

FORTNIGHTLY

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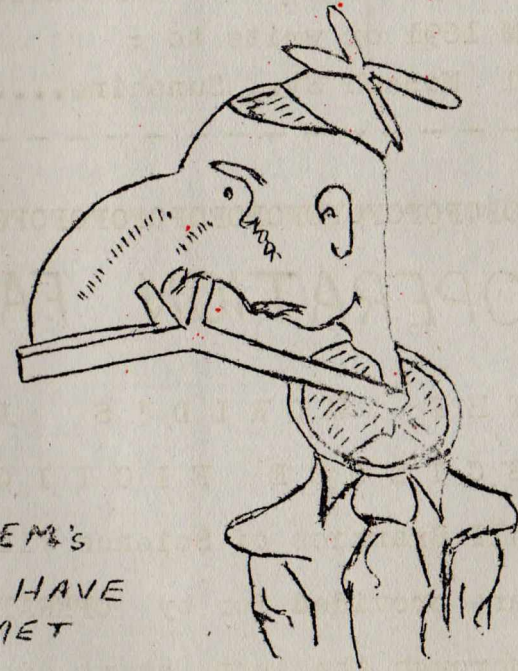
# ETHERLINE

THE SCIENCE FICTION  
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 12  
3/9/53.

FILMS.....  
FANDOM.....  
BOOKS.....  
MAGAZINES..  
PUBLISHING.  
ALL.....  
THE.....  
LATEST.....  
NETS.....  
FROM.....  
OVERSEAS...  
AND.....  
INTERSTATE.

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BEM'S  
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MET

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## SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM IN MELBOURNE

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By Marshall McLennan and  
Bob McCubbin.

PHASE ONE

First, I must acknowledge the assistance given in compiling this report by Marshall McLennan, and to a lesser degree, Warwick Hockley. The first phase is entirely due to Marshall, corroboratory evidence being supplied by Warwick. Marshall speaks :- Early science fiction really started for me when I chanced to buy, in 1928, a copy of AMAZING STORIES containing "Skyark". This was, for me, a milestone, as it has gained for me over the years a rich experience of stories in both magazines and books. Best of all, there has been that warmer interest of friends both in person and by correspondence. I recall Walter Gillings of England, who wrote to me up to the war. His "SCIENTIFUNCTION", the British Fantasy Review fan mag, later became "Tomorrow".

After subscribing to FANTASY MAGAZINE, SCIENTIFUNCTIONS and other magazines for some time, I wrote to ASTOUNDING in 1935. This brought many replies, and a few requests for information. I was able to supply FANTASY NEWS with half-page "fills" of Melbourne news, published on 4/12/38 and 26/2/39. I still correspond with Harry Warner Jnr. of SPACEWAYS. Sam Moskowitz had me write a page and a half titled "Life of a Scientist-fictionist from Down Under" for his fan mag NEW FANDOM. George Gatter, still corresponding, wrote a story for Gernsback's last WONDER STORIES, and has not yet been paid for it ! Clinton Cardwell - a very good letter-writer to this day - is a negro. Fans come in all shapes, colours and sizes ! To many overseas editors, Melbourne was news, and fan mags poured in.

About this time, contact was made with other fans in Melbourne, notably Warwick Hockley, Don Tuck & E. A. Taylor. Irregular meetings at home before and during the war years maintained the interest in science

fiction. Hockley and Taylor produced their "Melbourne Bulletin" in September 1940. It ran to seven issues, giving news and views, tit bits and jottings. About the same time, Don Tuck produced "Profan" which was really good. Don and I had many good yarns at odd times.

There were times of dead calm in science-fiction, then Sydney fans would send letters and magazines. War work meant long hours of shift-work but every time Don Tuck would hit Melbourne from Tasmania or Adelaide, I would get a cheery letter arranging a meeting. I would reply "Come on over between shifts and wake me up." On one occasion, a bunch of fellows from Sydney made a rowdy entrance talked vociferously for an hour, then raced off to get the train back to Sydney.

