

Lock, up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a 'plane! It's whatshisname!
No, it's an ornithopter!... A what?!

ORNITHOPTER EIGHT

Strange fanzine from another planet, edited and produced by Leigh Edmonds,
PO Box 433, Civic Square, Canberra, ACT 2608, AUSTRALIA for the next mailing of
the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, the Spectator Amateur Press Society and
some others by way of saying hello! Pictures by John Packer.

WHAT'S GOING UP DOWN UP DOWN UP DOWN UP AT THE FACTORY:

Fantastic as it might seem there is about to be a change in the way things are done on this planet. A new super-power is about to emerge. Despite the many obstacles placed in its way, Australia will soon lead the world in the space race. The USSR may have been the first to get a man into space and the USA may have been the first to get a man to the moon, but these are puny achievements in comparison to what is shortly to take place. Australia will be the first nation to get an ornithopter into space.

You gasp in amazement, and I don't blame you. . Few thought that such a daring and difficult achievement could ever be done. Even fewer have had the guts to back their vision of the future with good solid research and money. But now this feat of aerospace achievement will be made possible through the newly formed Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems - Aerospace Division.

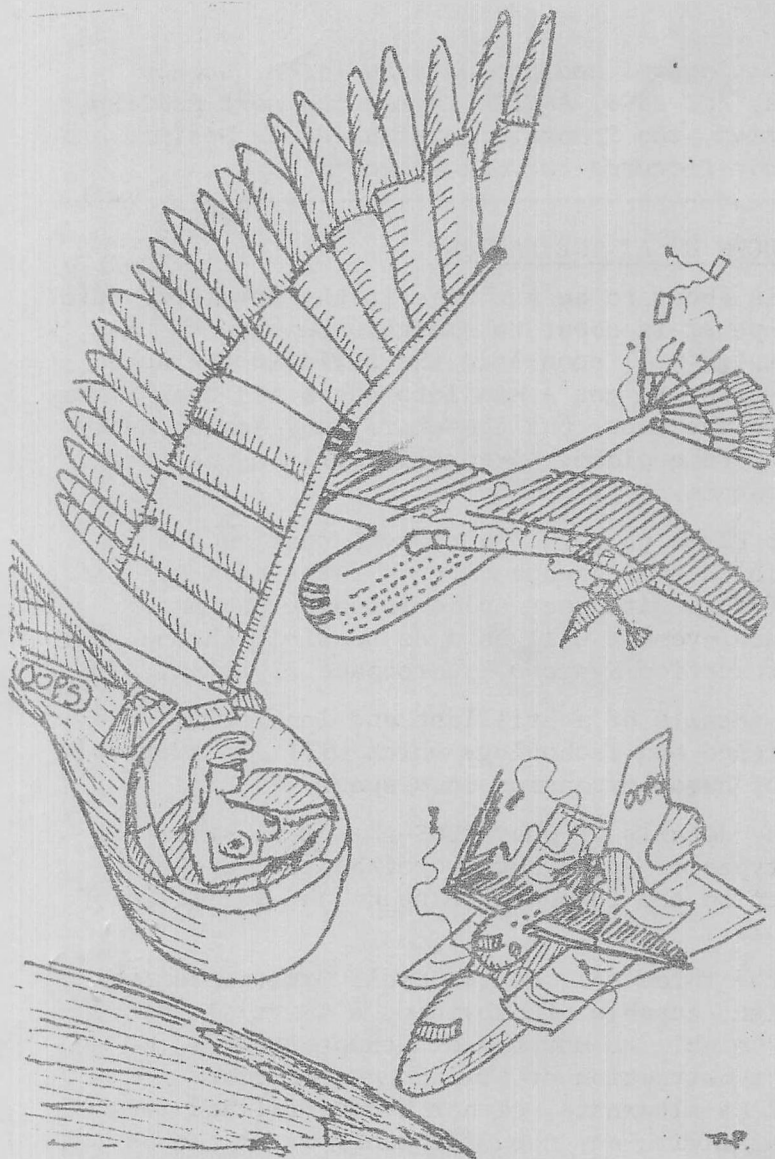
Only minutes ago OOPS-AD released details of a brilliant and innovative submission to the Minister for Science and Technology which will, if approved, place Australia at the forefront of human expansion into space.

Hold onto your hats... here are the details of what OOPS-AD has in store for the future. There will be three types of space borne ornithopter, each one designed to serve a different function and to meet the needs and abilities of different nations or multi-nationals.

The smallest and most compact of the three will be the Small Ornithopter, or SO. It will be a single seat design, capable of providing a shirt-sleeves environment for the pilot who may be able to use the ornithopter for such diverse activities as space borne construction or fixing geostationary satellites. The power source will be alternate, either a powerful and long lasting elastic band (which does away with any need for fuel) or it can be man powered. Either option will afford the user a unique method of movement in space and the low unit cost should place it within the reach of the smallest first class power. This versatile little ornithopter will be capable of being sent into space on the outmoded but sometimes convenient disposable launcher (in the old Atlas range) though, unfortunately re-entry may cause some problems. Please order in lots of ten.

Next in the range, and perhaps the most versatile, will be the Medium Ornithopter, or MO. This high technology, low risk, design will be available in a ten seat version. A warlike nation will be able to purchase the version capable of carrying a twenty megaton nuclear device (bomb not supplied with purchase). This ornithopter will be capable of carriage aloft in the Space Shuttle and will be man powered - as a consequence the ten man version will have a longer range than the bomb carrying version. The advantages of this design over other similar designs will be obvious and this unit is reduced in price so that an oil sheik may be able to contemplate purchase. Easy finance terms available to the US Department of Defence.

By far the most gigantic in the range, the most awesome craft ever to sail on the sea, in the air or in space will be the Giant Ornithopter, the GO. This mighty space borne edifice will be as large, or perhaps larger than the mighty aircraft carriers now employed by the world's navies. It will carry



a crew and passengers in excess of two thousand. The ornithopter will be man powered and every member of the passengers and crew will be provided with an Ornithopter Accelerating Recipricator (OAR), a long lever like device linked, through high technology mechanisms, to the wings which will then be made to flap. The coordination of the OARs will be managed by the provision of suitable matrial music through the musak system or by a system of drums and whips in the more basic of the sub-variants.

Needless to say, the purchase of one of these masterpieces of the aerospace art will be an immense symbol of national pride to any state which buys one. However, at this stage it appears that the astronomical cost of one of these ornithopters would mean that only a multi-national corporation would be able to afford one. Because of the gigantic nature of this craft it is envisaged that construction would be carried out in the starry void. We would recommend the use of a fleet of SO's

and MO's in the contruction of a GO. Price of the complete construction kit will be made available upon application on your Corporation's letter headed paper. Remember, a fleet of brand new Boeing B-52 bombers with every purchase made before June 1983.

OOPS-AD believes that only in space will the ornithopter finally be in its element. As you may be aware, in the earth's atmosphere the wings of an ornithopter have to overcome the resistance of the air as they flap. This is a great problem but in space there will be none of it. As a consequence it will be possible to build the wings of space borne ornithopters out of lighter materials and to make them less strong. This will mean all sorts of savings in structural weight and in many other areas also. This will, in turn, mean savings in the power needed to make the wings flap. OOPS-AD claims that this means we are about to enter the age of true manpowered flight!

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

As our Being 727 flew out over Holdfast Bay on the final leg of its approach to Adelaide Airport I would not have been at all surprised to see a couple of small sailing ships, from a period almost one hundred and fifty years ago, riding at anchor. Of course they were not, because the year was 1981 and not

1836, the settlement of South Australia has been going on a long time. Instead of a couple of ships, there was the sprawling city of Adelaide filling the plain from the coast up to the Mount Lofty Ranges.

