



King Magnus in the Marsh at Downpatrick

PARERAGON PAPERS

are published by John Bangsund, PO Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067, Australia, more or less monthly. Contributions, especially letters of comment, are welcome. Trades are welcome, too. If you can think of no other way of getting Pareragon Papers, the subscription is A\$10.00 for ten issues. This issue has been commenced several times. The first version had a three-paragraph review of Bradbury's film of Moby Dick, and a drunken biography of Matthew Flinders. The second version was even worse. The only good line in the lot was by Herman Melville: God keep me from ever completing anything, he wrote in chapter 33 of Moby Dick. It seems vaguely appropriate to mention that. This fifth issue is tentatively dated December. If I get time to complete it and start another before the year is out, which seems unlikely, I shall call the sixth issue January. This one you may call Ishmael.

oo

SOME READERS have taken me to task for an apparent spatio-chronological inaccuracy in the second issue of these papers, namely my account of a visit by John Keats and George Chapman to Adelaide. Keats (I am told) died fifteen years before the colony of South Australia lurched into existence, and Chapman died 161 years before Keats was born. There is just no accounting for the literal-mindedness of some people, and there are times when I wonder whether they've ever read science fiction or Ben Jonson in their lives. Ben Jonson? Yes, sir, immortal author of *Timber: or, Discoveries*, in which (as most of my readers will not need reminding) he said: 'For to many things a man should owe but a temporary believe, and a suspension of his owne Judgement, not an absolute resignation of himselfe, or a perpetuall captivity.' A wise saying, that, and one engraved on the hearts of politicians and sf readers everywhere.

But as it happens, I have good authority for Keats's being in Adelaide, so there!

...the view over the plains, with Adelaide in the middle-distance, and the Gulf in the background, is, according to the poet Keats, "a joy for ever".

— *Cyclopedia of South Australia* (1907), vol.1, p.498

Besides, Rotsler was with us at the time. Frankly, I find it harder to believe that Bill Rotsler ever visited Adelaide. Probably he does, too.

PAUL STEVENS (FOR DUFF!) sent me an article a couple of weeks ago — 'A Short History of the Paul Stevens Show'. I asked him to write it for us. It's awful. Every now and then, about once in three years, say, Paul writes something really worth reading. This wasn't one of those times. Paul is always stimulating to meet and talk with, and something of his zest and zany humour gets in to everything he writes, but usually not enough of it. He reminds me

of the kind of person Oscar Wilde professed to prefer — the kind that puts his genius into living, and only his talent into writing. One line in the article, however, is brilliant. It says just about everything about the man.

The sound of laughter has always been far easier on my ears than the sound of distant trumpets.

I wish I had written that. Thanks, Paul.

KEATS AND CHAPMAN did not attend the Thracian Horsemen Exhibition at the British Museum in 1976. It's a pity about that, but my rigid regard for historical veracity forces me to admit it. That, and the fact that I couldn't see any way of getting Shakespeare in, forces me to abandon a rather charming little story I made up about Orpheus and his loot.

Without a Keats and Chapman story there's only one way this issue will achieve that air of improbable erudition lightly worn that readers have come to expect of these papers, and that is to publish a letter from —

JOHN BROSAN
23 Lushington Road
London NW 10
16.11.77

Speaking of my sf film book, I think I told you last letter I was going to call it The Ultimate On Film. Well, the publishers thought that idea was a pile of Australian pooh-poo, so then I came up with From Melies To Star Wars, which everyone liked. Now some nerd has come out with a book called From Jules Verne To Star Trek... so the new title for my book is Close Encounters In The Third Row. My publisher is not amused.

Jeez, it's pretty grim in England at the moment. Not only is it bloody cold, but if your house catches fire you've got to put it out yourself. We've also had blackouts recently and the airport workers are still on strike, so there's no escape. Which reminds me: I went to see the original TV serial of *Quatermass and the Pit*, which was shown at the National Film Theatre last Friday. It was made in 1958, but in the final segment there's a sequence where an American newsreader says: 'Flash! We've just got word of an emergency in London! Large areas of the city are blacked out, planes are being diverted from the airport and fires are raging unchecked!' Everyone in the audience just roared with laughter, because that was almost a perfect description of London today. Prophetic science fiction strikes again. ...

