

PERRYScope 24



PERRYScope 24, July 2022, is an issue of a personalzine, published monthly, by **Perry Middlemiss**, 32 Elphin Grove, Hawthorn, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3122. E: perry@middlemiss.org
Produced initially for ANZAPA (the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association) and then anyone else unlucky enough to receive it. Also available for trade or download at efanzines.com with thanks to Bill Burns, and FANAC.org with thanks to Joe Siclari and Edie Stern. Unless otherwise specified all material is written by me.
Cover photograph by Robyn Mills.

INTRODUCTION

With the election over, all of the political posters have now been removed from the local streets and shopfronts. Dr Monique Ryan, our new independent member for the Federal seat of Kooyong, still had her campaign office open for a few weeks but I believe that has now shut down as well. She's been out and about in the community, visiting schools and local groups, who are probably all confused at finally being able to see a living, breathing politician. Our previous MP, Josh Frydenberg, was more concerned with the nation than this community – which I guess is only a natural consequence of being Federal Treasurer – and was barely seen anywhere.

Times change. As does the Federal political discourse. The new Federal Government will have some rocky times over the next few months but their early statements indicate that political debate will be less adversarial. Whether that extends to the other side, ie the previous Government, remains to be seen. I remain hopeful though I'm not holding my breath.

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This issue of **Perryscope** marks two years since I started this little exercise and 24 consecutive monthly issues. There are more to come, although, given I'll be travelling a lot in the USA and Canada from late August to early October, I can see that the regularity of this publishing schedule may well be interrupted at some time during that period.

I have no idea if I am going to have enough time to get any material together for the September or October issues. I may need to put together a double issue at some point to catch up. We'll see.

I am hoping to continue my travel blog for long trips of this sort. I find it's better to write as I go rather than leaving it all till I get home. That way things get lost or forgotten, real home life starts to intrude, time just seems to disappear, and things don't get done. I'll publish the travel blog link when I set it up.

Next month sees a bit of a change, reminiscent of **Perryscope 13**. So no ugly mug shot of yours truly, you'll be happy to hear.

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WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN MY LIFE

It took a bit over two years, but the COVID-19 virus finally arrived at 32 Elphin Grove, with all three of us (my wife, my son and me) testing positive on Sunday 5th June.

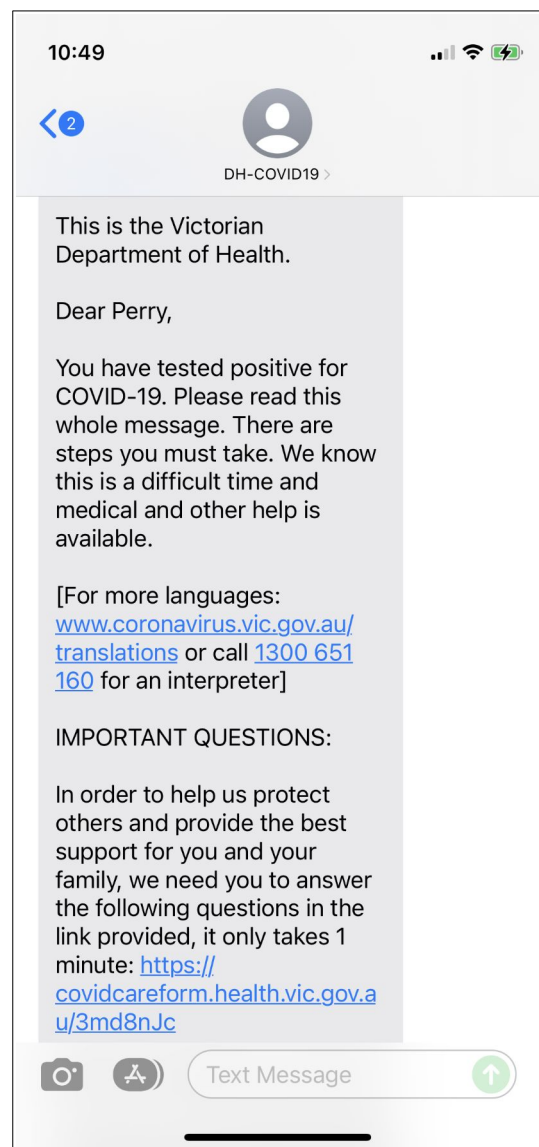
On the Thursday prior I had been experiencing a small snuffle which I put down to the cold weather. It was still floating around on the Friday when Robyn and I went to the Good Food and Wine Show at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition centre in the city (Jeff's shed for Melbournites). Again I didn't think much of it, and a few snorts of a nasal spray seemed to fix the problem. I didn't feel unwell.

Saturday, and Robyn and I were helping our son William check out a few apartments, as he is aiming to buy sometime this year. By mid to late afternoon, both Rob and I were feeling a bit tired and under the weather. Will seemed fine.

We didn't sleep well on Saturday night and by Sunday morning we'd decided that, despite a negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) all three of us would head out for a better Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test at an authorised testing facility. We were told the results would be back to us in 13-48 hours. You have to isolate after taking the test, at least until you get the results, which wasn't a problem for us as the day was cold and we just wanted to remain inside and stay warm. We hadn't heard anything by the time we went to bed that night. And we were feeling a lot worse. I'd had a mid-afternoon nap during Sunday and woke up feeling achy all over. I feared the worse. I was also starting to cough a lot.

The next morning, Monday, the news was in that we had all tested positive; it had been sent to us as a text message to our phones late the previous night, on Sunday, about 13 hours after we had been swabbed. We weren't surprised by the result.