My experience of stf has had some highlights, and mountain top experiences - the greatest being the formation of a Group in Melbourne. Gone are the frantic searches for back numbers (Oh yeah, say our completist collectors !). Today we have slick tales that have made many friends - for stf - and through stf - many friendships "

Marshall McLennan

PHASE TWO.

On my return from overseas, I commenced to buy such stf as was available in the Melbourne bookshops. The amount was strictly limited, and it's discovery involved much hunting. One day, while I was browsing in McGills News Agency, I saw a young chap (Race Mathews) looking at a copy of AMAZING. Having read that issue, I said to him, "Are you interested in that sort of stuff "? When he blushing-ly admitted the fact, we exchanged names, then moved on to Hanley's, as Race had heard of a sale of second-hand magazines. We purchased so many of the stf magazines, that the proprietor, who had limited



them to eight per person, nearly had a fit. This contact led to us exchanging visits to each other's home and cross-lending books. Casual contacts in various booksellers led to the addition of Dick Jenssen, Leo Harding, Marshall McLennan and Gordon Kirby to the group.

For some time, this nucleus used the homes of Race Mathews, Marshall McLennan and myself for monthly meetings and some further contacts were made, until the numbers rose to a dozen. Bill Veney came over from Sydney, and met the assembled fans at Race's home. Bill suggested a tighter organization. That night, the Melbourne Science Fiction Group was born. Although it was urged by Bill to form a iron-clad organization, with office-bearers, rules, records and annual subs, this was not the type of association desired by the assembled fans, and Bill's high pressure salesmanship was unavailing. The Group was formed with five convenors, McCubbin, Mathews, Jenssen, McLennan and Kirby, with McCubbin as prime mover. This was my first meeting with Mervyn Binns, who later, when weaned from his spiritualistic interests, became a valued member of the Group, due firstly to his professional side of bookselling, and later to his keen interest in AFPA. The home-and-home meetings continued, but, after arrangements had been made with McGills to insert advertising material in all stf material sold over their counter, the membership grew rapidly, and, after some search, a new venue was found, and the meetings were held fortnightly.

On August 14th., 1952, we held our first meeting in Val's Coffee Lounge. Five turned up, one table. By November, we had spread over the whole west end of the Lounge, as many as twenty nine fans being present at one time. However, though sex can be ignored when it raises its ugly head on a cover, the odd characters frequenting Val's soon made it imperative that we move to a more healthy position. Intro—

verts and extroverts we may be, but perverts never.

Keith McLelland located a room at the Odd-fellows Hall, 30 Latrobe St., Melbourne, and late in November, we moved in. In the new location, we had the room to ourselves, and could lay out sale and swap material in different sections. Dan Bicknell brought his movie projector along and entertained us with trade and class room films of interest on various occasions. We obtained permission to keep the library on the premises, and this soon became a feature of the meetings. At various times, visits from A. Bertram Chandler, Don Tuck, Douglas Nicholson, Mike McGuinness, Bill Veney, & Rex Meyer. May I extend a hearty welcome to all country, interstate and overseas fans?

In February, 1953, we decided to meet weekly, and have met every Thursday night since. Various sub-groups have begun publishing fanmags, & this will be dealt with in a later paragraph. At present, I am acting as Chairman to conduct a brief formal session, delivering news of general interest, introducing guests and new members, keeping an attendance record, and collecting the cash to pay the rent. We now have 58 names on the roll, all of them resident in Melbourne, but the usual attendance is about 15. Roughly 10 of these are regulars and are serving the Group on the various committees.

The Library consists of novels, pocket books and magazines, donated by Melbourne, country & interstate fans, to whom we again give many thanks. Under the able control of Mervyn Binns, the Library is going very smoothly. At the present time, all the regular members have exhausted its possibilities, but new members find it of great interest. A new supply of material is due soon from England. The Sydney Futurian Society also deserves our thanks for its assistance.