For a few months before Valma and I went to Adelaide to attend ADVENTION, the annual national sf convention, I had been studying the settlement of South Australia and the first few years of the foundation of Adelaide and therefore I was much more familiar with the city as it had been almost one hundred and fifty years ago than with the present city. At work I had been talking to a person who had lived in Adelaide and we were talking about some points of geography. I could not understand what he was talking about and he could not understand why it was that I did not know what he was talking about... not until I remembered that the most recent map of the area I had was drawn in 1856.

So we arrived in Adelaide and discovered that it was, just like any other city, a big, noisy, smelly spread of humanity in all its semi-planned glory. Coming from a city such as Canberra, let me tell you that it was a bit of a shock. On the way to Canberra Airport we'd driven through the bush and caught the occasional glimpse of horses grazing in paddocks.

The convention was supposed to take place at the Oberi Hotel on the verge of glorious up-town North Adelaide. The directions on how to get there said that there was supposed to be a mini-bus from the hotel to meet every flight at the airport. But of course, Murphy strikes when you are laden down with baggage and there was no bus. We stood and waited patiently for it for an hour but I didn't mind much because I always like hanging around airports - catching the scent of kerosene, the roar of thrust-reversers going into action, the whine of turbo-props and the sight of the nose of an aircraft going up in the air as it rotates and then lifts off into a graceful climb. All technological poetry to the senses.

In the end we caught an airline bus to the city and then a taxi to the hotel where we spent some time settling in. North Adelaide itself is quite an interesting place, being what one might call posh. After we'd played with the taps in the bathroom, fiddled with the tv and the other special effects in the room and speculated on the bottle of bubbly in the fridge we went out to examine some of the delights of the area. We were not disappointed as it was something like Carlton in Melbourne, only less flashy and thus more comfortable. To add to our delight there were a few interesting looking eating places which we determined to sample. And the first thing I had was a glorious cheese fritter from a small pastry shop. A little later we tucked into some pies and sausage rolls which were lovely too.

When we got back to the hotel the whole convention suddenly began, a day before schedule. We walked into the foyer and bumped into Gary Mason and Perry Middlemiss. There were also Jeff Harris and Joseph Nicholas in the vicinity but they were hassling to get going with Frank Herbert to do some promotional stuff for half a dozen radio stations so we only had time to say hello to them.

Gary and Perry wanted to do various things for the convention and we decided to tag along with them. It was a good way to get an informal look at the city as they did their business. As it seems to have turned out, we spent a lot of time wandering the corridors of the University of Adelaide.

I cannot now quite recall what we were there for, all that I can really remember was walking along corridors, going up and down a flight or two of stairs and then along another corridor. The university, you see, is situated on a fairly small block of land and so as it has grown it has had to go up and down instead of along. Added to this is the fact that

the university is on a fair slope and the level which lets you out onto the ground in one place is way up in the air in another and you have pure confusion for the uninitiated. The native guides also seemed to be fairly confused and at times we wondered if they knew any more about where we all were than we did.

After that little event, it had seemed to me at the time that the place had been designed by a rabbit, not by an architect. Valma went back to the hotel to rest up a bit and Gary took me on a tour of a couple of bookshops. Gary was the one who spent money, not me... what would I want with an edition of the journal of the french explorer, Baudin.

Anyhow, Adelaide is a nice enough place, but after you've lived in Canberra for a year or so you get used to being surrounded by hills and Adelaide seems awfully flat. This is not helped at all by the size of the inner city itself which is a square mile, laid out in 1837 by the first Chief Surveyor of the settlement, Colonel William Light. The people of Adelaide are more often than not a little proud of this layout and it certainly has lead to a nice spacious city. However, unlike most cities where there is a premium on land and this has forced the growth of many high rise office buildings, there is still enough land in the city itself that there are relatively few very high buildings. If I had not come from Canberra where the buildings are even more spread out and therefore much lower still, I would probably have been very impressed by Adelaide.

During our drive Gary took me out to see his post office box in Unley. On the way there we got caught in the peak traffic and I commented to Gary that there were sure a lot of cars, in all directions, banked up as far as you could see. He told me that it wasn't that bad and that he had expected me to comment on the lightness of the traffic, in comparison to Melbourne. But it's been a long time since I've been subject to the terrible peak traffic in Melbourne and I told him that if the traffic piles up five deep at the intersection of Macarthur and Northbourne Avenues, we reckoned that that was a real traffic jam in Canberra.

As night fell we drove back to the hotel, picked up Valma and went to a Mexican restaurant in Melbourne Street, North Adelaide, and spent a fine evening there, catching up on all the news.

The following morning I was woken at about seven by the sound of large jet airliners flying low over the hotel, obviously on full climb power. In my job, for the Department of Transport, I handle all the letters written to the Minister for Transport complaining about, asking about, telling about the airports and aerodromes in Australia. A lot of people had been annoying the Minister, and through him had been annoying me, about the problems caused by low flying aircraft from Adelaide Airport. Before I had been sceptical about their claims but very quickly they had gathered unto themselves a convert.

Breakfast was taken up on the top floor of the building, in the restaurant which gave a superb view out over the city proper to the south of the hotel. The view was magnificent and the meal wasn't too bad either.

For the mornings entertainment Valma and I went for a bit of a wander through the streets of North Adelaide. Our ultimate destination was a monument known as Light's Vision. It is situated on the crest of a hill which affords a view over the Torrens valley to the main city and has the man, in bronze, stretching forth a hand towards the city which he planned. All very noble.

A lot of the houses in the area are quite noble too and we had a pleasant enough time wandering along and commenting on their fitness, or otherwise, to be owned by us - though I must admit that after

the rude awakening we had received at an early hour I was not as enthusiastic as I might have been.

The path we took led us along the edge of North Adelaide with the parklands on our left and the houses on our right. The park seemed to be curiously British, perhaps this was not the case and once again we were judging by Canberra standards - where the bush areas are untouched and you could not even describe them as parks in any way. Perhaps the native state of the land was as it now appears in the parks which surround the city of Adelaide, but at the time it seemed to me that perhaps the lands had been Anglicised by people from way around the world who wanted to re-create a bit of home on the foreign shores.

There was one magnificent house, built with a commanding view and in magnificent proportions, set in a large area of land. If my memory serves me right it is called "Carclew" and was at one time the home of a rich and influential Adelaide family. These days (we were told later) it is owned by the State Government. As we approached it I was struck by its similarity to one of those mansions that I had heard about in fairy stories. As I got closer I could hardly believe my eyes to see a damsel with long blond hair standing on one of the balconies from a magnificent corner turret. At first Valma was tempted to agree with me but as we got closer her better eyesight revealed the boring truth. It was a window cleaner in a blue overall, with a long fair coloured rag slung over his shoulder. So much for a fairy tale coming true.

We continued our wandering and saw a lot of other interesting houses, but none so delightful. We stopped at one spot and looked at the plaque set into an old hall, which informed us that the place had once been a school building - perhaps in the 1850's though the plaque was not clearly worded on this point. We turned around and there was a man looking at us. He said, "You mightn't remember me..." "Tony Richardson", I said. I doubt that anybody reading this fanzine will have heard of Tony, or of John Wiley either.

Their significance is that they both joined the Airports Branch of the Department of Transport at the same time a few years ago and, instead of moving to Canberra, John Wiley had moved to the Regional office in Perth and Tony had taken a job with Australian National Railways in Adelaide. When Valma and I had gone over to Perth in 1980 to the national convention there, I had decided to take a turn up Hay Street to see what the place was like and the first person I bumped into was John Wiley. So, it seemed even more of a coincidence that while we were taking a stroll around the streets of North Adelaide, miles from the nearest office building, we should bump into the other pair of the duo. It turned out that he had been driving on his way to do some work on a project and had seen us from his car and stopped to say hello. Anyhow, we had a nice quarter hour or so standing chattering before he had to get on with his work and drove off.

