



PARERGON PAPERS

Number Seven



PARERAGON PAPERS

are published for seventeen poets and a woman who once met Kafka's aunt by John Bangsund, PO Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067, Australia, and this is the seventh issue, commenced 26 January and nominally dated February 1978. This journal supports postmen, the Morgan stencil manufacturing company, the Dylan Thomas Revival and Stevens for DUFF. In an effort to combat inflation, stop the world going to hell in a handbasket and convince the Australian Tax Office that this is a fair-dinkum business venture, the subscription to these papers is hereby reduced to A\$5.00 for ten issues — but I still prefer letters

oo

I HAD A LETTER today from the Literary Editor of *The Irish Times*.

He asked me when I was going to stop publishing rubbish about Flann O'Brien, Oliver St John Gogarty and Keats & Chapman, because I'm giving Irish literature a bad name. No he didn't. I just made that up. What he said was that *The Irish Times* stopped reprinting Myles na Gopaleen's column some years ago. He mentioned also that Dublin has no literary journals at present, and that he doesn't play cards. If you find the latter a little obscure, so did he. 'Perhaps you could enlarge on this sometime,' he said. I did. I wrote back to him immediately and told him to re-read *Lavengro*.

There's a photo of the Literary Editor (his name is Brian Fallon) in the issue of the IT that was wrapped around his letter. He reminds me of someone. I think it's the bloke who runs the milk-bar round the corner in South Road. He doesn't look Irish either. Nice looking chaps, both of them, but the Literary Editor looks younger, about my age. Far too young, really, to be a Literary Editor of a major newspaper. I mean, that's what I've been told when I've applied for jobs like that.

I must have a word with Aldiss about this when he's here in March. He was a Literary Editor of a major newspaper once, a long time ago, when he was about my age. It could be that practically anyone can get a job as Literary Editor of a major newspaper in the British Isles, whereas here you need to be a failed author of many years standing even to contribute to the literary pages, let alone edit them.

MY FRIEND PENNY, who has loomed large in these pages from time to time, is looming larger than usual in real life right now. I told her I had tried to find a suitable get-well card to send her, and she was very gracious about that, but I needn't have bothered, because she looks absolutely radiant. I might have known that Penny would enjoy her pregnancy: she's that kind of lady. Today — I'm not sure how it came up — she implied that I would never have this experience, which, on available statistical evidence, seems a safe enough observation. On the other hand, as I pointed out to her, odd things do happen. About an hour before I was speaking to her I had seen my doctor about some ear trouble I've been having, and he asked me whether I did a lot of swimming. I've never learnt to swim in my life. 'You've got Swimmer's Ear,' he said. He says I'll live.

I HAVE DECIDED what it is about the kind of writer that manages to have stuff published by firms like Rigby's that I don't like. I was talking to Penny today because I had taken in some stuff I'd edited for a book called *A Thousand Great Australians*, or something of the sort. I don't know how many people have contributed to this highly marketable (but pretty useless) volume, but I edited two of them, between them responsible for a hundred of *The Thousand*. I must say that one of my authors was quite competent: his prose was a little dull but his facts were incontestable, and it's facts I'm looking for in a book like this. The other author, whose name I dare not mention, since she is highly regarded in some circles, wrote a load of bullshit. She can't spell: okay, that's what an editor is paid to correct. She is careless when it comes to facts, such as dates and so on: okay again, that's my job, to correct her. But her one major, over-riding and unforgivable failing is that she trivializes her subject. There is nothing much I can do about that.

I'm getting close to the knuckle here, but one of this lady's subjects was a gent named Jorgen Jorgensen, and it just happens that Jorgen Jorgensen is one of my favourite characters in Australian history. The lady presents him as an object of derision, a fool, a con-man who didn't have the nous to be successful as a con-man and finished up as a convict in Van Diemen's Land and 'died in degradation in a Tasmanian ditch'.

He didn't. He had a heart attack in a public place. Pretty unromantic, but it can happen to anyone.

If I hadn't previously struggled with some of this lady's writings I might almost have been surprised that she had spelt his name 'Jorgenson' and described him as 'flambuoyant'. But to give her her due, she had looked up the readily available references on him, from West's *History of Tasmania* to the latest *Australian Encyclopedia*, all of which, sadly, go on repeating old, silly and misinformed stories about the man.