For many of the Group, the major interest



is publishing. Mervyn Binns, Dick Jenssen, Race Mathews, Leo Harding and Ian Crozier formed Amateur Fantasy Publications of Australia (hereinafter referred to as AFPA), and by pooling resources, purchased a duplicator and supplies. One of AFPA's first good deeds was to relieve me of my News-letter which, although a labor of love, was becoming a temporal and financial burden. It was completely remodelled, reconstituted and published by Ian Crozier under the title of ETHERLINE. It is now published fortnightly at 6d per copy. It is a financially sound venture, containing news & notes from local and global sources. Believe me, Ian got quite a shock when my news-letter was dumped in his lap, but, to date, the 11 issues have shown an increasing coverage and improvement in technique. Leo Harding and Dick Jenssen are responsible for PERHAPS, of which Nos. 1 & 2 have appeared. No. 1 appeared in February, 1953, and was of 28 pages, mimeographed, and with a Jenssen photo-lith cover. It showed distinct evidences of its amateur origin, and was criticized rather severely in certain quarters. No. 2 appeared in May, 1953, and showed that many lessons had been learned. Spelling and stencil cutting were both much better, the issue contained 48 pages, and was photo-lithoed on front and back covers. The contents were mainly science fiction. Meanwhile, Race Mathews was busy with his brain-child, christened BACCHANALIA and this was identical in format with PERHAPS, but was devoted to fantasy. This ran to 30 unnumbered pages, mimeographed on yellow paper, and No. 1 appeared on April 26th, 1953. No. 2 is due shortly. Both PERHAPS and BACCHANALIA are bi-monthly. Appearing on alternate months, they are intended to be complimentary. Leo Harding on June 30th came to light with WASTEBASKET. The editorial slogan is "We print what others throw away", and, in the first two issues, he has certainly succeeded in living down to his slogan. Bruce Heron and Kevin Wheelahan are associate editors of the new publication, QUESTION MARK, which has just appeared.

This will bring the total of AFPA mags to 5. Since the formation of the organization, Kevin Wheelahan has become a full member, and Keith McLelland has been made a honorary member. Whatever you send to AFPA, it will be published.

This account is fairly concise and comprehensive, and, for the benefit of the man who will be asked to write the next chapter, is complete to July 31st, 1953.

Bob McCubbin.

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BOOK NEWS.....



*Global Round Up* —



The biggest news this issue was the arrival of Van Vogt's SLAN, which is published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson at 13/3. At the same time, it was announced that this company would issue all the following books in the near future:

FOUNDATION by Isaac Asimov at 10/6s. This is the first volume in Asimov's trilogy.

INVADERS OF EARTH, edited by Groff Conklin, a collection of 14 stories selected by the leading anthologist in the business, priced at 10/6 stg.

STRANGER FROM SPACE by Hazel Adair & Ronald Marriot, priced at 10/6 stg. This book is not known by the writer, but if it is up to the high standard set by the publishers, it should be worth a place in your collection.

Also announced this week in London are the following: STAR MAN'S SON 2250 AD. by Andre Norton and published by Staples Press, priced at 9/6 stg. Some time ago, I mentioned a collection of stories due to be published by Cassell and Co. At last the details have come to hand, and they are as follows;



GREAT STORIES OF SCIENCE FICTION, selected by Murray Leinster, priced at 15/- stg, and was published in London last month. It is believed that these stories are all original.

Two books which may be of interest to some of our readers were published also last month. Both are fairly heavy tomes of a semi-technical nature. THE IMPRISONED SPLENDOR by Raynor C. Johnson, published by Hodder and Stoughton at 25/- stg, deals with life after death. MAN IN THIS WORLD by Hans Zehrer, from the same publishers and same price, is an original idea from a distinguished German scientist.

Another book in the illustrated Macdonald series of Rider Haggard's novels has just been issued. Priced at 8/6 stg, the title is THE WORLD'S DESIRE.

Doug. Nicholson's story, FAR FROM THE WARMING SUN will appear in the September issue of GALAXY. This is a milestone in Aussie fan affairs, and we extend the best wishes to Doug for the future.

The Heinz Risse novel, THE EARTHQUAKE, which was mentioned in the last issue, has arrived here in Melbourne, at most booksellers.