We wandered back to take another look at "Carclew" and then back to the hotel. Then we went and got some lunch from the pastry shop we'd tried the day before and decided that we would catch a bus down to the city proper to have a wander around and see what was what.

Adelaide buses are not terribly like Canberra buses. In Adelaide the buses are designed to carry lots of people and the seats are small so that more people can be crammed in, standing. The last time we were on such a crowded bus was in Sydney, and this reinforced my impressions of Adelaide being very Sydney like.

The bus pulled up in King William Street and right outside the tourist bureau. I decided that a public transport map would be a good idea and in we went to get one and a few other odds and ends. Then we started off to see some of the

sights and got a little way before we thought it might not be a bad idea if we had a public-transport map each. Valma turned back to get one and almost bumped into Robin Johnson who was coming along the street.

Robin was, it turned out, heading towards "The Black Hole" bookshop where Frank Herbert was supposed to be signing books. We tagged along with him. What happened for the rest of the afternoon is a bit of a mystery to me. I have a fair idea of what happened but not of why it happened.

I recall Paul Day asking me what I thought of his shop and saying, because Robin had told me that the shop was only there for a while as its normal basement location was being expanded, in reply "Oh Yes, I hear you're here while they enlarge your hole." After that there was a cup of milo in a basement eatery and then Gary and Erik Harding and Valma and I driving and walking around the art galleries and museums of Adelaide in search of the lost Frank Herbert and his crew, who were supposed to be in the museum but weren't. Not that we could see anyhow.

The most interesting place we visited was the small Egyptian room in the museum. I suppose that the mummies there were rather insignificant for any part they may have played in history, but they were the first that I had seen. I guess I was a bit awed just to think that the people these mummies had once been had walked around over two thousand years ago. I could not help but wonder how much civilisation has changed man in that time and my historical streak showed as I pondered on their shortness... was it the normal height for people of that time - and if it was what were the causes - or was it just that they had died fairly young.

There was also Morticia the tarantula (alive and big and furry - not recommended for people who don't like spiders) and the bones of a giant wombat in the natural history museum.

In the art gallery the four of us sort of drifted off in different directions. I was wandering along by myself after having absorbed some not-terribly-spectacular Australian art, when I walked around to see Gary and Valma down on their hands and knees in front of a short woman holding a basket full of washing. As I watched they peeped up under her dress. As I got closer I saw that the woman was a well made model and that they were just checking the authenticity of the model down to the last detail.

In a little hall out the back of the museum and the art gallery there was a display to commemorate one hundred years of life in Adelaide, from 1880 to 1980. The most impressive item on display, and there were many, was the woodcut block used in printing an aerial view of the city which was dated around 1876. I had always thought that those things were cut from one lump of wood but this one was made up of many little blocks, each only a few inches square, bolted together to form a very large overall picture a couple of feet high and three or so feet long. The overall detail of the print is impressive but on each little block the work is not impossibly exacting and it was possible to see that in doing the work block by block the artist had made it, psychologically at least, easier for himself.

After all that we did a touch of shopping and went back to the hotel. After a bit of a sit around in our room we went down to the foyer to see what was going on and if there was anybody there we could go off to dinner with. That was when the convention really got rolling for there were a whole bunch of people sitting around one of the table chattering away, Lee Harding at one end and Leanne Frahm at the other.

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After a bit of chatter a whole bunch of convention organisers wandered off and Joseph Nicholas grabbed Valma and I and followed them off. During that dinner Joseph and I hopped through a reasonable amount of plonk and somewhere in the alcohol induced fog you could say that the convention got rolling good and

properly. And it was a pretty good convention too, with no total highlights and no real points of boredom either. The most enjoyable aspects of the event, for me at least, were the chance to meet Joseph Nicholas and also Joyce Scrivner. Just as enjoyable was the opportunity to meet up with a lot of friends in fandom, and in particular the people from Melbourne and Adelaide whom I had not seen for a long time. This includes Paul Stokes and John McPharlin who put us up for almost two weeks after the convention.

The great delights of ADVENTION lasted from Friday evening until Monday evening and was one of the most exhausting periods I've ever spent. One night I thought vaguely about going to bed but thought that maybe it was a bit early yet until I looked at my watch and found that it was about 5.00am and the following evening I actually did get to bed early at about 2.30am.

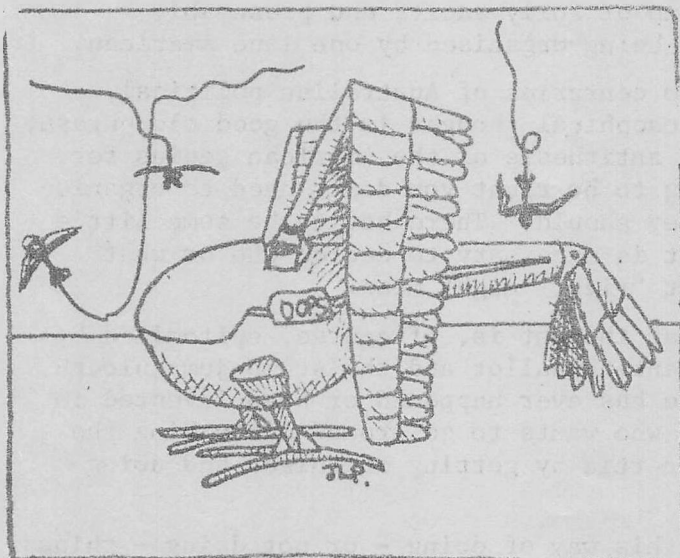
The following Tuesday morning we packed together our things and prepared to leave the hotel. It appeared as though the rest of the convention was doing so as well and there were a lot of farewells being said all over the lobby. We met Joseph there for the last time and it was as though a newly forged friendship was broken just before it had time to set properly. There were also a lot of other fans preparing to go home and also a lot of others who were moving out to stay with the local fans for a few more days yet.

Gary Mason and Joseph were driving to Melbourne that day and the last we saw of them was from John McPharlin's car as we drove alongside Gary's part of the way through the city... but we parted company at Light Square.

After a hectic five days we did virtually nothing the whole of that Tuesday, just sat around and listened to some records, looked at some interesting video-tapes on John & Paul's video-machine and generally did nothing. Later on we did some supermarket shopping and in the evening participated in an exciting expedition to the laundromat - a place we had not been to for many years. We were glad of our rest day because the following day about twenty fans hired a small bus and went for a tour of wineries in the Barossa Valley and then went on to a Mexican meal in the evening. The day after that Valma and I indulged in a bit of a sightseeing tour of old and historical things around the city and ended up at the Botanic Hotel where a whole horde of fans met (on the way to that event we bumped into Justin Ackroyd in the Rundle Mall and went off to have a delightful tea and natter with him about things. The following day

was Friday and we did some more sightseeing (down to Glenelg where the settlers arrived in 1836 and where there is a nice monument which mentions one of my favourite characters in Australian history, Robert Gouger), and there were visitors that evening. On Saturday we went visiting Perry Middlemiss and Helen Swift and Sunday was declared, by popular acclaim, to be a rest day.

The two weeks spent in Adelaide were in fact two of the most enjoyable weeks I've ever spent anywhere and if I didn't have other things I wanted to write about in this



fanzine I could probably fill up another twenty or so pages. Perhaps I'll continue on about this next issue, if nothing interesting happens to us in the meantime.

THE "WE'LL PRINT ALMOST ANYTHING" SECTION

(Here is a little item which I've been sitting on for some time, for reasons which some people will find obvious in due course.)

You can put away the implements of torture, I recant! It's not, you understand, that they frighten me or anything like that, it's just that I finally figured out what's going on.