I must try and persuade the incredible Peter Roberts to join ANZAPA again. He's just back from travelling around the USA after winning TAFF this year. Said he had a great time. He now lives in some obscure seaside town and makes his living as a freelance vegetarian. He's someone you must meet one of these days. You have a lot in common.

oo

Peter Roberts! Of course! Why didn't I think of him? He even speaks the language! Peter, would you be interested in writing a story for us about the Thracian Treasure Exhibition? I've got a great line for you, if you want it.

LEANNE FRAHM
272 Slade Point Road
Slade Point
Queensland 4741
7.10.77

Pareragon Papers sent me into a depression for three weeks — but I don't feel badly about it, it happens very easily and often. I thought I'd write and tell you about it, as you don't seem to do anything but read and write, and I would certainly make a light change from your apparently regular high-voltage-intellectual fare.

As is usual with manic-depressives, the sight of MY NAME in print threw me into 'Transports of Delight' (should I apostrophise the clichés so you can skim over them? Never mind, you're probably a speed reader.). Visions of legions of southern adepts reverently discussing the brave and lone pioneer of the North, of the letterbox crammed with Free Copies and congratulatory telegrams, of Premier Joh publicly declaring me subversive...

Then, as I lay on my stomach contemplating the sand-fleas attempting to scale the rugged strands of the shag-pile carpet (which strange juxtaposition only goes to underline the primitive nature of life here in the tropics — or how seldom I vacuum the carpet), as, I say, I contemplated this rosy future, it dawned on me what your papers really meant. I was more alone than I thought I was.

You don't mind being an arid person in a whole arid continent, but when you find that bits of that continent are teeming with bright and gay life, with people that talk about things you can only think about, never discuss, then said aridity becomes very depressing. Perhaps there are people up here who are interested in such things — you don't exactly trip over them, though.

... Yes, Slade Point is near Mackay. It is the next point round the coast from the Beautiful Mackay Harbour, a residential suburb with nothing to recommend it except for the lovely stands of paper-bark swamp that run through it, and which are slowly but surely being hacked down and sand-filled to accommodate all those light industries without which any modern suburb is incomplete. If they get much closer, I'll be moving. They get me depressed, too.

I'll say good-bye now. Thank you for introducing me to a part of Australia I didn't know existed.

I think we might very well thank Leanne for doing us a similar service. I wrote to her, asking permission to publish part of her letter, and mentioning that her vision of fandom as gay, bright, high-voltage-intellectual and so on isn't all that close to the mark (I know some gay people and some high people, of course), and that being geographically isolated from fandom isn't the total deprivation it might seem. I went on to talk about fanzines, and suggested to Leanne that she might think about joining ANZAPA.

(22.10.77) I don't want to alarm you with the promptness of this reply — visions of neurotic housewife taking letter-break between headache-powder-break and cooking-sherry-break, overbearing soul-baring (that's bad) — but as you asked my permission to print parts of my previous letter, I felt I could not be single-handedly responsible for the delayed appearance of the next pareragon papers.

Anything you can find of use, use. In all modesty (which I have to a cream-curdling extent), I can't imagine what you could want to print, unless your true motive is to make me the butt of one of your rapier-sharp comments. (As well as being supremely modest, I am also insecure and suspicious.)

Thank you for all the literature you sent me. I read everything through twice, and I now feel I know a little about what fandom is. Previously it's only been a word to me. For instance, I couldn't understand your reference in PP3 to Nation Review as a fanzine - where's the science fiction for chrissake? - but I can now see that it qualifies within your definition, just. In my opinion there's still a touch too much hatred in Nation Review to be a genuine fanzine. (And on that subject, I don't agree with the editor who accused you of writing your essay on Flann O'Brien in NR style. Absolutely incorrect. You obviously liked what you were writing about, in contrast to the usual cynical-for-the-sake-of-perversity attitude of NR writers.)