On the American front, there have been quite a few books announced over the past few weeks. To mention a few: FANTASY TWIN by De Camp and Weinbaum. FLIGHT INTO YESTERDAY by Charles Harness; QUADRATIC by Olaf Stapledon and Murray Leinster; THE TIME MASTERS by Wilson Tucker; PRIZE SCIENCE FICTION, a collection edited by Donald Wollheim; the 1953 collection of YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS, edited by Bleiler and Dikty; TO THE END OF TIME by Stapledon published by Finck and Wagnell; a new Fletcher Pratt novel, THE UNDYING FIRE; the Rinehart edition of a semi-technical book, THE END OF THE WORLD by Hireen, complete with Bonestell plates; THE ROBOT AND MAN by Martin Greenberg, published by Gnome; five more titles in the Winston Juvenile series, MYSTERY OF THE THIRD

MINE by Lowndes, BATTLE ON MERCURY by Erik von Ihm, ROCKET TO LUNA by Richard Marston, VANDALS OF THE VOID by Jack Vance and THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET by K. Wright. All these are priced at \$ 2.00 each.

The new Von Braun novel, MEN BETWEEN PLANETS is to be published this month by Sidgewick & Jackson. Besides the two books mentioned last issue, TWENTY SECOND CENTURY and BEST SCIENCE FICTION, 3rd series, Grayson & Grayson have announced the early publication of Judith Merrill's anthology, BEYOND HUMAN KEN and Groff Conklin's collection, STRANGE TRAVELS IN SCIENCE FICTION. It looks as if G & G are coming good again after their slight lapse over the past few months.

The Orwell anthology mentioned in an earlier issue will be published shortly by Weidenfeld and Nicholson. Apparently there was a change of publishers, as this book was due out early in the year from another well-known house.

IJC

## BRITISH MAGAZINE NEWS

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John Spencer & Co. go flash with their string of mags, TALES OF TOMORROW, WONDERS OF THE SPACEWAYS, WORLDS OF FANTASY, and FUTURISTIC SCIENCE FICTION. It appears as if they are making an attempt to interest the adult section of stf readers. Thicker paper, more material, and cover format similar to the current American mags will comprise future issue, with the same on their series of novels, the first of which has appeared here in Melbourne.

Nova Novel number 4 will be COSMIC ENGINEERS, Nova Publications announced recently. This will be in keeping with the high standard aimed for with the previous selections.



## MOVIE REVIEW

### "ABBOTT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS"

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This picture, like all other picture, depends on the personal views and reactions of the viewer for its appeal. If you are a perfectionist, liable to explode at the script writer's ignorance of even elementary astrophysics, astronautics and atomics, don't go to see this movie. But if you can park your scientific knowledge at home and go along expecting to see no more than two dills get mixed up with a rocket ship(?) and a bevy of "Miss Universe" contestants, you'll get a lot of laughs. The humor is laboured, of course, and the situations are patently contrived, but I, for one, found a fair bit to laugh at (in both senses of phrase). A notable exception to pseudo-scientific gadgets that appear here and there through the picture is the flying saucer of the Venusian (Venerian? Venerial? space force. It looks as if it REALLY could fly!

To sum up: If your sense of humor is bigger than your sense of scientific exactitude, you'll enjoy this film.

Ted Butt.

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Edward Hyam's fantasy, SYLVESTER is being filmed by a British studio under the title of YOU KNOW WHAT SAILORS ARE. This amusing yarn is about a so-called highly secret Radar device which consists of an ancient pram and sundry junk mounted on a ship's mast during a 'night out'. If they stick closely to the book, it will make very good entertainment.

IJC

## BOOKS AVAILABLE IN MELBOURNE

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We are starting this feature again, due to the ever-changing stocks of the Melbourne booksellers. It will run every week, but we can NOT guarantee that the book mentioned is still available. However a letter to the editor will ensure that if the book is available, a copy will be obtained for you.