Some of us just take a bit longer to realise why things happen the way they do and I must be slower than I had thought. Look, if somebody had gone to the trouble of taking me aside and explaining the reasons things are being done as they are... well, I would have joined in enthusiastically. After all, I'm good at that sort of thing.

But as I was saying, some of us are just slow and need to have it explained to us. Since I realised what's really been going on it has occurred to me that there are some who may not have caught on yet. Therefore I'll try to explain it simply so that they can understand this complex matter - if they need me to explain it I suppose they really aren't likely to reason it out themselves.

What it comes down to is this - that there is a right way to do things and there are many wrong ways. The right way to do things is the Australian way, and one of the wrong ways is the American way. There are, of course, many other wrong ways of doing things, the French way, the Russian way, the Indonesian way, and even the British have a way.

The hallmark of the American way is encapsulated in the term "American know-how". Sounds impressive and, by Roscoe, it is. Americans seem to know all about the important things in life and know how to do them efficiently. No doubt other races will get around to walking on the moon, but the Americans did it first. They have also done other things like popularising science fiction, inventing rock and roll, the electric light bulb, the telephone and so on. I have often wondered how they do these sorts of things and, not being an American myself, it took some time. Perhaps others find them as incomprehensible in this matter as I do. But anyhow, the key is their organisational ability. Let me illustrate this by simply recalling the numerous times I've sat in restaurants and watched a group of fully adult, and presumably intelligent and capable, Australians being organised by one lone American.

The supreme achievement of almost two centuries of Australian political, psychological, sociological and philosophical thought is the good old phrase; "She'll be right!" It is almost the antithesis of the American genius for organisation because if "She's" going to be right you don't need to organise things - they will just happen as they should. There has to be some little organising, unfortunately, because it is necessary to decide who or what "She" is and to roughly work out what "right" might mean.

This supreme achievement of Australian thought is, of course, epitomised by the fact that, apart from the preferential ballot and the stump-jump plough, nothing of any great world importance has ever happened or been invented in Australia. This is as it should be, who wants to go around disturbing the equilibrium of the slow but steady inertia by getting organised and doing things.

I suppose that Americans would find this way of doing - or not doing - things as incomprehensible as most Australians find their way. And this is where I

get to the point of this little philosophical aside and recant my previously heretical attitudes... those long pointy things looked very nasty (or is it just my imagination).

Over the past few years I've been guilty of criticising the Australia in '83 bid. I now see how wrong I was in doing this and I recant everything I have said. I now see that the bid has been based on the most sound and traditional, and the strongest of Australian precepts. I don't need to say that the bid has been efficient or energetically carried through because, of course, that's not the Australian way of doing things. Let the Americans grub around in their efficiency, attending to dull little details and trying to make things like "Baltimore in '83" come about. I ask, who needs that sort of thing anyhow, especially when almost two centuries of Australian experience makes it patently obvious that the way in which the various "Australia in '83" bidding committees acted have been the only proper way in which they could have acted. In addition, and this is very important, by mounting a bid based upon sound Australian principles, the farseeing bidding committees have been showing the Americans that there is a better way of doing things. I could wish that they had done it better - but that seems a curiously American thought.

American WorldCon bidding procedures have been based on flashy advertising with well presented ads in convention programme books and the like, flyers, handouts, room parties, and all the paraphernalia of the modern American public relations business. Australians want none of that and are showing, by example, that rumors of a bid, hastily thrown together ads and flyers, minimal parties, fanzines full of dull material, badly printed with poor art and myriads of typos are a superior form of publicity. I now publically announce my support for these methods.

If feminists have realised that they shouldn't just try to break into the male domain, Australians should learn the same lesson. Following on from this thought we get into a seven page discussion of how Australians can propagate their superior world view without compromising that ideal. However the discussion was un-Australian so I left it out and smacked myself for revisionism.

Vera Lonergan has been drumming up Australian voters for the site selection this year. Last August she leaned on me but I wasn't going to be in it. I fully expect that when she has read this she will grab me at the earliest chance and try to convince me to join up and vote for Australia in '83. But I don't know about that, I reckon "She'll be right" anyhow.

WE DO TOO GET LETTERS

Bob Smith, Box 1019, GPO, Sydney, N.S.W. 2001

Thanks for sending me ORNITHOPTER SEVEN, and there is a faint suspicion beginning to filter through my mind that a dastardly plot is being woven to envigle Smudger back in to the dubious arms of Madam Fandom... On the other hand, I guess, a few lively letters and the odd cheeky article in THE MENTOR would also have brought forth the same results... But I mutter to myself savagely: "I don't care - it's lovely egoboo, and no self-respecting ex-fringe fan could resist it."

You know, I am beginning to wish in the most desperate way that back at the 1970 Syncon I hadn't been so bloody generous and auctioned off my copies of FANCYCLOPEDIA II, a complete file of RETRIBUTION, SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, etc.

As the person who bought the copy of FANCYCLOPEDIA II I must say that over the past ten years I have not been at all upset that you went and sold it. Now I only wish that I had bought those other things as well.

My dips

back into fandom, even in the form of "rambling" bits and pieces as somebody in TM termed them, are mainly a form of rebellion against the extreme commercialism of science fiction and related phenomena, and the desire to inject a mild sense of humor back into Australian fandom.

I note an increasing interest in things fannish these days, and was starting to feel that Molesworth's history should be "balanced" by more direct remembrances from other parts of the Australian fannish community. Your comments help in this regard, of course, and it does no harm to remember and remind what fun our fannish American cousins had within fandom.

You know, I wonder why, in the early days of the Melbourne SF Club, there wasn't the fannish equivalent of Laney...? If I remember my association with them back in the 1950's reasonably well the "talent" was certainly there! Perhaps John Foyster comes closest, although Dick Jenksen could be fairly pithy at times. But certainly nobody blasted the dear old MSFC the way Laney did that hatchet job on LAFFS!

I feel a strong response to your comments on writing our own fannish history, and I try, maybe foolishly and stumbingly) to convey the atmosphere of the time, with a reasonable balance of nostalgia and clear-eyed fact. Is this wrong, do you think?

Not at all. It seems to me that one of the great lacks of the Molesworth history is that it gives no real feel for the fannish times during which all the events reported took place. If somebody wrote a history of, for example, the MSFC, the telling of the facts as to who attended meetings would be quite dull if one did not also attempt to tell anecdotes which brought into a clearer light the personalities of the people involved and the atmosphere which the location of the club and its personalities had. Matter of fact, I don't think that you could say that the MSFC had any history except that of its personalities.

Yes, it would have been very interesting if somebody like Dick of John had written about the MSFC in its heyday. I would probably have preferred John Foyster to do the job, mainly because if I was going to get a walk on part it would be in my very early days in fandom... and we all do silly things when we are new to fandom and I think that John may have been a bit more sympathetic.

Of course, as I said last issue, the article by Lee Harding, "I remember AFPA", contains much about the very early days of fandom in Melbourne, including the beginnings of the MSFC. Lee's article is in some ways preferable, or least more interesting to read, probably because Lee is these days a writer and Vol would have been, if he was still alive, an academic.

I suppose that I might as well mention that since the last issue I have been giving quite a deal of serious thought to the possibility of writing a history of Australian fandom from 1935 to 1975. I am not exactly sure what form this history might take, if I were to get around to writing it, but the one thing which is for certain is that I won't be able to begin work on any such opus until about 1986, which is when I should have completed my Degree in history. I think that that will keep me quite busy enough for some time yet.

Robert Runte, 10957 -88 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G DY9, CANADA.

Thanks for the copy of ORNITHOPTER 07 which I received today and read with much interest. I read the section on fan history with great interest and as I am myself working on a history of my local club and commissioned a series on Canadian fandom by Taral for my fanzine N.C.F. As things turned out, Taral got so carried away that his first instalment was about forty pages or roughly twice the size of N.C.F.'s total page count - as a consequence he has undertaken

to publish it himself as a two or three hundred page monograph.