Now I must mention something that is worrying me. You mentioned putting my name on the waiting list for ANZAPA. Possibly you may have been too busy to notice, but the initials ANZAPA stand for the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association, and there are at present only thirty members, who I must assume publish things, and are in fact the cream of the Australian etc. sf-and-other-things intelligentsia.

All I've ever published are angry letters to the editor in the local paper. Whether they get published or not depends on whom I'm attacking, and on the frame of mind of the staunchly National Party and staunchly Returned Serviceman editor. (I'm giving him one more day to publish my latest on the subject of the banning of street marches in Brisbane, and then I'm going to ring the bastard and get an admission straight from his lips that he's only printing pro-Joh letters.)

I've also written three pages to you on my deprived childhood and narrow, circumscribed adolescence, which prevented me from coming into contact with anyone who even reads science fiction, let alone has an opinion on it. Mercifully, I've omitted the three pages and will precis: I'm basically dead ignorant. When I read your stuff I mentally grovelled. I don't recognise half the writers you refer to, or half the works of writers I do know. I'm in kindergarten all over again. You see, all my reading has simply been what appealed to me in the local paperback market or book exchange. I haven't checked yet, but I know that the local and ancient School of Arts Library (which I haven't patronised in years since I read through the complete disaster epics of Charles Eric Maine, their one concession to sf's tawdry existence) will not contain one book by Flann O'Brien or John James. There is a local University Centre, but I don't know either the extent of their library or its availability to the general public. I feel completely at a loss, and burdened by the knowledge that I've wasted an awful lot of time.

This leads to the obvious: I don't believe, however dearly I would like it, that I would qualify for membership of ANZAPA. If I read it right, I would be up for printing some pages of bright, witty,

in-depth stuff every couple of months. And just look at me: like I said, dead ignorant. Besides that, my inferiority complex tells me I would feel so guilty at taking a place from someone who has grown up down there on fandom and really understands it. However, having said all that, my cosmic intellect tells me that after a few years in touch through the magazines and fanzines I will be there! I also take it that I will be able to harass editors with pungent letters pointing out their basically inane conclusions, even if I'm not anything special.

Thank you once again for all you forwarded. I've had a reply from Mr Paul Collins of Void magazine, who has somehow managed to sell me a hardcover edition of a new Australian anthology as well as a subscription. All these people seem so darn nice it's hard to say no!

ps: In case I've managed to give the impression that I'm incredibly stupid, I must add that when I got to Supersonic Snail I felt vastly superior to half the nuts who wrote to Bruce Gillespie. From there I think you can gauge my position in the sf pecking order.

oo

After they have read your letters, Leanne, I hope all members of ANZAPA will feel thoroughly ashamed and resolve in future to write bright, witty, in-depth stuff every two months! Some of them do that anyway, but it isn't a membership requirement. I wasn't quite sure how to interpret that paragraph, so to be on the safe side I have put your name on the waiting list. These days it takes at least a year to get into ANZAPA (there are fifteen people ahead of you on the list), so you'll have plenty of time to get the feel of fandom and decide how much you want to be involved in it.

Again I urge ANZAPAns to send their stuff to folk on the waiting list. It's a bit expensive at first, but you soon learn who appreciates the gesture and who doesn't, and often enough you get more response from the waitlisters than from your fellow members.

MORE ABOUT FREDERIC RAPHAEL When I wrote that little piece about Raphael in PP3 (p.26) I didn't know that he was the author of *The Glittering Prizes* — the most brilliant tv series I've (partly) seen this year. I had no intention of watching the series, but a friend of Sally's said I might like it because it was full of witty dialogue, and I did like it, and could kick myself for assuming from the trailers that it was just another *Duchess of Duke Street* and missing half the episodes. I was only mildly interested in watching the film *The Last Run* when it came on one night in October, and if George Scott hadn't been in it I might not have bothered at all. When the script-writer's name came up, I knew I was in for something worth watching — I've often wondered whatever became of Alan Sharp (since *A Green Tree in Gedde* and *The Wind Shifts*, two-thirds of a superb but presumably incomplete trilogy published in the mid-60s, I've never seen anything by or about him), and now I can guess — and so it was, a minor masterpiece. At one point Scott says 'It's for money, but I would like to do it right.' It sounded like the author speaking.

