to ANZAPA. His latest statistical bulletin (which I've lost already: I'd lose me head if it wasn't screwed on properly, me mum always used to say) warns me that I'm going awfully close to contributing my thousandth page to ANZAPA. We must liaise about this, Derrick, because I'd like page 1000 to be a bit special. Also I'm relying on you to check Leigh's statistics in the light of the information I'm so carefully providing in this gripping article.

Leigh, meanwhile, not content with his incredible performance in ANZAPA 64, has blithely knocked up a little list of his first 500 fanzines, all in chronological order, with details of page numbers, distribution, colour of paper, length of residence at above address and what he had for breakfast. Leigh isn't a librarian. He's a lapsed Methodist and unreconstructed public servant, which probably amounts to the same thing. You could hate him for his sober methodical industriousness if he wasn't such a nice bloke, good writer and lousy speller.

I have no intention of producing a long boring list like Leigh's. The long boring list I do intend to produce is Significantly Different. For a start, it's alphabetical, not chronological. There's a good reason for that. The list includes all the fanzines (and other fan publications) I can recall publishing, from ASFR 1: June 1966 to Hanrahan 1: January 1980. The first figure in brackets is the number of issues I think I published; the following figures (if any) indicate the issues I had on file last time I looked. Last time I looked I couldn't find the file.

ADVENTION 1972: HANDBOOK (1:1)
ANNOUNCING: AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK VOLUME 1 (1:1) *sob*
ANNUAL SAVE-BANGSUND-FROM-BANKRUPTCY SALE (1:1) Only one? Must've changed title.
THE ANZAPA BOOK (2:2)
ANZAPOPOLL Title varies, including I Must Be Talking To Myself (1975: no-one else voted). I've conducted the poll four times, so make it 8 issues. (8:1-5, 7, 8)
APPLE CORFLU (1:1)
AUSTRALIA IN SEVENTY-FIVE: THE FACTS was a supplement to A75 Bulletin 3.
AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY (4:1-4)
AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (20:1-20)
AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 7½ was a special issue for the 1967 British SF Convention. Perhaps 6 copies stayed in Australia, and until recently I believed I had one. (1:)
AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW: TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE (= Parergon Papers 8)
AVE ATQUE VALE! (1:)
A75 BULLETIN Might have known this would get complicated. I published 4 issues that I know of: 1-3, 7. I don't know how many issues were done altogether. I have nos. 1-3, 5-9, 13.
BLOODY OAF 2 (with John Foyster) (1:)
BUNDALOHN QUARTERLY (4:1-4)
BYO-CON 1973: DO-IT-YOURSELF HANDBOOK (cover and some of contents) (1:1)
CANTO 2: TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE (= NMH 13)
CHRONONHOTONTHOLOGICAL REVIEW (= Crog!)
CLAWS (1:1)
A CLIP ON THE EAR (with John Foyster) (1:)
CONSTITUTIONAL STUFF (with Leigh Edmonds & Paul Stevens) (1:)
THE COSMIC DUSTBUG The only copy I have is no.10, but I don't think I did 10 issues. (6?:10)
CROG! (9:1-9)
DEJA VOODOO (1:1)
D*N*Q (Defiantly Normal Quarto: jointly with Sally: my part was Flagondry 1)
DROOPING IN AT THE HORVAT'S (1:1)
ELEVENTH AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (1972): HANDBOOK (1:1)
FAPANZAPABITS (1:1)
FIRST DRAFT (1:1)
FLAGONDRY (3:1-3)
HALLIFORD HOUSE NEWSLETTER (4?:1-4)
HANRAHAN (1:1)
I MUST BE TALKING TO MYSELF (= Anzapopoll results 1975)
INFERNANIWOBBLEPROURBULENTGOBULATOR I don't have a copy, but that's closer to the spelling than Leigh's version. (1:)
JOHN W. CAMPBELL: AN AUSTRALIAN TRIBUTE (1:1)
LODBROG (5?:1-4, 6)
MEMO AUSTRALIA IN 75 COMMITTEE (?: two unnumbered issues)
A MOVING STORY (2?: two unnumbered issues)
THE NEW MILLENNIAL HARBINGER (14:1-14)
NINTH AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (1970): HANDBOOK (1:1)
A NOTE FOR ANZAPANS (1:1)
A NOTE FROM THE PRINTER (1:)
OFFICIAL ORGAN (7:8, 56-61)
ORGANIZATION MAN (1?:1)
PARERGA (1?:1)
PARERGON PAPERS (12:1-12; now = PG 38-49)
PHILOSOPHICAL FERRET (=PG 33?+?) (1:)