The main difficulty in writing a history of Canadian fandom seems to be getting anyone (including Canadianfans) to believe that there ever was a Canadian fandom. (I notice, for example, that in your discussion of the perfect fanzine you dismiss English & American & European competition, but you don't even acknowledge the possibility of Canadian competition, you've obviously never seen an issue of the Monthly Monthly!) Everyone seems to assume that Canadian fandom (and Canadian fan history) is merely an American branch plant operation. This is not entirely the case...

Shame, Edmonds, Shame. I take your point about there being a separate Canadian fandom and I look forward to seeing Taral's efforts in writing it. You are, of course, right in assuming that I have assumed Canadian fandom is very much like that in the US of A. Perhaps if you people were to publish on A4 paper and to stop using twilltone us fans over the waves might notice a bit more obvious difference and also start to look for less obvious differences. I don't know. I assume that the N.C.F. you refer to is the fanzine NEW CANADIAN FANDOM which I have heard about. I will be interested in seeing if it is able to differentiate the two groups of fandoms on the North American continent.

Perhaps a major problem is that if fans intermingle enough they tend to get to act the same. Thus, to a person like me with a few thousand miles of perspective, all North American fandom looks pretty much the same. Still, I suppose that close up Canadians and Southern fans, and East Coast and West Coast fans, and members of LASFS, all have slightly different ways of doing things. It has occurred to me that in the case of Canadian fandom it would be more likely to associate Vancouver fandom with the West Coast and Toronto with the East Coast or the mid-west. I suppose the trouble is that I know so little about the history of Canada that I have no idea of what things might have taken place to give it a different character to that of the U.S. I think that this may be one of the troubles of living in a country which takes up a whole continent. Anyhow, I look forward to reading an explanation of all these things which are at the moment mysteries to me.

Marilyn Pride, 194 Corunna Road, Petersham, N.S.W. 2046

Your story of moving house touched a cord. You might remember at Syncon 80 a bunch of us were drawing things for CRABAPPLE and grumbling about our home environments and "what things could be like". Well, after a few months we actually did something about it and formed a household (myself, Mike McGann, Lewis Morley - he built and wore the Alien suit in the Antifan film and the Metaluna Mutant at Syncon 80 - and the spirit of Nick Stathopolous.) The house was a shop and has a large front room, now a studio, and plenty of space to put up fans. But it was far from easy. Would you believe that in one week the stove, the fridge, the jug and Lewis's car blew out - the fridge barely an hour after Mike had bought \$10 worth of chicken loaf and we had finished painting an elaborate 'Alien' cartoon on the sides (of the fridge that is). What more could go wrong, we asked, and were attacked by the sandwich maker in a shower of boiling cheese and tomato. Oh well, our fingers are crossed, but it's improving. Dragons are crawling up the walls and the toilet is a dark shrine to Giger, best undescribed. If you can fight your way through the studio clutter, past the mutant and the heads hanging in the hallway we eat in the lounge by the light of a glowing boulder.

Sounds magnificent. The idea of eating by the light of a glowing boulder makes me wonder what you eat, dragons ribs? tail of Alien? Mutant's claw?

It sounds as though the next time there is a convention in Sydney you should set up a little booth outside

your front door and charge admission to what must be one of the wonders of the modern fannish world.

Richard Faulder, Yanco Agricultural Research Centre, Yanco, N.S.W. 2703. Your assessment of Q36 as the best Australian fanzine is spot on. If I read a fanzine I want to be entertained, and if I'm informed as well, then this is a bonus. Not only does Marc Ortlieb have a tremendous natural ability as an entertainer, he does so without pretention of the excellence of his product. He is having fun, and he wants his readers to have fun too. In this he stands apart from the publishers of CHUNDER! and SIKANDER, whose fanzines have at least a hint of "This is great stuff, and you're lucky that I'm letting you share it." CHUNDER! has less of this, even though it would be more justified. Unfortunately John Foyster also has a taste for controversy, and if there isn't one going he'll try to stir one up. While I have nothing against controversy as such, those that get aired in Foyster's zine often contain a fair degree of bitterness, and I for one find this painful. Considering how recently Irwin Hirsh has entered the fanzine scene, his claim to know the ideal style of fannish writing seems a bit cocky to me. This is reflected in his tendency to drop names in such a way that it seems like deliberate name-dropping. Nor is his claim to fame bolstered by his apparent uncertainty of the direction in which SIKANDER should go.

"Scuse me while I pop in here for a minute.

First thing doesn't in fact relate to what Richard has written but what Robert Runte had to say a page or so ago, the bit about comparing Australian fanzines to the overseas competition. Of course there is no overseas competition. There are Australian fanzines and there are the "also-rans". Some British fanzines are pretty good and there are even some good North American and New Zealand fanzines. But when I come to looking for the perfect fanzine one of the prime requirements is that it has to be Australian. A few pages ago I had a bit of a shot at the '83 bid but I'm sure most people will read it the wrong way and say that I am being satirical or something. In fact one of the things I am saying is that seen from an Australian perspective the bid was quite respectable but that it could not compete with the Americans in their areas of speciality. The trouble is that Americans just try too hard.

This sort of brings me to Richard's comments on SIKANDER. The main trouble that Irwin has, it seems to me, is that he tries too hard to be excellent. You have seen this as a defect in one way, I just thought that SIKANDER was a little more American than it might have been. This is because the fine fannish fanzines which were coming out of the US a few years ago - things like QUIP - seemed to me to be saying something like "This is brilliant stuff and you had better appreciate it". I don't think that Americans saw that sort of thing in such fanzines, but to foreign eyes this came over as trying too hard. On the other hand, ORNITHOPTER is truly a "She'll be right" fanzine.

Fans of written science fiction seem unlikely to split off from movie/tv sf fans, or vice-versa. Firstly the continuing traditions of science fiction and its fans are perpetuated by the written word (even if, as you say, its history is mainly an oral one) and so are much less ephemeral than science fiction as presented on the screen, large or small. Secondly, screen sf (media sf is obviously a ridiculous term) is of appeal to the less mature portions of peoples' minds. As they grow up, material of greater depth will be sought, and this they will only be able to find in written sf.

I always love reading about your model making activities, because they remind me of the many happy hours I spent modelling in my youth. Now, however, I don't have room to put the completed

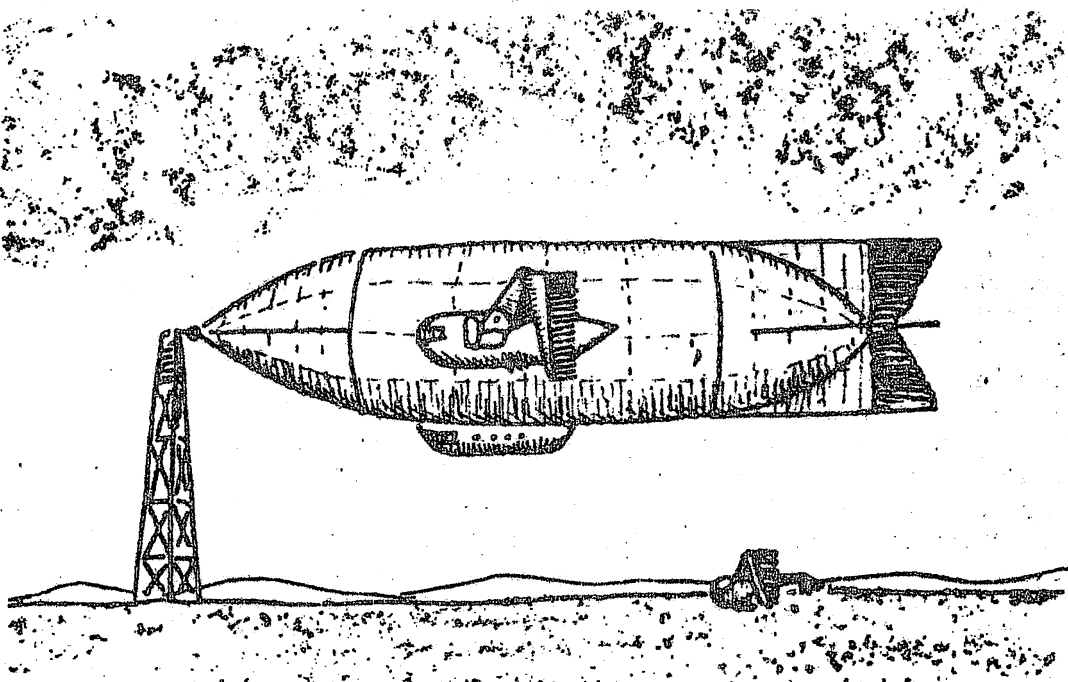
models, or enough money to sustain modelling alongside the level of fanatic I have attained. One of the things that irritated me when I was modelling was the way in which the Humbrol Authentic Colours, which seemed like the answer to every modeller's dream when they first came out, didn't remain consistent. Still, anybody who talks about making a P-47 in an evening can't be fair dinkum about modelling.