The definitive study of Jorgen Jorgensen is *The Viking of Van Diemen's Land* by Frank Clune and P. R. Stephensen (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1954) — a book that is not impossible to find if you really want it. It's in most good libraries, and most good booksellers have copies from time to time. This is what Clune and Stephensen have to say about Jorgensen, in summing up his career:

He spent twenty years in Australia in two separate sojourns, 1801-1805 and 1826-1841. In his early period he was an officer on HMS *Lady Nelson*. He took part in the discoveries of Bass Strait, Port Phillip, King Island, the Tamar River and the coast of Queensland; in the first British settlements at Port Phillip, Hobart and Newcastle; he was acquainted with Governor King, Lieutenant-Governor Collins, Flinders, Bass, Grant, Murray, Baudin and many others of importance in Australia's annals. In his second period, returning in ignominy, he was entrusted with the leadership of exploring parties in Tasmania; he discovered Lake St Clair and Mount Bischoff; he took a prominent part in the suppression of bushranging and in the 'Black War'; he was a contributor to pioneer journalism; he was the author of a work on economics and compiled a dictionary of the native language. While in London he was acquainted with Sir Joseph

Banks, Alexander Macleay, Lord Castlereagh and other men of great influence in Australian colonial affairs. Apart from his Australian associations he was, at various times, a self-appointed ruler of Iceland; a British Foreign Office agent on the continent of Europe; the author of a book which was given a review of twenty pages in the *Edinburgh Review* in its heyday. He was present at the Battle of Waterloo; knew the Duke of Wellington; met Goethe; was particularly friendly with Sir W. J. Hooker, the eminent botanist.

And so on. In short, a rather interesting bloke altogether — but unless you read Clune & Stephensen you'll just have to take my word for it.

Surprising as it may sound, I have not read the biographies of a thousand great Australians (and a lot of the biographies I have read are of people who didn't make it into this book), but a comparison here and there of the little I know with the brief biographies in the book suggests that a great many of The Thousand may not have led such dull or oddball existences as their brief-biographers present.

And so another forest somewhere becomes another non-book. But I shall buy a copy of it, because it has information I need, and I'll use it. But I won't entirely trust it. Sad, isn't it.

12 February The book I should be editing at the moment instead of writing this stuff (oh, yes, I'd better mention that I resigned from the Public Service on 31 January and returned to work in the real world) is a delightful study called *The Destruction of Victorian Adelaide*. I don't want to say too much about this just now, because I could go on for pages, and I really must finish my work on it this weekend, but it's a marvellous little book.

The irony of it is that I can see the destruction of Victorian Adelaide going on right outside my window. There's a bloke over the road, up a ladder, knocking bits off his house with a sledge hammer.

It's his house. He can do what he likes with it. The man isn't an idiot, I would say, from my observation of him these past twenty months. He hasn't taken to his house with a sledge hammer because he's some kind of nut. So why is he destroying what little charm and distinction it has? I don't know, unless it's because he just isn't aware that he possesses something that has some beauty, some charm, some distinction. And if that is the case, maybe I am at fault, for not making his acquaintance in all this time and not telling him how much I have enjoyed looking at his old house through my front window.

GUFF I'm not sure what GUFF stands for, but I'm standing for it.

Leigh Edmonds has started a fund to send an Australian to the World SF Convention in Britain in 1979, and I have declared my candidacy. The thought of finding enough money to get me to Britain and back appals me, but where there's fandom there's a way (I tell myself), so I'm standing. The fund starts officially this Easter in Melbourne, I gather. I'll keep you posted. (see p. 91)

26 February What the bloke over the road was doing, up a ladder, knocking bits off his house with a sledge hammer, was preparing it for a facelift (as they say in the trade). A few days after I last wrote, a truck pulled up with a load of cladding, and a couple of energetic young blokes started tacking lengths of thin timber supports to the front of the house. Then they knocked off a few projecting bits the owner had overlooked, such as the veranda, and within a few days the house front looked (from a distance) as though it had just been built - of cream brick. Actually it's quite a neat job. I can't see the sense in it, but it's neat. The philosophy of it, though unforgivable, is perhaps understandable: to restore the original random squared slate front, long plastered over, would have been an arduous, long and perhaps tricky job. But asbestos fibre sheets printed to look like cream bricks? No, it isn't right. It's a bit like having a brick feature wall inside the house, plastering it over, and hanging brick-patterned wallpaper on it.

The cladding has covered up the vents under the roof, so it's going to get very hot under that roof - anything up to 80°C, if I can believe Tom Jenkins and John James, authors of a book I proof-read last week called *The Wise House*. Not having a veranda any more isn't going to do much for physical comfort in that house either.