Monday was another bad day. Will seemed to be the best of all of us and actually decided to continue working from home, as he said he wasn't feeling that bad, and he had a lot of work to do. I was supposed to record an episode of my podcast that day, but put that off, and Robyn just decided to stay in bed for a couple of days. A very unusual occurrence for her, as she very rarely feels unwell enough to not work.



Tuesday, and the worst of the virus effects were starting to recede. I didn't feel well, though it was more a matter of feeling a bit off-colour rather than having the full flu-like symptoms. I couldn't concentrate however; five minutes of reading and I was dropping off to sleep. Watching television was okay, and I was sleeping a lot, but anything that required any form of attention span was out.

By Thursday we were feeling a lot better. Concentration was back, somewhat, and I was able to let David Grigg know that I would be okay to record the latest episode of the podcast on the Friday. Will said he was back to normal, and Robyn was also starting to feel almost the same.

Things kept on improving. Over the weekend the cough was gone, and the only thing left was some residual tiredness, and some sinus blockage. Will, being the young man that he is, didn't seem to suffer from any of this, but Robyn and I did. I tended to wake up each morning with a slight headache caused by sinus congestion, though this (the headache) went away after I had been up and about for an hour or so. On the other hand, Robyn said she was basically deaf in one ear. It got so bad, and didn't seem to be improving, in the week following our isolation that she booked an appointment to see her doctor, only for the congestion to clear the night before she was due to see him. Scared the congestion into submission I reckon.

During that post-diagnosis week I left the boundary of the house only twice – once to put out the rubbish bins, and once to bring them back in. By the end of the 7 days' isolation I was starting to get very annoyed with it. I realised then that, while we had experienced very long lock-downs in Melbourne during 2020 and 2021, we were at least able to go for a walk, or for one of us a day to do some shopping. With the COVID diagnosis we weren't allowed to leave the property unless it was an emergency. That final extra restriction appeared to make all the difference.

But we were lucky. We live in a country where vaccination against this virus is possible, free, and generally accepted as being in the public good. All three of us were twice-vaccinated in 2021, and boosted earlier this year and I can only surmise that those three injections were what saved us from a far more difficult, if not serious, illness. To me it came across as a bad dose of flu that hit hard for a few days and rapidly diminished.

After we had received the diagnosis we had discussed where we might have caught it. We couldn't really decide. While none of us had put ourselves in massive crowds anywhere, we had been out and about and any of us could have caught it any day in any location. We resigned ourselves to the fact that we might never know where one of us was infected. Worrying about it wasn't going to help so we just laughed it off.

A couple of months back I was having lunch with a few old friends and I was discussing our plans for our trip to Canada. As is also usual at these times the topic of COVID came up and I mused that it might be a good idea for me to get a dose and get over before I headed off in late August. The general view was, "No," I shouldn't. "Don't risk it," they said. Well, that choice is out of my hands now. And maybe, just maybe, this bout of COVID really might have occurred at just the right time. Any extra protection can only be a bonus. Right? Yeah, right.

This fanzine acknowledges the members of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it is produced in Hawthorn, Victoria, and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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WHAT I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT LATELY

Podcasting – TWO CHAIRS TALKING, co-hosted with David Grigg

Notes from this month's podcasts

Episode 75: (10 June 2022) *A bug in the program*

There was a bit of a delay with this one due to me getting COVID and being a bit under the weather earlier in the week.

This episode David and I talk about the stories on the 2022 Hugo Awards ballot in the categories of Best Short Story and Best Novelette. We are mostly in agreement about which stories work and which do not, but there are a couple of differences.



Later I chat with W. H. Chong about the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

Episode 76: (28 June 2022) *Psalms, splinters and burning tigers*

This week we discuss the finalists on the 2022 Hugo Ballot in the category of Best Novella. And we have a disagreement about which one we will be voting for.

After that I chat with Rose Mitchell about the second season of STAR TREK: PICARD.

You can access the current, and all past podcast episodes at twochairs.website, or you can subscribe through any podcast subscription service.

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Cover notes: the picture here was taken by my wife Robyn Mills, in August 2019 in Iceland, after we had been kitted up for our short trek across one of the glacier tongues that falls off the main Vatnajökull Glacier, which covers around 8% of the island's land mass. We were lucky that day as the weather had started off rather miserably, low cloudy with drizzling rain. But by the time we got to the actual glacier, the rain had let off, and the clouds had lifted a little. And by the time we got back to the bus a couple of hours later it started to rain again. We had a lot of fun that day. I'd never been on a glacier before and, chances are, I'll probably never be on one again. I can't recommend the experience highly enough.

WHAT I'VE BEEN READING LATELY

Codes – F: format (e for electronic, blank for paper); R: rating, out of 5.0.
 Abbr – Coll: single-author collection; Nvla: novella; Trans: translated.

June 2022 books

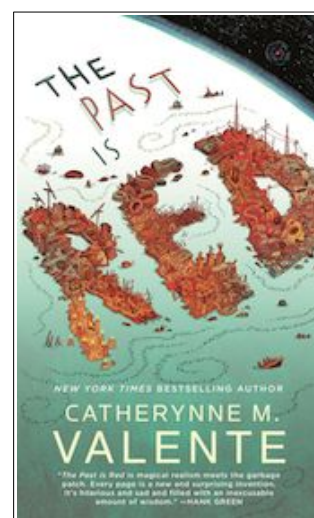
Title	Author	Genre	Date	F	R	Pub Date	Notes
The Past is Red	Catherynne M. Valente	Sf	June 8	e	3.2	2021	Nvla
Lisey's Story	Stephen King	Horror	June 11		3.0	2006	
The Guns of Navarone	Alistair MacLean	Thriller	June 13		3.8	1957	
All the Myriad Ways	Larry Niven	Sf	June 15		3.2	1971	Coll
The Grand Banks Café	Georges Simenon (trans David Coward)	Crime	June 16	e	3.1	1931	Trans
All the Sounds of Fear	Harlan Ellison	Sf	June 20		3.4	1971	Coll
A Desolation Called Peace	Arkady Martine	Sf	June 30		4.0	2021	

Books read in the month: 7
 Yearly total to end of month: 44

Notes:

Another less-than-optimal month, probably due to me getting COVID and trying to read two 500-page (or nearly) books. At this half-way point in the year I'm about six books behind where I should be. If I had a hope of hitting my target of 100 books in the year I should have been near or over the fifty mark. I fear I may not catch up.