One of the things that I do like about modelling is that the further you get into it the less it costs. If I make three or four models a year that doesn't cost me much at all, in money anyhow if time isn't money. But what is interesting is the way that sf is working its way into the model making industry. Take, for example, the most recent two issues of the US magazine MILITARY MODELLER and also the most recent British SCALE MODELS. One issue of the US magazine has an article on how to put the details on the model of R2-D2 and the other has an article on how to scratchbuild a Fedrallinium Ballite Cruiser. Neither of these are terribly interesting as they are written for people with little modelling imagination with detailed step by step instructions on how things might be done. As always the article in SCALE MODELS is much more useful discussing, as it does, the merits and problems with the new MPC "Snowspeeder" and "Star Destroyer" kits. There are also some comments on some Airfix kits and some photos of a new "AT-AT" model. All written for people who take their modelling seriously and know what they're about when it comes to sticking bits of plastic together.

Marc Ortlieb, 1/2 Water Street, Kensington Park, S.A. 5068.

Loved Mike Gunderloy's term "vidiots". Must remember that one. (And also note the fundamental hypocrisy in my using the term, since this letter is soon to be interrupted when I go into the lounge to watch the Muppets.) Despite the doom merchants, I don't detect any slowing in the world's fanzine output. Certainly the giants, which were barely hanging in there when I first arrived, have gone the way of all fanzines that cost that much to post, but there are still some superb fanzines (even if most of them aren't Australian).

Sigh, so much for good intentions. Not only was the letter interrupted for the Muppets, but also for "Diamonds Are Forever", a quick typing job when I realised that my English programmes were due in this morning, and this evening's "Kenny Everett Video Show", "Goodies" and "Going Straight" - the programme, not me.



You have, of course, totally missed the point of Leanne's letter. Can't you imagine the potential of lighter than air ornithopters. I mean, real birds have hollow bones. Why not have an ornithopter with hollow helium filled wings?

Well we actually tried something like that but the gas kept on escaping from the bamboo. We also tried that with hydrogen in the bamboo and the smouldering ruins were spread halfway across the Parliamentary Triangle when the fool pilot thought he'd have a cigarette.

But if OOPS is good at anything it is lateral-thinking. Instead of putting gasses like Helium in an ornithopter it would seem much more profitable to stick ornithopter wings on a lighter than air flying machine. Although many people have pointed out to us that Zeppelins flew quite well without wings we reply that although that might be true there are advantages to having flapping wings on a dirigible. Well... not actually an advantage to everybody but some people might find it a bit of an advantage. For example, Bert Chandler is very keen on dirigibles and it seems to me that part of this reason could be because they are like ships in the air. Which is fair enough because they float along and don't go too fast. Furthermore, they take up a lot of space and passengers could go for a stroll which is not really possible in a Jumbo jet.

Now, the reason for putting wings on is to make people like Bert happy because one thing which ships do which dirigibles don't is to bob up and down in the waves. Ships Captains might not just feel at home floating majestically through the skies so, with the mere flick of a switch he would be able to activate the wings to give a realistic up and down motion. There would, of course, be a certain amount of randomness built into the system so that the dirigible might roll a little and by fitting wings at the front and the back there can be some longitudinal excitement as well. And if a little bit of bobbing around is a bit tame for the captain he can select more exciting modes such as "Storms", "Hurricane" and the quite drastic "Women and Children First...".

As soon as OOPS can find somebody in the dirigible business we will approach them with our proposition. In the meantime I suppose that we'll just have to float the idea here.

Joseph Nicholas, Room 9, 94 St George's Square, Pimlico, London, SW1Y 3QY, UK. I agree with you that merely reprinting stuff from old fanzines is not the way to go about compiling or presenting a history of fandom, and that we should, when re-examining the past, bring new attitudes and perspectives to bear upon it (which is something that I tried to do in my "Coming From Behind" article in the BY BRITISH fanthology, and by God it was pretty exhausting work - for all that we might agree that fanzines are the written record of fandom's doings, a lot of what gets written down is either apocryphal or just plain wrong, and needs penetrating examination in order not to perpetuate errors, which usually involves ignoring the fanzines entirely and talking directly to the people concerned); and, continuing this sentence to the usual lunatic length I am habitually wont to achieve, I further notice this bit in your review of Marc Ortlieb's Q36E to the effect that you were glad to read my piece about Pimlico because (apart from being good in itself, for which I thank you) it demonstrated that I could write about something else other than fanzines - but NAPALM has had nothing whatever to do with other people's fanzines, at least not in the sense of subjecting them to long-winded "Kill The Fuckers" analysis. So I suppose it must be a pretty unmemorable fanzine, eh? Poot. Must try harder next time, I suppose.

No, no! NAPALM OF THE GODS is a ripping little fanzine and the only reason I didn't mention it is... is... because... it doesn't rip into other people's fanzines...?

Your comments about

putting together some of the past of fandom from fanzines was immensely and absorbingly interesting, but just at the moment I seem to be running out of space in this particular issue of this particular fanzine and so any ideas on the subject will have to wait until some further issue when nobody has sent me any letters of comment and I have to fill up a whole twenty pages by myself.

Harry J.N. Andruschak, PO Box 606, La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91001, USofA
The thing that remains in my mind after reading are your somments on fan history. You mention club minutes, for example.

Well, in the case of LASFS, I doubt if it would be of much help. For many years we have had the practice of "CUTE" minutes, filled with alledged humor. The current secretary is Alan Winston, and he does a rotten job.

In the case of the LASFS Board of Directors, things are better, since Fred Patten is secretary, and nobody can take accurate and informative minutes like he can.

But even if a fan historian wanted to do research on the LASFS, where would the minutes of the weekly meetings be? Oddly enough, not in our library as the Librarian does not want fanzines in the library... or club records. I think they rest in various fan's homes... Lee Gold, Bruce Pelz, Milt Stevens and others. Try tracking them down.

Thankfully I won't have to, and I have a fairly good idea that the MSFC never kept minutes, or if it did I'm sure Mervyn Binns would know all about it...

Maybe the historian would like to go through APA-L, LASFAPA, and SCAPA FLOW, as well as the many defunct apas that were started in the LA area. But again, there is no central collection.

And this is supposed to be one of the major clubs in fandom. How are other clubs organised, if at all? Judging from the clubzines I have seen... not very well with the usual exception of NESFA.

There were also a few other people we heard from before this particular issue was finally laid to rest, says he; perhaps we could have a WAHF column if I can ever get them all together in one place at one time. But in the meantime, the infamous...