The windows in the front room now look grotesquely tall and thin. They were tall and thin before, but the elegant window surrounds made them look just right. The bits of the surrounds that weren't knocked off have now disappeared under the fake brick cladding. The oddest thing of all is that the house now looks much bigger and taller than its neighbours. The house next door has been thoughtfully preserved (or perhaps restored, but it looks original): it's beautiful. The house next door to it has been updated a bit, but there has been a good compromise between the original attractive features and the modernization considered desirable by its owners. I should have reserved the word 'neat' for this third house; compared with it, the first house is positively a shambles. So: three houses, originally identical, now utterly different; and the first looks enormous, the third large, and the second almost tiny between them.

In my drawing opposite (I hope there's a drawing opposite: I've just spent an hour doing it)(yes, John McPharlin, on stencil, the way I showed you two nights ago) I have tried to show roughly what I mean - and I don't think I'll go in for this sort of drawing professionally: it's too bloody hard. You will just have to imagine some of the things I am unable to convey in the drawing. No.79 has the 'cream brick' cladding; the heavy line under the eaves and extending across the front is a single row of 'red bricks'; there is a fake red sill under the windows, and a fake red brick footing; there is no vegetation at all in front of the house; the front fence is of plain cyclone wire. No.81 has what I have called random squared slates (I'm not sure whether that is correct), and their deep chocolate colour is relieved by white window and vent surrounds, quoins and architrave; there is a mass

of foliage between the veranda and the street (that's where the stylus went right through the stencil — something you'll have to watch, McP), and a huge tree in the street shades the projecting front room; there is a tasteful white awning over the front windows; the front picket fence is stained to match the slates, but the side fences are white, as is the screen at the western end of the veranda (so the owners can actually use the veranda: it must be a very pleasant little nook in there). At no.83 the slates have been plastered over lightly (close up you can see them faintly outlined) and painted pale blue; there is white outlining, as at no.81, except on the architrave; a flat-topped veranda, rather like a car port, has replaced the original; the veranda supports and front fence have unobtrusive white-painted iron scrollwork; there are two pot plants on the veranda, two more that I've just noticed, one on either side of the projecting



79, 81, 83 Hughes St, Mile End

front room, and a small tree in the street. I had noticed the truncated chimneys on no.83 before, but it wasn't until I did this drawing that I noticed the bits cut off the chimneys on no.81. And speaking of bits cut off...

If you look closely at no.81 you will notice that it has a little wooden spire at the front. I know nothing about architecture, but it seems to me that that little spire puts the finishing touch on this building, drawing the whole design together and making artistic sense of it. Until a few days ago, no.79 had a spire, too. Then the owner went up his ladder one last time and, as if one final symbolic act were required, hacked the spire off. The mutilation was complete.

I think I'd better stop this sort of talk. One day last year, John Foyster accused me of joining old-building fandom (or something like that), and I'd better ease up before he thinks I'm aiming at becoming its secret master.

But I can't deny that my work for the National Trust, and more recently for Rigby's (they've given me some fascinating books on Australian architecture to work on), has made me rather interested in the subject — and it's a bit of a change from my endless rambles in these papers about science fiction.

POWER, INFLUENCE, GLORY &c One of the marvellous things about being official editor of an amateur publishing association is the marvellous letters you get from all kinds of interesting people. One of the rotten things about it is having to answer the others.

On the whole I've enjoyed my term as Official Bloody Editor of ANZAPA, but I'm not enough of a book-keeper, legalist or masochist to seek another term. I don't mind really whether Gary Mason or Derrick Ashby succeeds me as OBE. If it's Gary, I am committed to helping him in various ways; if it's Derrick I'll have to pay absurd amounts of money to get my stuff to Melbourne. Either way I lose, so I don't mind which of them wins.

Voting for the new OBE of ANZAPA hasn't finished as I write, but you won't see what I write until he is elected, so I don't feel that I am influencing the voting in any way by writing about certain of ANZAPA's affairs now.

I had a circular from Derrick Ashby a few days ago, and from what he said I rather got the impression that he didn't quite understand how ANZAPA has changed since he joined a few years ago. Gary's experience of ANZAPA goes back to the association's earliest days, but he dropped out for quite a few years, so maybe he doesn't know quite what he is in for either.

Derrick says (if memory serves: Sally has just cleaned up my study again, and I can't find a damn thing here) that the OBE is not an administrator, or something to that effect. Well, chaps, I have had news for you: the OBE of ANZAPA has enough work these days to keep your average base-grade public servant feeling overworked for weeks at a time. No kidding. For a start, fans are notorious address-changers, and we now have close to fifty of them to keep track of. Also we have an ever-increasing waiting list, and the OBE is now obliged to keep a record of whether the people on that list have or have not acknowledged receipt of the official organ.

Also, about twice a week on average, we get letters from people who want to know what ANZAPA is all about, people who want us to do things for them that we are not empowered to do, and members who want to go on being members without meeting the basic membership requirements. Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Gary and Derrick, I wish you luck!