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS (50: 1-22, 22a, 23-36, Parergon Papers 1-12, 50)
PICKING UP THE PIECES (1:)
A POSTSCRIPT TO ANZAPA 57 (1:1)
PROCEEDINGS OF THE THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (1:)
PROCRUSTEAN PAPERS (1:1)
REVOLTING TALES OF SEX AND SUPER-SCIENCE (7:1-7)
REWOLF-GALF? (1:1)
SCYTHROP (8:21-28)
THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS NEWSLETTER (18:v8n1-10, v9n1-5, 3 unnumbered issues)
STUNNED MULLET (7?:1, 1, 3-7)
SWINE FEVER (jointly with Sally: my parts were Apple Corflu 1 and Flagondry 2, the latter including a contents listing of Parergon Papers)
TENTH AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (1971): HANDBOOK (1:1)
THIS IS NOT A FANZINE (1:1)
THIS IS THE PLACE (1:1)
THE TIMES BICYCLE PUMP SUPPLEMENT (= Parergon Papers 11, 12)
THE WEDDING 2 (1:1)
21st JULY 1973 AT 46a WENTWORTH AVENUE, KINGSTON, ACT 2604 (1:1)

All of which adds up to 218 publications in 13 years 7 months, or an average of one every 23 days. Total pages about 3000, calculated by comparing the thickness of the file with three reams of paper, subtracting for thickness of ink, adding for items missing from file, dividing by the number I first thought of, multiplying by the number you first thought of, stirring gently for 15 minutes and placing in a cold oven until ready. Which doesn't make me any kind of publishing jiant, obviously (Leigh has done well over 4000 pages in 11½ years), but it's an awesome amount of paper and ink I've wasted.

A few months ago I visited Phillip Adams in his cool, dark little grotto in St Kilda Road, and the first thing he said to me was 'Well, what are you going to do with your life? You've pissed away the last ten years.' With variations, people have been saying that to me for quite a while, and I appreciate their kindness and concern. It's quite true that I have squandered my time, my talent, my money, my health. It is also true that if I had stayed in my first decent job I would by now be at least office manager in the electricity supply department at the Northcote Town Hall, possibly even deputy town clerk, with 25 years service behind me, a nice house in Ivanhoe, three grown-up children, a Peugeot 604 and a collection of 10 000 fine and rare books, and I would be on first-name terms with the political, religious and business leaders of the community in which I was born. I would vote Liberal. I would be unhappy.

As it is, I think life has been kind to me, and in particular I have a lot to thank science fiction fandom for. I have yet to write a book or even a regular column for a newspaper (and, with respect to those who think I should, I don't lose much sleep over this), but I wonder sometimes whether I would ever have written anything at all if I had not been introduced to fandom and fanzines.

Certainly I owe my living to fandom. In 1968 I applied for a job as assistant editor of Materials Handling & Packaging. Rick Stevens asked me what experience I'd had in journalism, and I said None, except publishing these, and handed him a stack of ASFRs, and I got the job. That job led to a B-grade journalist position at The Age (vacated by a fan named Damien Broderick, who recommended me for it), which in turn led to an A-grade job in Canberra, editing politicians and public servants, which impressed John Pitson enough to give me a job as editor with the Australian Government Publishing Service, which Mike Page thought qualified me to be a senior editor at Rigby's in Adelaide – and this accumulated experience, along with several stints as printer's reader (I've been in and out of the PKIU like a yo-yo) and a few other useful things, not least the practising of writing and editing in fanzines, has enabled me to survive as a freelance book editor.

I enjoy editing (or copy-editing, sub-editing, desk-editing: call it what you will), and I don't think it's only because I prefer correcting other people's mistakes to being embarrassed by my own (I have, after all, been blasted by Jim Blish: after that nothing hurts). I enjoy it for the same reason that I enjoy publishing fanzines.

'At both school and university I was lucky to be in a very mixed group of people who were committed to a wide range of different things, and one could taste the lot. A publisher must have the absorptiveness of a sponge coupled to the commitment of a butterfly. Anyone who is sufficiently interested in anything to do a Ph D will not make a publisher. Conversely, a publisher must find everything in the world interesting enough to warrant alighting on it for a few seconds.'

Thus Nick Hudson, managing director of Heinemann Educational Australia, addressing the March 1979 meeting of the Society of Editors. I can think of no better way of summing up why I enjoy doing what I'm doing – except that for 'university' you must substitute 'fandom'.

I don't feel guilty about enjoying my work. Often I feel guilty about squandering my talent. But lately I've been wondering whether, after all, my talent is for doing precisely what I'm doing.