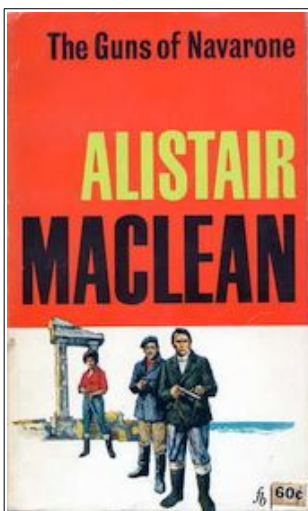
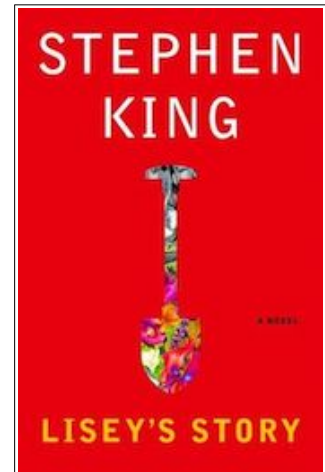
The Past is Red (2021) – Catherynne Valente wrote her first story about Tetley Abednego, “The Future is Blue”, in 2016. That story won the Theodore Sturgeon Award in 2017 and has been included as the first part of this novella, which continues the adventures of Tetley a decade later on a far-future Earth, devastated by climate change, where she is a citizen of Garbagetown, a human settlement built on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Tetley now lives on a small boat off the patch, seemingly isolated from the rest of her community, for reasons explained in the earlier work. During the course of her story she discovers a strange object from the distant past that finally starts to fill in the background history of this world. Tetley is a much more tragic figure here than earlier, which indicates her development as a character and the writer's development of her world. I wasn't as enamoured of this novella as I was with the original story, though I suspect the opposite will be true of most readers. R: 3.2/5.0



Lisey's Story (2006) – Winner of the 2006 Bram Stoker Award for Best Novel.

Lisey Landon is the widow of the famous novelist Scott Landon, who died two years before the start of this novel. Lisey has finally gotten around to beginning the process of clearing out her husband's study after she has been hounded by a number of academics eager to discover if Landon left behind any finished or unfinished manuscripts. She has turned them all away but one day someone shows up who isn't so much interested in Landon's work as in exerting power and control over her. He attacks her and threatens further assaults if she doesn't hand over the documents. Lisey reflects on her marriage and slowly comes to realise that her husband had many long-term problems founded in his childhood. She also discovers that he would escape to a fantasy world to deal with them and then finds herself also able to travel to that same world to help solve her own problems. This isn't one of King's best works: it's long and slow; the supernatural element doesn't appear for quite some way into the novel; and the pacing is all over the place.

R: 3.0/5.0

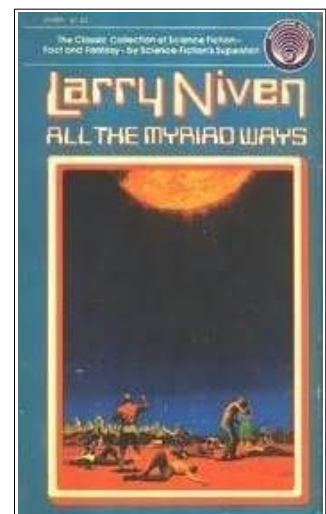


The Guns of Navarone (1957) – Alistair MacLean's World War II action thriller which was later made into a major film with Gregory Peck, Anthony Quinn and David Niven. And, try as they might, the film production crew couldn't stuff it up, which says something for the base material. Set on the fictional Greek Island of Navarone, just off the Turkish coast, this novel involves a 5-man commando team charged with destroying a major gun emplacement that is threatening allied shipping in the eastern Mediterranean. Previous naval and aerial bombing runs have failed so a direct assault on foot is required. There are some wonderful set pieces in this short novel and it surely must be considered one of the best examples of its type of writing. Don't worry about the characterisation here, just wallow in the plot and the action as the novel starts at a frenetic pace and doesn't let up. [The cover image here reflects the film adaptation, and its odd that it

features a woman as there are a grand total of zero female characters in the whole book.]

R: 3.8/5.0

All the Myriad Ways (1971) – An early collection of Niven's including some early time-line Known Space stories and others, ranging from sf ("Becalmed in Hell") to fantasy ("Not Long Before the End"). Among the other stories here, "The Jigsaw Man" was nominated for a Nebula Award and "Inconstant Moon" won the Hugo for Best Novelette in 1972. Also included are the speculative non-fiction pieces, "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex" riffing on Superman's love-life, "The Theory and Practice of Time Travel" and "Exercise in Speculation: The Theory and Practice of Teleportation". This gives the reader a good idea of what Niven was up to in



the late 1960s and early 1970s. While the stories might not all be top-level they are all at least interesting and worth reading.