Jim Ellis recommended *A Green Tree in Gedde* to me early in 1965, when I was still a librarian, and kindly lent me a proof copy of it. (Memory may be playing me false here, but I think the book was banned in Australia for a while - so many books were in those evil good old days - and I might never have seen it, let alone read it, if Jim hadn't done that.)

Jim Ellis and Lee Harding probably had most influence on my reading during 1964-67, Lee carefully, ever so tactfully, supervising my initiation in to science fiction (until that memorable day when I published a review of a book that Lee couldn't bring himself to read and said that we'd be hearing more of Ursula Le Guin), and Jim sharing with me some of his favourite authors. At the time I was so immersed in sf that I'm sure I've forgotten some of Jim's recommendations, which is a pity. He gave me Peter Mathers's *Trap* and Thomas Keneally's *Bring Larks and Heroes* to read in galley-proofs, and invited me to comment on the latter. (I did, and I think Keneally accepted some of my pin-pricking criticisms.) Before I went to work for Cassell's, he lent me his proof copy of Baldwin's *Another Country*, which was definitely banned. I think I may now reveal without fear of legal action that I found a copy of that book, and a copy of *The Spy Who Loved Me* (really, you'd be amazed at the books banned here in those days!), at the New South Wales Railways Institute Library, locked away in a cupboard in the librarian's office - and he said I might as well have them because, even if they weren't banned, they weren't the kind of books he would put on his library's shelves. When *Another Country* was un-banned (1967?) it was my copy that Cassell's used to produce the Australian edition. (Even then the good Christians who printed the book took great offence at the dirty words in it, and insisted that Cassell's take all responsibility for it. That wasn't so silly either. The Australian States still have the power to ban publications that the Federal Government admits, and at the time Victoria and Queensland quite often exercised it.)

Ah, then was days, Joxer, then was days!

One of Cassell's local authors was a chap named George Turner. Bob Sessions, the editor at Cassell's, sang out to me one day as I passed his office 'Did you know that George Turner is one of your mob?' I went in, thinking Bob meant that Turner had been a theological student or something in that line. Of course it was a different 'mob' that Bob was referring to. In his biographical data for the jacket of *The Lame Dog Man*, Turner mentioned that he was a reader of science fiction. I asked Bob for the man's address, and soon afterwards went to visit him.

I have a lot to thank Jim Ellis for, and in a round-about kind of way, so has science fiction and fandom. I don't hold Jim entirely responsible for my leaving the library (that would have happened eventually anyway), but I'm pretty sure he put in a good word for me when I applied for the job at Cassell's. During my two years in that job I travelled around Australia (meeting such people as Brian Richards, Don Tuck and John Brosnan); my vague ambition to do something literary became the firm ambition to become a publisher's editor - and if there was no immediate hope of that, well, I could publish a fanzine; and I met George Turner, and showed him that fanzine.

IN THE GUMS OF A MUMBLING GALE

A supplement to *Parergon Papers* published for FAPA by
John Bangsund, PO Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067, Australia

24 October 1977 What I should be doing instead of writing this is indexing a book. I enjoy indexing, in a way. Lee Harding once tried to tell me about Cyril Connolly's concept of *second-order creativity*, and when I'm indexing, that's roughly what I am engaged in and why I enjoy it, in a way. Indexing, I hasten to say, is not some kind of weird hobby I have, but part of what I do for a living. The book I should be indexing (I'm half-way through it, so I don't feel too guilty about taking an hour or so off to write this) is *The Queensland Frontier* by Glenville Pike.