LAYING IN WAIT FOR THE PERFECT FANZINE

This time around I can't exactly say that I am, in fact, looking for the perfect fanzine at all. Perhaps you could say that some of the works I am going to peek into are not fanzines at all, at least they don't look like what I would normally call a fanzine. They also differ from your ordinary fanzine in another way, in that even if they are not being produced to make money for their publishers, they are being published partly from the proceeds of the subscriptions and sales they make. And their editors do not hide this fact in any modest fashion.

In the 24th issue of AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS Marvin Binns writes "No doubt ASF NEWS is only grudgingly extended fanzine status by the fans here..." and I don't know about everybody else, but I guess that he is right about me. It seems to me that ASFN is produced on much more than an amateur footing and is aimed at what I would not really call a fannish audience. This is not to say that I don't find ASFN a highly valuable little publication at times, just that it is more in the line of TV-WEEK or HOME AND GARDEN than Q36 and the like.

So, anyhow, after Mervyn Bonns voiced this little complaint it occured to me that perhaps it would be a worthwhile exercise to look at some of the more "up-market" publications being put out by fans in this country. The three I have chosen are ASFN, THE CYGNUS CHRONICLER and SF

COMMENTARY.

The best produced of the lot is THE CYGNUS CHRONICLER. It is all very nicely produced and even shows fair amount of flair in the layout, the presentation of the art. It is infact the most flash fanzine being produced in the country at the moment. The trouble is that the contents don't really match up to the presentation.

About half the issue is made up of fiction, none of it terribly bad, on the other hand neither of the two stories are anything great either. Tony Peacy has an interesting little story with a well hidden twist, but in that laboured American style that seems to make all the characters come out of the same set of moulds. The idea in the twist is perhaps useful enough to be used to greater effect in a more detailed study of its implications, but perhaps it would need to be taken from a more subtle approach to make it work. Perhaps the editor, Neville Angove, could have taken some time to think on it before serving us up some more of the same old second hand style. The story by Albert Vann is perhaps a little bit different, but so insubstantial that it wouldn't bear any deep consideration.

Having done away with the fiction, the rest of the issue takes on a newsy atmosphere with a bit of toing and froing in the letter column. Unfortunately all of this is carried on with no great style... which is what I mean when I talk about it being well produced but the contents not living up to the package. For example, the editorial of this issue juxtaposes the recent Space Shuttle flight and the also recent cutbacks in US spending on space. Unfortunately this little item is a mere column and a half long and does no more than state the bare facts, and ask what is going to happen next. So, okay, perhaps they are the facts of the matter, but they are presented in such a way as to make one wonder what is on the next page. An important issue such as this might be could hardly be presented more boringly. A bit of an impassioned plea would not have been out of place if Neville feels as strongly about this as I think he might.

I must say that things did pick up in the last couple of pages when Neville and John Alderson began to indulge in an argument on some matter or another. Neville begins one of his comments-in-reply with ... "I did not miss the point of your letter, and neither am I particularly obtruse. It is just that your arguments are either fallacious or non-sequitor." Unfortunately, after that things go downhill and "facts" are mentioned. Now, I ask you, is that any way to conduct a decent fanzine.

Before we go any further I suppose that I should come to my own defence when poor Neville complains that I have done him dirt in my comments about his illustrious publication. Well, I reply, just because a lot of people are willing to pay money for it and you happen to think that it is a good way to publish a fanzine, that doesn't mean that I don't. It also does not mean that I think particularly badly of his product as something related to sf... it's just that I don't think it's very fannish and that's the yardstick that I'm using here. Other reviewers might use other modes of measurement but they are welcome to them.

Returning to these slick, offset publications we return to where we started, at Mervyn Bunns workbench..

Merv has learned a lot in the past few years and the magazine he is doing now is a great deal improved on those news-sheets he was producing for the MSFC ten or so years ago. The 24th issue of ASFN contains all sorts of interesting news and views which are of great interest and entertainment. Fortunately Mirvin has not lost some of his old skills and his tendancies to ramble on is as entertaining and amusing as it ever has been.

For example, in this issue he gives a blow-by-

blow report of ADVENTION. The theme he keeps on coming back to is his feeling that the formal program was too heavy, there was no light and humorous let-up from the continuing round of serious discussions of sfnal matters. This went on for about six pages and to the end Merv is still telling us that it was all too serious. How can people put up with such programming, he asks over and over. But then, when it comes to the last few program items he writes, "In the afternoon the convention engine was still chugging up hill, and amazingly not very many people had dropped off." Perhaps the reason people had not dropped off was because they actually enjoyed three days of solid discussion about sf. At any rate, it is a thought which seems to have escaped Mervyn. It is this sort of unconscious humor which makes a Binnes fanzine well worth the reading.

The letter column of this issue was more than entertaining with Neville Angove and George Turner exchanging pleasantries on the topic of sf publishing in Australia. In the midst of his letter Neville admits that he cannot edit, "I find it nearly impossible to adequately criticise a story in manuscript - and it is only when the story has been set and printed do I discover if I have made the correct choice, so I try to err on the conservative side." This is not the sort of thing that I would ever say in print, I'm amazed that anybody has.

However, the main topic of the letter column is the fitness or otherwise of the small bunch of fiction magazines being published in Australia at the moment. I must admit that, apart from having glanced at a copy of FUTURISTIC TALES it is a movement which has passed me by. The small point from the discussion which I want to refer to here is the way in which all the people contributing to the discussion talk about these things as being fan things, havving fannish standards and so on. It made me realise that other people use the same terms that I do in order to express different things. Michael Hailstone says, "... Turner slates the fiction for its fannish standard." The stuff he is writing about is fiction which I take to be of the level of that in FUTURISTIC and in Neville's magazine. Well, to put it bluntly, most of that writing is not of a sufficiently high standard that I would publish it in any of my fanzines - if I were publishing fiction - and thus I find the word fannish used in this sense to mean "of poor quality or substandard". And that is not what I mean when I use the word. However I suppose that the discussion does serve to remind me that in the beginning a fanzine was an amateur attempt to produce a science fiction magazine.

By now most readers of this little fanzine will have realised that this is the last thing I have in mind when I publish.

Although there is much more which could draw comment in an issue of ASFN I must congratulate Melvyn Banns for the good work he does in letting everybody in Australia know what is going on, by keeping discussion on interesting matters alive and for entertaining us on a regular basis. It may not be what I would these days call a fanzine, but whatever it is, it's okay. (Pity about the Ain83 cartoons though.)

And now I find that I have let myself in for saying something about SF COMMENTARY. As I lack a B.A. I feel poorly equipped for the job. Perhaps I should go and review something a little less weighty... such as the TLS.

As everybody must know by now, Bruce Gillespie really lacks a natural flair for style in his production, but what he lacks in natural ability he has made up for in many years of hard work and perseverance. By and large this issue (Numbers 62 to 66 combined) looks very good indeed. Some of the contents aren't too bad either. However I have either gained some literary understanding of late or the level of reviewing isn't what it used to be. (Once upon a time I would

pick up an issue of SFC and be awe struck by the seeming power of intellectual understanding brought to bear upon our humble field. Now days I find myself wondering what possessed Bruce to publish such cretinous and feeble minded drivel on so many of his precious pages.)