I haven't always kept it up, but I have tried to keep an ANZAPA diary, with notes on who has written to me or sent me something, who I have written to, and what money has come in or gone out in the course of this. I keep all ANZAPA correspondence in a special file, and before I start work on the official organ I go through that file to see what questions need an official airing and what matters of importance to us all need a bit of discussion or perhaps even a vote.

It's not really the kind of thing you would do for a living, if you had the chance, and as a hobby it seems just a little ridiculous. But there it is. I've enjoyed it. Long live my illustrious successor! Longer still live ANZAPA!

HANK AND ME There was a time when I admired Henry Thoreau more than any philosopher I'd ever heard of. Even now I like him a lot. He was a kind of articulate John Alderson — and I make no secret of my immense admiration for John Alderson. He's one of the most wonderful men I've ever met (even if he can't spell for nuts). John is also one of my rival candidates for GUFF, so I'd better not say too many nice things about him.

Hank Thoreau once said: Bloody hell! (No, he probably said that, but that wasn't the quote I had in mind, dammit!) Thoreau once said something to the effect that a man who gets lots of letters probably hasn't heard from himself lately. (All my references have let me down! But I know he said *something* like that! He really did, trooly-rooly!)

More in Thoreau than in anger I bypass the point I had in mind to make, and press right on to a letter from

JOHN RYAN
PO Box 24
Yeronga QLD 4104
18.2.78

On Thursday, while Mr Firestone thought I was working for him, I was down at Griffith University doing what we in the trade call a bit of research. Because *Meanjin* is indexed only up to 1964 or 1965, I had to wade through the contents pages of the later issues. In the process I came upon these bits on Brian O'Nolan. You may already have seen them, or at least be aware of them. I enjoyed Sheridan's little anecdote about 'publishing obscene matter in Old Irish' — makes one want to know exactly what O'Nolan wrote.

(You really do have a dirty mind, John Ryan! But thanks for thinking of me. I have seen the article by Niall Sheridan: it was in the special O'Nolan obituary issue of the Irish Times, a copy of which Fergus Linehan — the John Ryan of the south of the north — sent me some years ago. The issue was dated 1 April 1971, to be exact. Dr Semmler's article, however, I had not seen before. If enough readers are interested, and Dr Semmler is willing, I'd be delighted to reprint it some time.)

Funny thing about O'Nolan. I had never heard of him until his name popped up in your writings, but then, I'm a bit iggerant on this litichure business. Some six months after first reading about him, the ABC started to read *The Third Policeman* each morning about 10am. I missed great gobs of it but whenever possible I tried to work it so that I was driving around (if only around the block) about that time of day to catch it.

A similar thing had happened to me with Peacock. For ages I had thought that old Thomas Love was just some sort of figment of the fertile Bangsund imagination or something. Then, a couple of years back, the ABC did a reading of one of his books. Can't recall the title... '(Something) House'?

(No. Probably 'Nightmare Abbey': the ABC is rather fond of that, and it lends itself to dramatization.)

In terms of ABC readings, it seems to me that you might be the local equivalent of the central character in Walt Disney's *The Barefoot Executive*. You are forgiven if you haven't seen this film. When one has young children, like the Ryans, you get stuck with some lulus of shows. I wouldn't mind all that much if Jan didn't nod off to sleep while such shows are on. I just can't sleep sitting upright in a car seat at a drive-in. It seems to me that the ABC staff must be reading PP — and when you write at any length about an author, they choose him for their readings. If word gets out, the payola from authors may make PP a viable financial proposition, and you can spend the rest of your days enjoying yourself, writing what you want to write. It's a nice thought.

I'll say it is! Roll up, folks! Parergon Papers — the publication that puffs puerile pen-pushers for pecuniary purposes! (Payment in advance, no cheques accepted.) Why, on those terms I'd even publish nice things about

JOHN BROSNAN
23 Lushington Road
London NW 10
17.2.78

So Peter Darling has got married! I must send him a dirty card at the earliest opportunity. Who is Elizabeth? (*Elizabeth Darling, of course! Formerly Elizabeth Foyster. The lady who provided you, Brosnan, with the best fanzine title you've ever had: Why Bother?*)

I'm grateful for your piece on the actual voting figures in the recent Australian election. I shall use them as ammunition in my next letter to my Tory mother, who has been going on about Big Mal's 'landslide' victory. I was very disappointed when I heard the results, and immediately went and pissed up the side of Australia House. Of course it didn't come as too much of a surprise — not as big a surprise as the events of November 1975. I was in Ireland at the time, which was a bit of a shock in itself, and I remember getting quite furious when I heard the news on the radio. 'This is the end of civilization as we know it,' I told Harry Harrison's dog (I was minding Harry's dog while he was in the States). The dog has since died, but I don't know if that's significant in any way.