With the possible exception of Mr Pike, I am the only person in all the world who has read this book three times. There is a good chance that I will retain this distinction for ever. Certainly I expect to remain the only person who has read this book three times for money. The first time was when I second-edited it. I had better explain that. The editor (a lady for whom I have a great fondness and even greater respect) had been working on this rather large book, off and on, for some months, and had edited all but about thirty of its 350-odd pages. My job was to go through the whole book, fairly quickly, making sure that the style was consistent, the names spelt the same way throughout and so on, and to edit those untouched pages. This sort of work is called second-editing. The job took rather longer than the editor or I expected, partly because I am the kind of person who, faced with a name spelt Fitzallen, Fitzallan and Fitzalan, will not choose one and get on with the job, but will insist on finding out the correct spelling. In this respect I am a lousy editor, and it's a wonder I survive at the trade. I have often been called *too meticulous*, which I resent, because I have looked the word up in my dictionary and know what it means, and the person who says this to me has not, and that's the difference between us and the difference between our concepts of editing. It also explains why I have no desire to work for a newspaper. Any kind of commercial publisher is much more interested in getting-it-out than getting-it-right. As Napoleon probably never said, history is merely lies agreed upon - and so is publishing.

Five or six weeks ago I proofread *The Queensland Frontier*. Now I am indexing it. I don't know how Mr Pike is making out, but for the last few months I seem to have been living off his book. I may even buy a copy when it's published, out of sheer sentiment.

Mr Pike is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of Australia. He has won a literary award or two. He seems to have devoted the greater part of his life to studying and recording the history of North Queensland, and for this I honour him, admire him, even envy him. But he can't write for nuts. Within his rambling, romantic, cliché-ridden, hulking great book there is hidden a trim work of scholarship. The true function of editing, it seems to me, is to dig that valuable little book out of the non-book the author has written. If editors were allowed to do this kind of thing, we would see fewer

books, probably smaller books, certainly better books. We would also see the general collapse of the publishing industry. So we go on compromising between getting-it-out and getting-it-right, and the books go on being churned out, and the publishers and editors and authors go on being employed and unhappy.

One effect that this dreary business has had on me is that I have stopped buying Australian books published for *the general reader* - that mysterious average Australian who buys the stuff that provides me with a living. Instead, when I can afford them, I buy works of scholarship and what one historian calls 'foundation' books. In recent months, for example, I have bought such things as La Nauze's biography of Alfred Deakin, Coghlan's *Labour and Industry in Australia* and Douglas Pike's *Paradise of Dissent* (in the first category), Nicolas Baudin's *Journal*, Stokes's *Discoveries in Australia* and Collins's *The English Colony in New South Wales* (in the second). I would rather read Matthew Flinders any day than the multitude of lightweight, entertaining, general books based on his journals.

Now here's an odd thing. People like Glenville Pike just can't resist rubbishing these 'foundation' books. 'Landsborough used quaint phraseology in his journal', says Pike (a mild example of what I mean, but the closest to hand), and by crikey! so he did. But Landsborough was a bushman, and he wrote his journal while he was out in the desert looking for the lost explorers Burke and Wills. His 'quaint phraseology' is just fine by me, but Pike's isn't. Mr Pike belongs to a sad school of amateur Australian writers who can't mention pioneers without calling them *grim-jawed* or *heroic*; whose Aborigines (when they are not called *myalls* or *natives*) are invariably *wily* or *faithful*; and who can never put to sea without *setting out in the teeth of a howling gale*.

There. I feel better already for saying that. Back to work.

Before I go back to work I should mention that if your name is Handfield you have an ancestor or relative on page 90 of *The Queensland Frontier*; if your name is Foyster, your lot is on page 300; if your name starts with Mc or Mac, see the index (two out of every three grim-jawed pioneers in North Queensland were named Mc or Mac Something).

In the December mailing of ANZAPA Christine McGowan (*force of habit! sorry! Christine Ashby*) berates me for my 'habit of running FAPA stuff through ANZAPA'. I have corresponded with Christine about this, and we have reached an understanding. But when/if you see Parergon Papers no.5, you may note that I have stopped claiming that they are published 'for FAPA and ANZAPA'. As I said to Christine, in the last twenty-two months I have published something over 190 pages, 120-odd this year; of these FAPA has seen only about two dozen pages; ANZAPA has had the lot. I didn't plan it that way. In future (while keeping up FAPA minac) I will be publishing for ANZAPA and a select mailing list. Many FAPAns will be on this list. If you want to make sure of being on this list, and if you would like to see the things I never got round to sending to FAPA, please write to me.