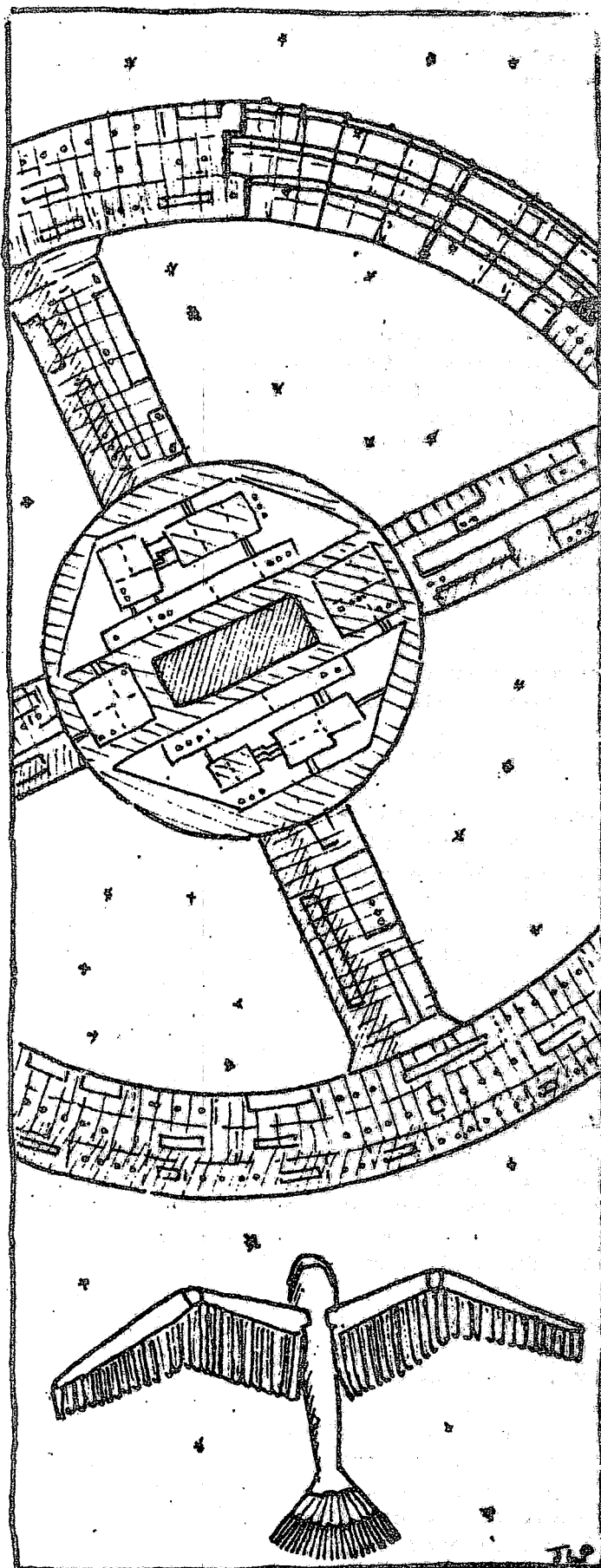
Despite any disappointment I may have with some of his contributors there are still the old faithful reviewers and critics who always seem to contribute thought provoking material. Without a doubt the most notable is George Turner who always seems to have valid comments to make on most things he mentions. Another is Bruce himself. In this issue perhaps the most entertaining contributor is Damien Broderick who writes about Alfred Bester in a scintillating fashion, in fact in a bit of a Besterish fashion.

Before I run out of new and interesting ways to say that I enjoy reading SFC, I should say that the letter column is nice and big, and full of the usual interesting stuff, and for lists fans there is even a feast of Bruce Gillespie 1980 lists to compare yourself against.

I note that although he does not list his favourite music he gives AC/DC a mention. It's nice to see that he has finally caught up with where it's at... even if he was too late to hear the band at its best.

Having dealt with seventy-odd pages in just a couple of hundred words I must retire defeated and say that it is a thankless task trying to write about SFC, it is just too big and impressive to do proper justice to in a mere few lines. But this isn't a fanzine, it's a labour of love.

In conclusion it occurs to me that all the



publications I've mentioned this time around are labours of love in one form or another. Their editors also show a degree of stick-at-it-ness which is worthy of high commendation and you won't catch me doing anything like that if I retain my sanity. Nevertheless I suppose that there must be lots of people who would prefer these publications to great fanzines such as Q36, TELOS and TWILL-DFU. If there are any such people reading this fanzine I would advise them to send money to the publishers who are now named:

Neville Angove, PO Box 770, Canberra, ACT 2601 - \$5 for 4 issues. Melvin Bidds, , 305 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Vict. 3000 - \$5 for 6 issues. Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vict 3001 - \$10 for 10 issues.

Gasp... thank Roscoe that's over. Just remind me not to go around deciding to review fanzines again. Or if I must, make sure that they aren't very good and deserve to be degraded in a matter of one or two words. Saying the sorts of things that I had in mind to say seems to have taken much longer than I had intended, and not come out quite the way I would have liked. Such is life.

If I have the page numbers right on these stencils this is going to be about the last gasp of this issue of this fanzine. Odd, isn't it, the way that space gets away from one on such occasions. Odd also, but not quite such a good thing, is the way that fanzines such as this one always fail to live up to expectations. I mean, here we are just about to the end already, and what have we got...

The first page is always the best, starting out with twenty fresh stencils, some letters, some art, some drafted out ideas and a lot of hope and enthusiasm. "This time around," one promises oneself, "this is going to be the perfect fanzine." But somehow that Foyster article fails to materialise, the letters seem to lack sparkle in the right place and the ideas go flat in the middle of their execution ... and instead of ending up with a fanzine which is full of fine fannish wit, incisive comment, love of life and all that we get yet another uneven fanzine. Hopefully not as bad as some, but still...

People who have read the colophon will recall that this fanzine is supposed to be an apazine for distribution through FAPA. As a result you would expect that I might have the odd mailing comment to that apa here, but it seems that not only have I gone and convinced myself that fanzines aren't what they used to be, I have also convinced myself that it would be the height of folly to decide that I was going to do comments to the membership of FAPA in the next few lines. I mean, if I were concise I might just begin to get going on some comments to Harry Warner, or warm to a reply to Jack Speer, but that would only leave you and I dangling when the issue came to an end - you because you would not know how and I was going to conclude my comments, and I because I would not know either.

Mailing comments are very odd creatures and, given the number of apas there are in fandom these days I would venture to guess that more published fanac is mailing comments than anything else. Perhaps this might have something to do with the growth of conventions too, everybody getting more and more used to talking to everybody, wanting to continue personal interaction over distances after conventions have come to an end, wishing to maintain the feeling of togetherness and communication through direct comments rather than in a more general form of articles, letters, columns and so on. On the other hand it may have a lot more to do with a failure of the imagination which means that people have to have others writing things to spark them off in what they are going to think and say. It also leads to a general shallowness of thought and a lack of writing skills, as these are not needed to keep up an apa membership. Fortunately this is not quite the case with FAPA and thus I



can get by without doing mailing comments. However I can't get by without publishing the following: This has been the eight issue of ORNITHOPTER which is, as I was saying, published for the members of FAPA and SAPS and a few others. You can even subscribe at \$1 per issue for four issues for \$3, if you must. As it also says elsewhere, the art in this issue was done by John Packer and committed to electrostencil by Noel Kerr. Assistance in production has been rendered by Valma Brown, the notorious Vanilla Slice Fondler. If there were to be an index it would look something like this:

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Laying in Wait for the Perfect Fanzine (some might say not about fanzines at all, about <u>The Cygnus Chronicler</u> , <u>Australian SF News</u> and <u>SF Commentary</u>)	15
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PRINTED MATTER

And so another issue of ORNITHOPTER runs down, it's rubber band flabby and worn out, its wings drooping, its tyres flat, its fine laquered patterning cracked, its fabric torn, its control wires slack and rusty, its radio silent, its gleaming panel work tarnished, its pilot layed off and on a spree.

What could be sadder than an unairworthy ornithopter? Answer: two unairworthy ornithopters. Another question: Who sawed Courtney's Boat? And another: Is the Poo Mightier than the Yobber? Will Death Release Us? Is Bloch C'ed? Are Fans Slans? Klaat Borada Nikto? Is there no end to this? Well yes boss, there is...

She'll be Right!

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