R: 3.2/5.0

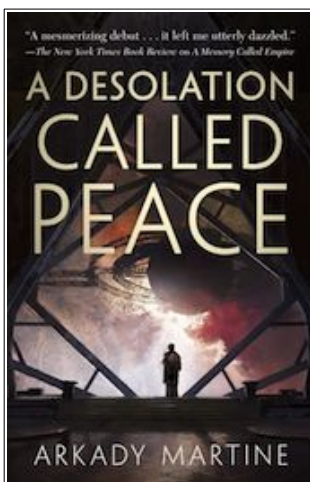
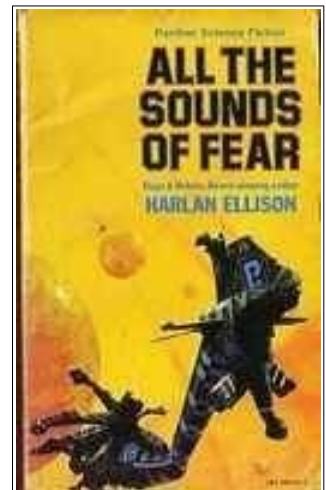


The Grand Banks Café (1971) – #9 in the Maigret series by this author.

Maigret has persuaded his wife to take their summer vacation at Fécamp rather than with her family as usual. There he intends to assist in the investigation of a murder after he is approached by an old friend. A fishing vessel has returned to port after three months away, and within an hour the captain is murdered. It had been a terrible voyage: the captain attempted to fish in the wrong place off Newfoundland, a young boy was swept overboard, and the final catch was spoilt. Now the ship's crew is on shore, drunk and unwilling to help in any way. As usual in this series, the main interest is in the delineation and interplay between the characters, major and minor. The reader will have a hard time picking the killer as a vital piece of evidence is not revealed until quite near the end.

But that is of little consequence. I am starting to become very sorry for the long-suffering Mme Maigret. R: 3.1/5.0

All the Sounds of Fear (1971) – A collection of Ellison's stories ranging from 1956 through to 1967, including his award winning stories "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream" and "Repent, Harlequin!" said the Ticktockman". All of these deal with the themes of alienation and oppression, either by external forces – governments or society – or by the stories' protagonists themselves. Most of them were originally published in the various sf magazines of the period, other than the title story, with first appeared in *The Saint Detective Magazine*. It's very easy, and also very interesting, to see the author's progression from the earlier, standard sf stories to his later award winners. R: 3.4/5.0



A Desolation Called Peace (2021) – #2 in the Teixcalaan series by this author. This novel won the 2022 Locus Award for Best SF Novel, and it is also a finalist for the 2022 Hugo Award for Best Novel.

Before you even start on this 500 page novel you need to have read the first in this series, ***A Memory Called Empire***. At the end of the first book, Ambassador Mahit Dzmare had helped the Empire transition from one old Emperor to the next only to discover the presence of an alien armada on the Empire's boundary. This novel deals directly with that alien menace: the initial attacks, the defeats, the victories, and the attempts to bring the war to a quick and satisfactory conclusion. Again Dzmare, and her implanted memory tech come to the fore. This one is not quite as good as the first, which is probably because the world setup is not as fresh as before

– by necessity of course. The first 100 pages here are going to be something of a battle to get

through, at least there were for me. After that the action and forward motion of the plot starts to pick up and the book improves immensely. This is the second book on this year's Hugo list dealing with "first contact", which is interesting. I suspect this novel will do very well at Hugo time. I've only recently discovered that these two volumes were originally conceived of as a duology and that no third, or subsequent volumes are planned. That's a pity, as I think there are still a number of questions left hanging at the end of this second volume. And that's not something I say very often. R: 4.0/5.0

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REVIEWS OF AUSTRALIAN BOOKS

I didn't get through as many books as I wanted to this month – I'll put that down to getting COVID as it seems like a handy excuse – so I'm reprinting a review I wrote back in June 2008.

The Seance (2022) by John Harwood

Genre: Horror

With one foot firmly planted in superstition and folklore, and the other striding out towards science and enlightenment, the Victorian era is the perfect setting for the gothic or horror genres. The 18th and 19th centuries had seen advances in the physical, biological and mathematical sciences but these had scarcely had any impact upon the general public until the invention in the 1870s of the incandescent light bulb, and the development of the long-life version by Thomas Edison in 1880. The use of electricity rapidly expanded over the following decades and it is interesting to contemplate the reactions of people when they first came into contact with it. It must have seemed incomprehensible – a force that can provide heat and light, yet which could also kill and injure in ways that would have appeared almost magical.



Little wonder, then, that people attempting to come to grips with the new "magic" might turn to old "magic" to define or make sense of it. John Harwood's second novel, ***The Seance***, sits directly in this time period – the late 19th century – when science was making inroads into everyday life, and yet superstition and fear still held sway.

The novel deals with mistaken or lost identity, inheritance and sudden death, deserted, crumbling mansions and dark, forbidding woods. All the classic ingredients of a gothic story that leans in the direction of horror.

Constance Langton has spent the past few years of her life attending her widowed mother – who has been pining for a younger daughter who died – and who later commits suicide. Constance is troubled by the part she played in her mother's attempts to contact the dead girl via paranormal means, and feels partly responsible for all that has occurred. In 1889 she learns that a distant cousin has left her a crumbling mansion in Suffolk. Her lawyer, John Montague, presents her with a bundle of papers that detail the lead-up to some shocking events that took place in the hall some twenty years previously. The papers are

the personal accounts of Montague himself and Eleanor Unwin whose story seems to bear a resemblance to Constance's own.

The story is complicated and requires close attention, but it is just as much the evocative writing as the plot that holds our interest.