Speaking of Ireland, a colleague and I have formed a film company there. It's called Finn Films Ltd, and we're busily trying to get a project off the ground. Our proposed film about a scientist who turns himself into a sharkman while trying to find a cure for cancer didn't get anywhere, so now we're writing a script about a film crew making a film in Ireland about a scientist who turns himself into a sharkman while etc. If that fails, I have another project up my sleeve — an Australian film to be called *Picnic at Dangling Dong*. It will be based on a little-known but true incident that occurred on Valentine's Day 1901 when 503 schoolgirls disappeared in the women's lav in the little town of Dong, near Wagga Wagga. Gordon Chater will play the schoolgirls.

Did you know Terry Hughes has a copy of *Down Under* 1 and is

familiar with the Black Triangle etc? No good will come of this, I fear. If he finds out about *An Echo of Jackboots*, I'm doomed. My past keeps coming back to haunt me. John Baxter gave me some old fanzines recently, including some ASFRs, and in one of them was a letter from me to you on the subject of science fiction. Now you're going to find this hard to believe, John, but I sounded like an utter cretin! Amazing, isn't it?

No. In those days I would publish just about anyone - Bronner, Delany, LeGuin, Pohl, Harrison, Paul Stevens: anyone who cared to write, more or less. I'm not denying that even you had a letter in ASFR, John, but I can't find it, which is a shame. I'd thought of reprinting it here, to impress Terry Hughes, then flogging it off to the ABC for their morning readings.

The next letter purports to come from the Comptroller of the Currency, Administrator of National Banks, Washington D.C. - but we are not fooled. That office is a well known front for the CIA's Australian Fandom Infiltration Unit, and the letter is in fact from

TERRY HUGHES
4739 Washington Blvd
Arlington
Virginia 22205 USA

Thank you for the hours (and days)
of reading pleasure provided by
the package you so generously sent
to the Arlington wastes. I have
found both your *John W. Campbell:*
an Australian tribute and Baker's

The Australian Language to be books of a truly thought-provoking nature. I read each slowly, at times chuckling, at times savoring the information provided, and allowing my mind to journey down any spur tracks that presented themselves. It has been a highly enjoyable experience.

(Psst! You there, Brosnan? Is this the way he writes to you? Yes, I thought so. A man to watch, I agree.)

I found it very interesting to read the 1972 (and earlier) comments by people on Campbell from a 1977 perspective. Redd Boggs's ideas seem to have fared the worst. As I was reading his suggestions that Campbell was kept on by Big Business (or Government) interests so that he could continue to divert the Cosmic Minds of science fiction readers so that they will remain unaware of what was happening to them and the United States, I was expecting it to turn out to be a huge put-on, a spoof of paranoid fantasies. Yet, as I read further into the piece, it became obvious that Redd was quite serious about his propositions. This is one piece that looks far more foolish now than it must have then. *(Please pardon me, Terry and readers: I promise not to interrupt again. Redd's piece was written in June 1970. It didn't seem at all foolish to me at the time, and even now I don't think it should be written off as folly. I was pleased to have Redd's permission to present it to the Melbourne SF Club's Campbell Symposium, and to reprint it in the book.)* JWC has been buried for many years now, but his magazine continues. Without Campbell, *Analog* continues to flourish - its circulation no longer

climbing (it has leveled off around the 100,000 mark), but still leading the field by a huge margin. The new editor, Ben Bova, writes editorials but has yet to mention a 1977 version of the Dean Drive.

The other contributions were of a less controversial nature, although no less interesting, and have held up much better. Your own 'John W. Campbell and the Meat Market' was an extremely well written and very effective article on the man's impact on the lives of those who felt they were familiar with the man and his works and those who forgot his name and only recalled a particular story of his. Your observations have lost nothing to the passage of time and remain as true and important today in Highly Advanced 1977 as they were yesterday in Primitive 1972.

I have thrust your collection of impressions of JWC by various people onto those souls who have entered my apartment in recent weeks. On one occasion Lou Stathis began a discussion of Campbell with me, and I told him of your book and showed it to him when we got back to my place. He soon became lost in it, even as I did, so you may be getting an order for a copy. Tom Perry spoke of ordering it from you, too. Just don't get the impression that I spend all my time discussing Campbell with fan friends! What a blow that would be to my sweet faanish reputation! Accused of having Serious Thoughts about science fiction and expressing them in front of others. *shudder* Be quiet about this and I promise never to tell anyone that you are an employee of the CIA. ...