Quote for the month: 'In its time it was the first steel-framed building in Australia.' (These days, of course, it wasn't.)

5 November The index finished, I am taking the weekend off. It's a glorious feeling, after pounding the typewriter for a week in the line of duty, to sit here typing a stencil. Dean Grennell expresses this feeling superbly in Grue 40 (FAPA mailing 160: arrived two days ago), and his description of the mindless tyrannies imposed on him by the firm for which he writes — he is not allowed to use the word 'very', for example — would just about bring tears to the eyes of anyone who has ever been a writer, editor or proofreader for a commercial publisher. Dean also says something very important about amateur publishing, and I take the liberty of quoting him a little for my readers outside FAPA:

You see, it has come down to the point where the regallest luxury I can pamper myself with is to employ usages non-sanctioned by our vigilant and utterly omnipotent inhouse proofreading department. ... What I am doing in Fapa, why I am staying in Fapa, is for the sweet sake of working off my personal foibles and frustrations and winnwams. Every time I employ the word very, it is a sweet spit in the eye of sovereign authority and it is ever so transfulucingly therapeutic, y'dig? When one is in the process of being nibbled to death by young ducks, one does not always respond with icy rationality. Fapa is my popoff valve and I appreciate it. That's why I stay in Fapa, all these many years. A good safety valve is a useful artifack.

In the same mailing Ken Faig has some rather different things to say about amateur publishing. I sympathize with him, too, but not quite as much.

I'm a member of APAs for the reading material which they provide, not for the pleasure of producing an amateur magazine of my own. Frankly, writing is a hundred times harder than reading for me... and the actual production of an amateur magazine, after the writing is done, is shere drudgery.

Ken goes on to write about book-collecting (would your people make you say 'bookcollecting', Dean?) and why people do it, which I found interesting. But I have two main reasons for surrounding myself with books that Ken doesn't touch on. Together with this typewriter, books are the tools of my trade. And my books are my memory.

Ken says it is disrespectful not to read a book. I agree, up to a point. But I have hundreds of books that I have no intention of reading. Example: A. W. Jose's *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, volume IX, The Royal Australian Navy*. That is one of the most useful books I have in this room, because I often get books to work on that deal with maritime history, and it's handy to be able to check their authors' facts with an authoritative history. A lady author called on me last year and expressed surprise that I had corrected many details of fact in her book. 'How do you know these things?' she said. I said 'I don't. I look them up.' More recently I was talking to a lady who has a *Sands & McDougall's Directory of South Australia* on her shelves — a fun book, she called it — and I started rattling off the many things I find my copy useful for. 'Gee,' she said, 'I never thought of using it!'

I have a lousy memory. Some say it is a lazy memory; at times I have wondered whether it is a selective memory, or whether too much alcohol has eroded it; certainly it doesn't work properly. My father had the same problem, and he never drank, so it probably isn't the alcohol. Some things I remember easily: authors, titles and publishers of obscure books; most that I've ever learnt about classical music; the names of streets in Northcote; a lot about makes and models of cars; odd things like Bach 1685-1750, Luke 2:52 in the KJV, John 1:1 in Greek, Cherubini's full name; I can sing the Marseillaise in French, and with a bit of effort can remember (but not recite) the sonnet that begins 'They that have power to hurt' and many verses from Gray's Elegy. But I can't remember the dates of the kings and queens of England, nor governors, prime ministers, presidents, significant historical events, Melbourne Cup winners, issues of *Astounding*...

So I surround myself with books. And if my brain isn't much good at retrieving facts from its own storage, it is pretty good at directing me to the right books for information I need. That's why I say that books are my memory.

I also read books, Ken, but I don't seem to have done much of that lately. Except in the line of duty.