Monks Wood came upon us with no warning, looming like a black wave out of the mist as we passed from grey daylight into near-darkness beneath the firs. The rushing of the wind ceased, and there was only the muffled rumble of the wheels, the scrape of branches along the carriage, and the occasional gush of water from the foliage above. Shadowy outlines of tree trunks slid by, so close I could have touched them. The knot in my stomach tightened still further as the minutes dragged by, until the light returned as abruptly as it had gone.

Emotional and manipulative? Of course. And so it should be. A very distinct part of the gothic tradition lies in the manipulation of the reader's and characters' emotions, leading both along twists and turns, down blind alleys and into scary dark corners. Don't forget that the Victorian era also spawned the classic detective fiction of Doyle and Poe. It was all manipulative, and all the better for it. Harwood knows what he is doing here: he'll spook you a bit, and seem to deceive you with sleight of hand from time to time, but you always have the feeling you are in safe hands and that you won't be left hanging over a pit, suspended only by a slowly fraying rope.

Two years ago we were lucky enough to read another Australian gothic novel, *The Resurrectionist* by James Bradley. That was a gem, and so is this. John Harwood's previous novel, *The Ghost Writer*, won the Best First Novel Award at the International Horror Guild Awards. This one should surely be in contention for the main award.

[Time proved that I was very wrong in my assessment of this novel's international prize-winning chances, though it did pick up the home-grown 2008 Aurealis Award for Best Horror Novel.]

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WHAT I'VE BEEN WATCHING LATELY

Television

Holding (Season 1 – 4 episodes) (2022)

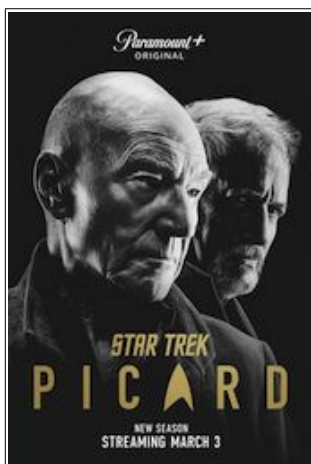
Platform: SBS OnDemand

Genre: Crime Drama

Based on the novel of the same name by TV host Graham Norton this is a story set in the small Irish town of Duneen where bodily remains are found in someone's garden. Local garda, Sergeant PJ Collins, played by Conleth Hill from *Game of Thrones*, is required to investigate. Everyone is convinced the body belongs to Tommy Burke, a local man last seen twenty years before. He was something of a celebrity in the town and famously went missing



after leaving his fiancée standing at the altar on their wedding day. But DNA evidence seems to disprove this, until long hidden secrets start to emerge. After the first episode I thought this was going to be a rather clichéd small town murder mystery, but decided to persist as the characters seemed interesting and amusing. I am glad I did. Turns out this is a quirky, likable, cosy mystery which is definitely worth your time. R: 3.9/5.0



Star Trek : Picard (Season 2 – 10 episodes) (2022)

Platform: Amazon Prime

Genre: Sf

At the end of season one of this series Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) seemed to have finally been able to settle down to a long retirement. Now, his old adversary Q turns up, trapping him and his companions in an alternate reality. His crew, along with the Borg Queen, have to travel back in time to the 21st century to stop Q messing with the future of the galaxy. The pacing is rather slow and there is more of an emphasis on the characters in this season, which is a bonus; the worn-out time-travel plot-line not so much.

Interesting and enjoyable but not as good as the first season.

R: 3.1/5.0

Bosch : Legacy (Season 1 – 10 episodes) (2022)

Platform: Amazon Prime

Genre: Crime Drama

This American crime drama is a spin-off of the Amazon Prime series **Bosch**, which ran over seven seasons from 2014-2021, and is based on Michael Connelly's novel **The Wrong Side of Goodbye** (2016). Again the main actor is Titus Welliver in the lead role, which he seems to have made his own. Joining him from the previous series are Madison Lintz, who plays his daughter Maddie, and Mimi Rogers, who plays Honey Chandler, a high-powered defense attorney. Bosch is now a PI, having resigned from the LAPD at the end of season 7. Here he is engaged by a dying billionaire to try to track down a woman he knew fifty years previously. Maddie has just started working as a rookie cop with the LAPD, and Chandler and Bosch are also investigating crooked businessman Carl Rogers



– from season 7. Maybe not quite as slick as the Amazon series but it's good to finally see some PI crime material on our screens. If you liked the earlier Bosch series you'll also like this. I know I did. R: 4.3/5.0



Griff's Canadian Adventure (Season 1 – 6 episodes) (2022)

Platform: ABC iView

Genre: Travel Documentary

British comedian and documentary-maker, Griff Rhys Jones, sets off to discover the heart of the “true” Canada by starting in Newfoundland in the East and crossing the entire country to Vancouver Island in the West. Along the way he does the usual thing of looking for the quirky, the unusual, and the clichéd, poking

as much fun at himself as the locals along the way. But he does come to love the place: the vastness, the people, and the scenery; though mostly the people. Jones is an amiable companion and imparts enough knowledge about the places he visits for you to get some sort of picture. And it's all done with a sense of humour and fun. We looked on this as "research" before our own Canadian trip coming up in September, even though Jones visits quite a number of places we won't be getting to. R: 3.4/5.0

Magpie Murders (Season 1 – 6 episodes) (2022)

Platform: BritBox Australia

Genre: Crime Drama

Written by Anthony Horowitz, and based on his novel of the same name, this is an intriguing story-within-a-story mystery set in the world of London publishing. Alan Conway (played by Conleth Hill, again) is a highly successful mystery writer whose main character is the 1950s detective Atticus Pünd. Just after submitting his last novel in the Pünd series Conway is found dead at home. His editor, Susan Ryeland, then discovers that the last chapter of the novel is missing, so she sets out to find that chapter, and comes to realise that the clues to the disappearance may well be hidden in the new book. The adaptation here, which my wife tells me is faithful to the original book, mixes the timelines and uses the same actors for roles in the current time and in the novel adaptation – as Conway had based his characters on the people he knew. This could have been a disaster but it is handled perfectly and the effect is quite striking. The whole thing leads up to one major joke, which is very funny. Not normally my thing, but I enjoyed this a lot. There is a second novel in the Susan Ryeland series by this author and I'll be hoping they decide to go round again and make a TV adaptation of that one as well. They'd have to use the same actors of course.