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Author	Title	Price
Carnell	No Place Like Earth (SF)	12/-
de Vaucoleurs	The Planet Mars (Fact)	18/-
Hickey	Introducing the Universe (F)	16/6
Wheatley	Star of Ill Omen (SF)	15/9
Virsoff	Our Neighbour Worlds (Fact)	42/-
del Rey	Marooned on Mars (SF)(J)	9/6
Ley & Bonestell	Conquest of Space (Fact)	42/-
Asimov	I, Robot (SF)	10/9
Berry	Born in Captivity (SF)	10/6
Campbell	Beyond the Visible (SF)	10/6
Lewis	That Hideous Strength (Fan)	12/-
Stoker	Dracula (Weird)	7/6
Lewis	Out of the Silent Planet (SF)	10/-
Wyndham	Day of the Triffids (SF)	13/3
Childers	Riddle of the Sands (Fan)	10/6
Huxley	Brave New World (Fan)	12/9
Heinlein	The Puppet Masters (SF)	12/-
Marsh	Breakdown (SF)	13/6
Heinlein	Man who Sold the Moon (SF)	12/-
Dunsany	Str. Jour. of Col. Polders	11/-
Erskine	Venus the Lonely Goddess (Fan)	9/6
Yorke	Space Time Task Force (SF)	7/6
Cabell	Jurgens (Fan)	10/6
Cabell	Devil's Own Dear Son (Fan)	9/6
Orwell	1984 (SF)	16/-
Orwell	Animal Farm (Fan)	7/6
Dinesan	Twilight on the Betzy (Fan)	13/6

MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION GROUP  
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20/8/53

Again Bob McCubbin was in the chair, and ten members were present. The main business of the evening was a re-organization of AFPA. Leo Harding, Merv. Binns, Dick Jensen, Kevin Wheelahan and Ian Crozier decided to place all AFPA publications on a regular schedule, to avoid overlapping of material and publication dates. There will be a full meeting of AFPA to arrange final details.

Owing to City Council elections, the meeting next week will be held at Bob McCubbin's home. Even stf fans cannot compete with a milling mob of voters and scrutineers.

Two 1937 WEIRD TALES were sold in the meeting.

A bank account is being opened in the name of the Group, to hold the small amounts that may accrue on meeting fees.

28/8/53.

Owing to the City Council elections, we were debarred from our usual meeting place. Bob staged the meeting at his home, and 10 members turned up. Kevin Wheelahan, in the words of Stephen Leacock, sprang onto his mount and dashed madly in all directions. He was seen rotating rapidly on a couple of occasions, and finally landed at about 9 pm.

Bert McMichael of Springvale Rd., Glen Waverley, came along with a suitcase full of U.S. mags, & these sold like hot cakes. He seems to have a sure line of supply, and looks like being cultivated by fans.

There was much discussion about AFPA, and it is now finally organized.

ARMAK

ADVT. SCIENCE FICTION NEWS FROM MCGILLS,

After some delay, GALAXY BRE No. 5 (2/3) has arrived, featuring "The Defenders" by Philip K. Dick and the 2nd. part of the serial, "Ring Around The Sun". ASTOUNDING BRE July (1/3) came in at the same time containing the 2nd. part of "Null A-B-C", by H. Beam Piper and J. H. McGuire.

A. E. Van Vogt's classic, SLAN has arrived and is selling for 13/3. Amongst some of the other books we have in stock, and I believe we have the largest stocks of science fiction and fantasy books in Australia, we have Heinlein's THE MAN WHO WOULD THE MOON at 12/-, THE YEARS BEST STF NOVELS selected by the Bleiler & Dikty duo, selling at 12/-, GALAXY READER at 12/-, IT HAPPENED LIKE THIS by Philip Reynolds, at 12/-, and John Russell Fearn's THE GOLDEN AMAZON TRIUMPHS at 10/9.

There are still a few copies of the first Nova Novel, STOWAWAY TO MARS left at 2/- each, and the other two Nova magazines, NEW WORLDS 21 (2/-) & SCIENCE FANTASY 5 (3/-). NEBULA 3 and THRILLING WONDER STORIES (Summer edition) are also available.

A wide range of Pocket Books, including SCIONS PANTHERS, PANs, CORGIS, MILESTONES, and SPENCERS are all on sale, with new titles being added to weekly.

So if there is anything at all you want in the science fiction or fantasy way, Books old or new, or pocket books and magazines, write to me care of the undermentioned address, and I will be only too happy to help you.

Mervyn Binns.

McGills Agency, 183 Elizabeth St., MELBOURNE.  
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