As a thorough guide to the language of an English-speaking country, Sidney Baker's *The Australian Language* stands out as a splendid example of what such a book should contain. I have not read the entire book. What I have done is to read most of it by a random hopping pattern. I would follow certain ideas or usages throughout the book, rather than read chapter after chapter in order. The development of a language is seldom logical, so why should I set such a restriction on the way I read a book on the topic? Baker expresses his viewpoints very well. As I read through this book, more and more expressions became clear to me. While Baker's word development ideas do not necessarily hold true for the US, many times Australian and American idioms are remarkably close.

There are exceptions, of course. For instance, in the section on vulgarisms Baker says that 'blood oath' derived from 'bloody oath'. I have always associated 'blood oath' with 'blood brothers'; does Australia have this term?

Sure does. I don't know anyone who uses the words, but Baker's 'blood oath' apparently is just a contraction of 'bloody oath'. You would understand readily from the verbal or written context whether an Australian meant 'My word!' or a bond sealed with blood.

One thing that mildly surprised me was that in the vulgarisms section Baker notes that 'bloody' used to be represented by a

long dash because the word was too dirty to put into type. Such practices were common in books and the press for some time but such restrictions have been reduced over the years. Yet in his own book Baker does not use 'fuck' but instead has 'f**k'. Do you know if this was his choice or that of the publisher? It certainly struck me as amusingly ironic.

Probably the publisher's. The book was published in 1966, after all, when Peyton Place and suchlike filth was banned here. The words you discuss in the paragraph I've just suppressed (mustn't corrupt my readers in Queensland, Terry) are not infrequently heard on tv here, and are repeated ad nauseam in the American films that Sally and I try to avoid. What I find really odd is that Americans manage to make 'bullshit' sound filthy. Australians, in some way I can't explain, use and accept the word as meaning 'nonsense', not taking much notice of the excremental factor; the emphasis is on the bull rather than the shit. Patrick White got into a bit of strife recently when he spoke of 'the soft plop-plop of Australian bullshit' - but even that doesn't sound as vulgar as, say, the way Gene Wilder used the word in Blazing Saddles. Maybe it's just the accent.

I hope to expand my collection of such books to include a compilation of Canadianisms, as well as one of New Zealandisms. I already have one good dictionary of slang that contains many idioms that are no longer used but still interesting to read about. The Baker book is the only one I've seen in a reasonably priced paper edition. I hope it starts a trend.

Me, too. I've never seen a copy of Mencken's book, but I feel sure it must exist in a cheap edition. The only halfway useful book I have on the differences between American English and English English is Norman Moss's little compilation, What's the Difference? From this one realizes that Australian English (the everyday stuff, not the slang) tends to be more American than English. ::: Still waiting for those orders for the Campbell book, Terry. Maybe Lou and Tom sent them to the old Canberra address in the book. You may be bored stiff to learn that the Meat Market of the title has been acquired by the Victorian Government for use as an arts and crafts centre.

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY DEPT We'll start with mine and go on to Derrick Ashby's. John Foyster said he hadn't read a solitary book on my list in last issue, and wasn't particularly interested in doing so. 'Are we growing apart?' he asks. In the best sense, John, yes. In the sad sense, I hope not. Leanne Frahm (my subscriber, bless her) says, off the top of her head, that Whitlam, Crean, Cairns and Hayden were the four Labor Treasurers, and demands to know whether she is correct; if not, I am duty bound to reveal the answer in this issue. Right on, Ms Frahm! Leanne also asks

about streels: 'This obscure word appeared in "Ringsend" by Gogarty; it does not appear in my little dictionary. Is it (a) an Irish colloquialism? (b) a misprint for strolls? (c) a Gogartyism combining staggers and reels? or (d) an example of your own personal whole-heated simplemindedness?' With respect, ma'am, you need a better dictionary — but you worked it out pretty well anyway. Shorter Oxford says

Streel, v. Chiefly Anglo-Ir. 1839. (Cf Ir. *straoillim*, to trail, drag along on the ground.) intr. To trail on the ground; to float at length. Also of persons, to stroll, wander aimlessly.

Leanne claims to be saving her interesting experiences, thoughts &c to publish in ANZAPA when she eventually becomes a member. 'It doesn't really matter if it's all out of date by then: if Marc Ortlieb can go back to pre-natal foetal memories, or thereabouts, to fill out his pages, I can go back a couple of years.' Then she goes on to tell me about her interesting experiences, thoughts &c. Delightful.

I've read Foyster's remarks on Derrick's *Scrabblers Almanack* ('a possible contender for most boring ANZAPAZine of the year ((if not the decade))'), and I'm glad I did, because otherwise I might have started listing this household's scrabble scores. Hell, why not?