R: 4.3/5.0



Trom (Season 1 – 6 episodes) (2021)

Platform: SBS OnDemand

Genre: Crime Drama

Language: Danish, with English subtitles

Investigative journalist Hannis Martinson (Ulrich Thomsen) is returning to the Faroe Islands from the US when he receives a video message from a young woman, Sonja, identifying him as her father. By the time he lands and checks into his hotel she is reported missing and is later found dead during a local whale hunt. He decides to investigate as Sonja had indicated that she didn't trust anyone, especially the police. What follows is an interesting mystery with Martinson stirring up old grievances and generally rubbing people up the wrong way; the police are dragging their feet and

write off the death as an accident with no evidence; and the local big-wig businessman appears to be dodgy and corrupt and is meddling with both the police and Martinson. This is the first TV series I've seen with this setting and it looks as bleak and as interesting as both Iceland and the Shetlands. The plot seemed to be following a standard pattern until the last episode when it veered off the expected path somewhat. This last episode also points to a second season. I'll watch it. R: 3.7/5.0

Line of Duty (Season 4 – 6 episodes) (2017)

Platform: Netflix

Genre: Crime Drama

We're back with the fourth series of this British police drama featuring the investigations of AC-12 (Police Anti-Corruption). Returning are DS Steve Arnott (Martin Compston), DS Kate Fleming (Vicky McClure) and Superintendent Ted Hastings (Adrian Dunbar). In this series a young man with an intellectual disability is charged with the abduction, rape and murder of young women; it's pretty obvious right off that he has been framed.

Forensic Investigator Tim Ifield (Jason Watkins) is convinced of the young man's innocence but can't get anyone in charge of the investigation to take him seriously. But DCI Roz Huntley (Thandiwe Newton) is worried that Ifield will mess up the case, and her reputation, and visits him at his home to confront him about it. An altercation ensues, and Ifield is later found dead. The AC-12 group had already received information from Ifield and sets out to investigate Huntley. This series is up to the usual standard of this show, though there were a few moments in the last episode where the dramatic points seemed to be stretched a bit too far. But it all comes together in the end, with further hints of ongoing high-level police corruption as the overall arc of the show. R: 4.1/5.0



Spies of Warsaw (2 episodes) (2013)

Platform: ABC iView

Genre: War Spy Drama

Based on the 2008 Alan Furst novel *The Spies of Warsaw*, this series seems to have been broadcast over 4 episodes originally but is now presented here in two 90-minute segments. Set in Europe, though mainly in Poland, from late 1937 to the end of 1938, the plot revolves around the lead-up to the German and Soviet invasions of Poland in September 1938. Colonel Jean-François Mercier (David Tennant) is a military attaché in the French embassy in Warsaw. His main duty is to investigate the German armaments build-up on the German-Polish border and to attempt to obtain whatever information he can from German and Soviet insiders and defectors.

It has some interesting elements to it but it is rather a lacklustre affair with little dramatic tension and a love affair that seems to spring up out of nothing at all. Most of the actors tend to walk through their roles without offering much. I don't know how faithful it is to the original novel as I haven't read it. R: 2.8/5.0

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PERRYSCOPE Responses

Perryscope 21/22:

Carey Handfield: "Thank you for **Perryscope 21**. I enjoyed it as usual. In particular the description of your father's memorial. It reminded me of my mother's memorial which was

held in the great hall at Montsalvat which make sense as we had lived in Eltham for 30 + years. I recall an event of about 50 people family and friends. Lots of speeches about my mother and her life plus great catering.”

[**PM:** I particularly wanted to get down my thoughts about that weekend before they were forgotten. I’m glad it reminded you of a happy (?) event. Catering, at these occasions, is especially important.]

John Hertz: “I think your use of ‘ceremony’ in **P21** was quite apt. As to whether your mother’s plaque looks dirty after four decades, well, brass tarnishes.”

[**PM:** Yep, still should have cleaned it though.]

“Following Kenny Porter’s wishes I was the one who dropped his cremated ashes from an airplane into the Pacific Ocean. Not even a plaque. On another hand my mother’s body was buried in her family’s cemetery plot 1,700 miles (2,800 km) from her last home here in Los Angeles, and has a stone.

“I’ve now read *Cloud Cuckoo Land*. I still haven’t calibrated differences between your opinions and mine. As to ‘future generation starship on a voyage to a nearby star’, you should have (1) hyphenated ‘generation-starship’, and (2) studied, or shown more carefully you’d studied, the last two ‘Konstance’ chapters. Just sayin’. My own favourite moment was the Serbian silver-miners, but then I know lots of Serbs.”

[**PM:** These are only capsule reviews and so need to put a lot of information into a small amount of words, without giving away spoilers. And saying *any* more at this point about the starship will be a spoiler. As it would have been in the review. My basic aim in these small – very small – reviews is to provide a basic idea of the book and what I think of it. A lot gets left out, by necessity.]