Ed Cox: I meant to comment on your adventure with the black widder spider, but have forgotten now what the comment was. Earlier this year I wrote some semi-informed stuff about *Latrodectus hasseltii* and other deadly denizens of the suburbs for Leigh Edmonds's semi-mythical fanzine, in the course of which I repeated the opinion of local spiderologists (the Greeks probably had a word for them) that the Australian red-back is much the same animal as the American black widow and the New Zealand katipo. I ask any arachnologist in FAPA (is that the word the Greeks had, Jack?) to comment on this, just in case I scared hell out of Mike Glicksohn in Canberra through sheer ignorance. Oddly, I haven't seen a red-back around this place since I wrote that article for Leigh in February. Maybe they're waiting for him to publish it so they can see what I said about them. What we do have a lot of, though, is *Ixeuticus robustus*, a fearsome-looking little black brute. Learned arrack-socdolagists are invited to inform me on this one, too.

Where did those socdolagists come from? Someone raised the subject in May, I think. As an example of my books-as-memory system, I immediately consulted my copy of Surtees's *Mr Sponge's Sporting Tour*, wherein (page 25) there is a portrait of Mr Thomas Slocdolager, late Master of the Laverick Wells Hounds. Fascinating. As an example of my unsupported memory, I haven't a clue who was discussing the word 'sockdolager' in that mailing. Oxford indicates that the word dates from about 1836, so Surtees didn't invent it.

I haven't finished reading the August mailing yet — in fact I'll probably never finish reading Harry's monograph on the works of Joe Green (or, as the Greeks called him, Giuseppe Verdi) — but it is now six days to the November deadline, and by the time I get to Phoenix... Hey! what a great idea for a song!

Ciao, mes amigos.

It's not too strange that I should have drifted away from talking about Frederic Raphael (two hours ago, my time; six pages back, yours) and on to jobs, ambitions, people I've met. I'll tell you why.

In part of her second letter that I didn't publish (mainly because I prefer to hear my praises sung in other people's fanzines), Leanne said 'How wonderful to have had the opportunity to have become so literary!' And yes, it is wonderful, the opportunity. What I have done with the opportunity is not so wonderful. I've enjoyed it, sure, and will go on enjoying it, in the sense that 'being literary' is the way I live. But like Leanne, I am 'burdened by the knowledge that I've wasted an awful lot of time' - not too burdened, mind you, because it is possible to realize truths about yourself, to accept them, and not to be too burdened. And when it comes to deciding just how and on what I have wasted time, I am at a loss. The one thing I am sure about is that I have not wasted time by publishing fanzines.

Readers with long memories may recall that I once said I had always wanted to be an anarchist but didn't know where to join - to which John Foyster replied (in *Philosophical Gas* 30) 'I should have thought that wanting to be a scholar and not knowing where to join would have taken up all your spare time.' John gets a bit impatient with me at times, mainly (I think: over the years I have learnt the hard way not to attribute opinions and feelings to John, except in fun, and this is serious) because, whatever I may have done in the way of being literary, I have passed up countless opportunities to become educated. I suspect that George Turner has feelings about this, too. Call me Autolycus, a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. I do a good imitation, especially in fanzines, of a learned man. It's easy. All you need is a little raw talent and *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. So, Leanne, one of the things I know about myself is that I am a clever, but not a learned, man.

I am also an ambitious man, but my ambition doesn't really focus on anything in particular. It used to. I wanted to be a publisher's editor. I've been a publisher's editor. It's okay. Even now I would love to be an editor for a publisher like Faber, or Oxford, or any of the university presses, but the possibility of working for anyone like that seems pretty remote.

On Monday I start work as a base-grade clerk in the Commonwealth Department of Social Security. I don't expect to enjoy the work, but it can't be much more frustrating than what I've been doing for the last eighteen months, and it pays better than being a freelance literary person. I'll have people to talk to. When I come home and read a book or watch television or type stencils, I won't feel guilty. The best thing about it is that it might give me a kind of psychological breathing space, a chance to work out just what kind of literary person I want to be.

And that's all for this time.