Judy and Allan Cameron taught me to play scrabble, about 1960. They were good: Allan knew Milton almost by heart, and just about all of Milton's odd words are in Oxford, so he had an edge on us, but Judy was very well read, too (I'm not sure whether she discovered Peacock before her sister Ann/Luigi introduced me to him, but I wouldn't be surprised if she did). One weekend at their beautiful old house at Montmorency... Hell, I get all cut up with nostalgia, thinking of those days! Where are you, Judy and Allan? (Croydon? I've just looked at the Melbourne phone book. Memo self: send inquiring postcard urgentest.) One weekend, as I say, they taught me to play the game, and I spent an hour or so going through the dictionary and listing two-letter words, an exercise that has served me well ever since, to the disgust of opponents who have never encountered the two-toed sloth (ai), the Scottish sweetheart (jo) or the printers' measures (em, en). Judy and Allan were in the habit of recording really outstanding scores in the scrabble box itself, where they wouldn't be lost, and I adopted this idea. My records, Derrick, therefore go back to 29 August 1963 (when I won with 257, my father scored 218 and my mother 173, total 648). The only scores I've recorded under 600 are there because of impressive individual scores (e.g. 18.12.65: Diane 111, Mum 135, me 345, total 591). The best individual and total scores occurred on 18.1.70: Diane 157, me 563, total 720. Much more interesting than the scores (which aren't anything special to really good players) are the people noted in that box. Example: 12.5.70, me 260, Diane 203, Mike Horvat 156, total 619. When that game was played, the US Army fondly imagined that Mike was in Sydney (or possibly even

at his desk in darkest Vietnam). That's why Mike is invariably nice to me in correspondence and in fanzines. He knows we could have him court-martialled yet, my scrabble box and I.

MORE GUFF I know, I know. Back on page 81 you said to yourself: He won't go through with it. You were right. Sal and I couldn't afford to go to Melbourne for Easter, so the thought of going to England next year became just plain absurd. Thank you, my loyal nominators, but it's impossible.

To the best of my knowledge, the four candidates for GUFF are John Alderson, John Foyster, Eric Lindsay and Gary Mason. It's a pity we can't send them all, for each deserves to win. Who, then, am I supporting? All of them - didn't I just make that clear? - and Foyster in particular.

MORE MUMBLING GAELS The Lone Scrounger (masked magpie of Martin Place) - or Kevin Dillon, to disclose his secret identical - recently sent me some more stuff about Brian O'Nolan, a review of *A Flann O'Brien Reader* (Viking, US\$15) from Time magazine, 9 January 1978. And he sent me a letter from the Sydney Morning Herald by a Famous Rigby Author. I think Kevin sent me the latter for my general information, but I was more interested to see the amazing spectacle of a Famous Rigby Author unedited (or edited by journalists: same thing). I quote the concluding paragraph:

Included in those losses will be sales missed while the publishers take their time about deciding when (or, indeed, if) to bring out replacement impressions of the lost books.

I don't know if (or, indeed, how) to comment on that.

From a story in the Melbourne Age:

'At one stage, we thought the zinc-air battery was the answer and we even got some British Government money for the research,' he said. 'But, after five years, we had to give it away.'

An advertisement in all major daily newspapers:

VICES

I.A.C. PUBLIC HEARING

The Industries Assistance Commission will hold a public hearing for its inquiry into Vices at the time and place listed below...

Melbourne, of course. Billy Graham said Melbourne was the most moral place he'd ever visited, and he would know. No messing about in Melbourne with vices unworthy of government assistance.

A bloke on the telly the other night said 'In the fishermen's view there is a catch to this.' Which reminded me of the lady advocate of nuclear power, interviewed on ABC radio last year, who said that stories of accidents at the power plants had been blown up out of all proportion. This sort of unfortunate choice of words I call 'the naval backwater syndrome', and when next I put balls to stencil I might tell you why. (IBM balls, silly!)

IF IT'S FRIDAY, THIS MUST BE CANBERRA

Well, it's just barely Friday in Adelaide (11.57pm, Friday 31 March, to be exact), and Canberra — where Brian Aldiss has spent most of today — is now almost half an hour into tomorrow. Last night he looked just a little apprehensive at the thought of two days in Canberra. I explained to him that Australians rubbish Canberra for two reasons: the people who don't live there hate it because it represents government and overpaid public servants and so on; the people who *do* live there have mostly come from somewhere else, and they've taken some time to get used to the place, and now they wouldn't want to live anywhere else, and they know it, but they keep up this pretence of hating the place — partly because they don't want thousands of outsiders moving in and turning their neat, well-ordered little town into another Sydney or Melbourne. I think that's roughly what I said to Brian Aldiss last night at the Botanic about Canberra.