“As to whether Asimov was a fine stylist, I agree that fine stylist ‘implies a sense of how ... author[s] select [] their words, and ... then arrange them on the page for greatest effect’ (your language, **P21** p. 17). That’s what I’ve been respectfully suggesting is in Asimov – early Asimov, like *Foundation*. Nuance. Characterization.”

[**PM:** And it’s my view that he has neither nuance nor characterisation. His characters don’t change – they are the same at the end of a book as they are at the start – apart from those that are dead, of course. And with Asimov what you see is what you get. He was a writer of ideas, not of people.]

“I remember happily “The Subways of Tazoo” (C. Kapp, 1964) but ought to re-read it before commenting further.”

[**PM:** I suspect you will also be happy after you re-read it. It is, as I said, competent, and very much a story of its time. One that would have easily found a place in *Analog*. Kapp wrote five stories in his Unorthodox Engineers series, with all of them being published in either the *New Worlds* magazine or Carnell’s *New Writings* series of anthologies. These five stories were then published together in Kapp’s *The Unorthodox Engineers* collection in 1979.]

“Thanks to Marc Ortlieb for noticing that Mark Olson is a brewer (**P22**, p. 18).”

[**PM:** I suspect I will owe Mark O a beer for that little typo when I see him next.]

Perryscope 23:

Rob Gerrand: “So glad you and Irwin are helping sort out John Bangsund’s correspondence. As you rightly state, he was legendary, and his correspondence needs to be properly housed; I suspect Monash will welcome the collection. The first four names you mention are now recognised as giants of literature: Ursula K Le Guin, Tom Disch, Brian Aldiss and John Brunner, who when writing to John were little known outside the sf community.”

[**PM:** I’m sure we will find many more such names in the boxes yet to be opened.]

“I used to read every Jack Reacher novel as it came out, but gave up with *Blue Moon*; it ran out of energy.”

[**PM:** That would have been number 24 in the series, about the same time I started to notice a distinct lack of authorial energy as well. You can understand why the publishers want to keep pushing them out as they sell a shed-load every year and make everyone slabs of money. But it’s passed its used-by-date now.]

“I’ve watched five episodes of *The Lincoln Lawyer*, but am not sure if I’ll watch more. It all seems to be a bit too humdrum. (I watched the original movie of the same name, that stars Mathew McConaughey, which is based on the first Haller book, *The Lincoln Lawyer*; this series is based on the second book, *The Brass Verdict*. (I read both when they came out, and enjoyed them.) The film works better than the tv series, but neither is top notch.”

[**PM:** As I noted, my wife and I did enjoy it. I’ll be quite happy to watch another series.]

“Have you seen *Counterpart*? That’s a brilliant series starring J K Simmons where there are two Earths, one branching out from the other 30 years prior. That has excellent writing and acting, great direction and is completely convincing.”

[**PM:** I know of it, but haven’t watched it as yet.]

Marc Ortlieb: “I always found the idea that South Australia had rivers, apart from the Murray, rather unbelievable, especially when I found out that the Torrens in Adelaide was only the size it was because of the weir. In Elizabeth we only had Smith’s Creek and that only seemed to flow when someone upstream pissed into it — though I do recall seeing a water wheel in it when our Scout Group used to hike up into the hills above Elizabeth to a ruin we called the Old Mill.”

[**PM:** When I first moved to Canberra in 1981 I was quite astonished by the amount of water that was around: lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, etc. My new friends there, mostly from the eastern states, were a bit astonished at my astonishment. I would then ask them what was the first permanent water course (river, creek or stream), further north of Adelaide, past, say, 50 kilometres. I didn’t know the exact answer but I did know that it was in the far north of the Northern Territory, right up by Darwin. South Australia, as you’ll be aware Marc, is basically a desert, apart for a few green bits. So your experience doesn’t surprise me.]

“I hope that the sequel to *Duck Season Death* was called *Wabbit Season Death*.”

[**PM:** Yeah, nah.]

“You and I have obviously come to the same conclusion regarding being active in retirement, but have found different solutions. I just spent a delightful weekend with Scout Leaders and ex-Scout Leaders up at Gilwell Park, our major Scout campsite in the Dandenongs. It was Scout orientated but without the youth members.”

[**PM:** That’s good to hear. Too many older men of my acquaintance, when I was working, had no idea of what they would do when they retired. They basically had no outside interests at all. I tried to gently suggest that they had better start looking for something, though I don’t think many of them took my advice.]

“I have no plans whatsoever for my funeral. I won’t be there, so why would I give a fuck? Hopefully a medical student will have fun taking my body apart.”

[**PM:** Funerals are for the people left behind. And given it is a rather traumatic time for them it’s probably best to make some arrangements beforehand.]

Julian Warner: “The plural of levee is levees.”

[**PM:** Yes, yes, this issue’s typo of choice. Noted, acknowledged, and then forgotten. Nothing to see here, move along please, Mr Warner.]

“If I recall correctly the ‘villain’ in *Everything Everywhere...* is ‘Jobu Tabacky’ which is Jo(but a back)y. Possibly a clue here.” [**PM:** But more likely not.]

Mark Olson: “Your post about the simple pleasure of watching river flooding reminds me of growing up along the Mississippi in Minnesota. Up there, the river meanders down the flat bottom of a valley it carved out during the Ice Ages and then partly filled with sediment. Today the valley is maybe 3-5 miles wide, and now has steep, 300-500 foot sides rising up to rolling farmland. The valley bottom tended to be great farmland (the high parts) and wetlands (everything else).

“Maybe one year in three the spring melt further north would happen all at once and the river would rise at least twenty feet and flood the whole valley floor. This was never more than a nuisance, since the river towns were mostly built on high spots, but roads crossing the valley would be inundated. This was a huge problem for some, since the river was also the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin and Wisconsin’s drinking age was lower and it allowed stronger beer to be sold. The crossing at Red Wing where I grew up ran across “the island” right after crossing the river and the island was loaded with bars as well as peoples’ vacation cottages. All of which got flooded every few years and swept away in the occasional really bad flood.

“The river also freezes up to a foot or so thick in the winter and is perfectly safe to drive on (in fact, before many bridges were built, some railroads ran tracks across the ice for the winter.) The winter sport of ice fishing takes advantage of this. People go out on the frozen river, drill a hole through the ice and fish. Because it’s cold, they quickly came to build ice fishing shacks with stoves and each winter they would carry out onto the ice to fish from. The fishing typically involved a lot of beer...

“My grandfather was county Game Warden and ice fishing was under his remit. In theory, this involved checking for people taking fish over the limit, but if it was a spring with a

sudden thaw (and subsequent flood), he was one of the people who had to try to get the fishermen to get their shacks off the ice while it was still safe to do so, and to keep them from trying when it wasn't. Every year there were a few who missed their chance and had to watch their shacks drift off downriver. And my grandfather had to go out in a boat and try to drag the mess to shore.

“One year when I was around ten, the flood was especially big and quick and not all of the bars had time to take precautions. The water rose quickly and, among other things, carried off the parts of their stock that floated. Gramp and other state law enforcement guys had to go out in their boats with rifles and try to break whatever floating beverage bottles they could spot. (I think they had a great time!)

“It all left me with a life-long pleasure in watching floods (from a safe distance).”

[**PM:** Most of what you mention here is totally outside my experience. Floods? No, never been in one. Frozen rivers? Not in Australia.]

Nick Price: “I also found *Everything Everywhere All At Once* was very enjoyable (and bonkers.) Just as Harlan Ellison however squeezed James Cameron over *Terminator* being part inspired by Demon with a Glass Hand, I'd say that Neal Stephenson could have a similar case with the EEAATO writers/directors' Daniels' about his multiverse navigating character Fraa Jad from *Anathem*.”

[**PM:** I shall bow to your greater knowledge in this regard.]

Leigh Edmonds: “Thanks for another issue of **Perryscope**. This one looks very thoughtful, or is that pensive?”

[**PM:** I'm not sure if, in the picture on the cover, I am contemplating the upcoming day or just being pensive about whether or not I've ordered the right breakfast. I get that a lot.]

“I was very pleased to read about the work that you, Irwin and Wendy are doing with JB's letters. Is it only letters that John received or is it carbon copies of what John wrote too? After you've got everything in order it might be a thought to scan the letters, if not for public accessibility at least to ensure that the contents of the letters are preserved if anything should happen to the originals.”

[**PM:** The box we examined contained letters John had received, plus carbons of his letters, notes, scribblings and submissions for **Australian Science Fiction Review**. It looks like he was rather meticulous about creating his copies, which is a good thing for us. Yes, the ultimate aim is to scan each piece of material, for backup reasons if nothing else.]

“The Wimmera River where I lived always had water in it so I never experienced the excitement of seeing it start flowing or the energy in flooding water. As far as I can remember all the towns on the Wimmera had a weir so that the water supply for the town was protected. There wasn't a local pool but a spot on the river that had a floating arrangement in which kids learned to swim safely and a couple of pontoons appropriately spaced for swimming races. There was nothing terribly dangerous in the water but if you swum to the other side where there was a nice little beach you were almost certain to become host for a leech or two. So I didn't go there often.”

[**PM:** Given the rare occasions when the Rocky River actually lived up to its name I guess a few kids found a safe patch of water in which to go swimming. I can't remember ever doing

so.]

“I sometimes wondered that we drank the water we swam in but I later learned that the town supply water came from the channel system that ran across the Wimmera and Mallee regions. (There was a dead body found floating in that once that did cause some concern.) You could tell when some more water had come into the town supply storage because the water that came out of the tap at home was noticeably browner than usual. I don’t know that people would tolerate that kind of water supply now, but they were simpler days.”

[**PM:** Laura’s water was supplied by the Beetaloo Reservoir, some 20 kilometres by road due west of the town, built between 1886 and 1890. At that time it was the largest concrete dam in the southern hemisphere. It was designed to supply water for the mid-North of South Australia as well as the city of Port Pirie and the towns on the Yorke Peninsular. It’s no longer in service.]

“The only one of the items you reviewed that I know anything about is ***The Lincoln Lawyer***. Valma and I found it more or less by accident and watched the first season in two or three days. This indicates that we liked it a lot and I’m happy with your score of 4.3 which seems adequate.

“We are currently rewatching ***Glitch***, the plot of which I had entirely forgotten. The third season is a bit rickety and I thought it very strange that people were always driving along back roads to get to Adelaide. For me the highlight of the whole thing was the country landscape and the towns. While watching the first couple of episodes I thought some of the streetscapes were familiar so I looked up Google and found that a lot of it was filmed in and around Castlemaine which is on the road from here to Bendigo and where we spent a lot of time while I was working on a history for the Castlemaine Bacon Company. It was a nice project but it completely put me off eating bacon.”

[**PM:** I’m guessing some of the early manufacturing processes were rather less than hygienic?]

I also heard from: Lucy Sussex, re the John Bangsund letters, “You should definitely notify Julie Phillips, Le Guin's biographer, about the letters” [**PM:** Good thought]; **Nic Farey**; **Barbara O’Sullivan**; thank you one and all.

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