We talked about lots of things last night at the Botanic — that grand old pub on the corner of North and East Terraces that looks like an architect's idea of a wedding cake. And the night before we talked about lots of things at the Norwood pub, a place I like to take visiting sf authors to, partly out of sentiment, partly because it's right opposite the Norwood post office, where I have my box; if there's anything in the box, and the conversation gets boring, at least I have something to read. I can report that on the three occasions I have taken visiting sf writers there I have not been bored. I took Vonda McIntyre there on the hottest day of 1977, and Bill Rotsler on one of the coldest days; Brian Aldiss was *delivered* to Sally and me there by Kirpal Singh, a cheerful Sikh with a green turban who is doing something interesting at the Adelaide University's English Department, and whisked away from us by Michael Tolley an hour or so later. Michael is a senior lecturer, I think, in the same English Department.

Aldiss is a marvellous bloke. I felt as though I'd just met an older cousin who'd made good in the Old Country but was still kin and a good feller for all that. I'd seen him briefly on tv the night before (Tuesday), and he had looked old and sententious. That's what tv and a long weekend in Melbourne can do to you. He came bounding in to the Norwood pub, looking fit, young and fannish, pointed at me, said 'Aha, Bangsund!' (or something to that effect), and within three minutes Sally and I felt we'd known him all our lives. I said to Aldiss 'How do you like Australia where do you get your ideas from what are you drinking?' and he said 'No, what are you drinking?' — and was over at the bar buying drinks for us before we quite knew what was happening. When he came back he said he couldn't remember the last convention he'd enjoyed so much, and I said tactfully that we'd heard things hadn't gone altogether smoothly in Melbourne, and he said he'd had the time of his life and that Australians were bloody marvellous; Mervyn Binns, Paul Stevens and others had even gone to the airport to see him off that morning, and he was quite touched. So was I. Even if he was lying through his teeth, this man made me feel proud of being an Australian and a fan.

I can't describe the feeling of rapport we got from this man. It was instant, it grew, and I think it will last. I hadn't expected it. I had expected some fencing and parrying, some kind of shyness or even suspicion on both sides, but that didn't happen. We just got right down to talking like old friends, as though we'd known each other for a dozen years or so (which we have, but not face to face), and it was delightful beyond expression.

And last night we did it all over again. We thought we'd said goodbye to Brian there at the Norwood pub, but John McPharlin cunningly arranged to spirit him away from his official engagements for a relaxed dinner at the Botanic, so we saw him again. One more meeting, I swear, and Aldiss and I would have been ribbing each other mercilessly. We were working up to it at the Botanic last night. I almost had him cornered on the subject of 'C. C. Shackleton', but the company allowed him to get away. At Norwood he told me he'd kept on missing Bruce Gillespie at the convention in Melbourne; finally he'd grabbed him by the shoulder and insisted he talk - and as he said this he grabbed my shoulder. I said 'This shirt will never be washed again.' He said 'It looks as though it never has been.' Childish humour? Not really, not ten minutes after you've met a man so eminent in his field that you feel you should really be discussing something important like usuforn robots as symbol of cultural attrition in science fiction.

In fact, mostly we steered clear of sf as such. We talked mainly about the people and ideas and incidents behind sf - and some of the talk was libellous and most of it hilarious. I can report though that I pinned him down on *The Malacia Tapestry* and elicited the confession that that book will have two sequels. For the first time, but not the last, Brian the fan gave way to Aldiss the writer, and Sally and I just sat there and listened to him in awe. But mostly, while we were with him, the writer was taking a well deserved break from the heavy literary-academic stuff and relaxing as a fan and a friend amongst fans and friends.

During Brian's visit I got thinking all over again about the relationship between sf and fandom. I thought about it so much that I've proposed to Michael Tolley the idea of discussing the subject on a panel at the Adelaide convention in June. Fandom can sound so awfully childish at times, and at times it is, but then, so is politics. I got Brian talking about Yugoslavia; he told some gorgeous stories and we discovered a shared enthusiasm for the writings of Rebecca West and Alexander Kinglake (no, let's be honest: one book by each). What the hell have *Eothen* and *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* and Yugoslavian politics got to do with science fiction? A lot, as it happens, but you discover it only in the kind of fannish atmosphere that prevails when Aldiss and seven other fans get together in a pub in Adelaide to relax and talk about anything that interests them.

In the next issue of Parergon Papers (published before this one) David Grigg talks about why he gave up publishing fanzines. I hope I've given you some idea here why I go on publishing them.

Cheers,
J.H.B.