

SIKANDER

This fanzine was first conceived in April 1979, and all the written contents were in my hands in mid-June. In early July I recieved the cover from an old school friend Paul Armitage, who while he reads stf, he isn't a 'fan'. This I immediatly sent off to Noel Kerr to have printed on (what I presume is his) offset machine. When he recieved the cover, Noel rang me up to tell me that the drawing would not reproduce well unless some offset plates were made, which would cost me an additional \$50. At that stage I couldn't afford that extra cost (I still can't), and I told Noel that I would get another cover for him to print. The fault lay in both Paul and I having just about no experience in the use of offset.

I asked Paul if he could draw another cover for me, to which he said he would. Unfortunately for me Paul is this year doing his Higher School Certificate which means that this year is the most pressure packed year he can expect to have. In any other year Paul would've been able to sit down with a piece of paper and a pen and a week later present me with a fine piece of art. I knew there would be at least a three month delay in getting this issue out.

It is now the 20th of November. At this very moment Paul is sitting the first of his exams. And I am four days away from boarding a Pan Am flight which will take me to USA where I am to spend the next three months (my parents are paying for this). In fairness to Eric, John and Leigh I cannot delay this issue any longer. And I am very sorry that Paul could not be part of this, my first genzine, which I am determined will not be reviewed as "a typical first issue" (except by some funny buggers).

I realise that the contents page is not wholly correct. Let's just say that Noel and Paul are here in absentia. I am also very sorry that you could not see one of Paul's fine drawings. I will make certain that the next issue has a cover by Paul. It will be out after I arrive back in Australia. Don't ask when.

Put together by Irwin Hirsh
279 Domain Rd
South Yarra
Victoria 3141
AUSTRALIA

and is available for trade, letter of comment, accepted contribution, old fanzines (but write first) or editorial whim. It can also be had for one dollar, but I would rather you used one of the other methods. Published whenever.

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Art Credits

Paul Armitage.....Cover

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Cover printed by Noel Kerr

Thanks go to Eric Lindsay for supplying some of the mailing labels which saved me from some of the tedious work at the addressing stage.

ADDRESSES OF CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Armitage, 37 Monbulk Rd, Belgrave, Vic 3160

John Bangsund, PO Box 230, Kew, Vic 3101

Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge,
NSW 2776

Leigh Edmonds is about to move to Canberra, so why should I give his present address?

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EDITORIAL MATTERS AND OTHER MATTERS

=====

Hi folks, welcome to Sikander, the fanzine guaranteed to...
No, I will not guarantee anything about this fanzine. Mean-
ter say, I'm not even sure how much this fanzine is going to
cost me, so how can I be sure about anything else?

As an example, I could guarantee that this fanzine - my first
genzine - would put Marc Ortlieb to shame, as his first
genzine was not as good as this. But the thing is, I have
never seen Marc's first genzine, and for all I know, it could
be better than this, ~~though I / somewhat / doubt / that~~.

And on the same note, I could say the same thing about John
Bangsund's, Leigh Edmonds', and Eric Lindsay's first genzines,
but I wouldn't want to say that, as - aside from the fact that
I have never seen their first genzines - they have kindly come
forward with articles for this fanzine. The mention of which,
makes me think that this would be an opportune time to present
the first of the said articles.

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IN THE BEGINNING by Eric Lindsay

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In the beginning there was the British Empire, on which the
sun never set, perhaps because He didn't trust the English in
the dark. Across the Atlantic, lending Portnoy a hand, were
the uppity colonists, many of whom had left the religious
persecutions of their native lands, intent on setting up a
society in which they could do the persecuting. Thus are
great and idealistic nations established, at Tea Parties.

The British, of course, were not exploiters of native
populances, and only established colonies in areas that the
Spaniards, Portugese, French and Dutch had left vacant, or
were careless enough not to defend. The British spent much of
their time establishing the rule of law, under which many of
the poor managed to become criminals, and thus subject to
deportation to the New World. When the uppity colonists set
up their own government, such exports became severely
curtailed. Something had to be done.

Now the British had some fine navigators, who had discovered
many hitherto unknown lands. There was a minor matter of
native aborigine settlement covering perhaps 40,000 years, but
since they lacked civilisation, in the form of gunpowder,
no-one took any more notice of their claims to have discovered
Australia than they did of the claims of the Dutch or French,

who didn't get round to settling the place.

James Cook was rather proud of the place, writing: "The discoveries we have made, though not great, will apologise for the length of the journey" (1770). Of late there has been opposition. In 1972 Phillip Adams claimed: "There is growing support for the idea of having Captain Cook posthumously court martialed, for having discovered Australia."

We all know how Australia was founded. In 1783, George III was forced to stop exporting convicts to the United States because of objections from the colonists. Although 18 people were hanged outside Newgate on a single day in 1787 that didn't really decrease the prison population much, and some people were getting squeamish about the whole affair, and raising questions about it. The solution arrived at was to export the convicts to Botany Bay in New South Wales, a place with a fine climate, according to Cook, and a peculiar animal called a kangaroo, that was excellent eating.

Now numerous adventurers had asked permission to start their own colonies, between 1783 and 1785, and been turned down by the government. Why then did the British government act with such great despatch on August 18, 1786?

Ken Dallas, of the University of Tasmania, suggested in 1952 that Botany Bay may have been settled as a stepping stone for attacking the Spanish in Peru. The better known Geoffrey Blainey of Melbourne University decided natural resources, the shipmasts that could be made of Norfolk Island pines, were the explanation.

Ged Martin, editor of a fine book The Founding of Australia (Male and Iremonger), mentions a joke made by his colleague Steve Dyer, to the effect that perhaps Australia wasn't meant to be colonised. When investigated, some very peculiar things turned up.

Important government decisions were not generally made in August. For one thing, the grouse shooting began on the 12th, and the politicians were blazing away at them on country estates. For another, the Thames was London's main sewer, and in warm weather no-one wanted to be anywhere near it, while Parliament House is right by the banks.

Since 1650 there has appeared, on maps of Canada, an area known as New South Wales. In 1786 it was certainly better known than the newly named New South Wales in Australia. As well, press reports of 20th September 1786 announced that the British Government was thinking of forming settlements in the

Hudson's Bay area. Not all that unusual. William Pitt's government had set up a colony at Toronto in 1784, and in 1790 was thinking of settling Vancouver Island. A colony half way between made sense. Besides keeping the convicts confined, thanks to the sub arctic terrain, it would be a fine base for whalers, whose catches were absolutely essential for the candles by which Britain's businesses were lit. As well, it would deny the site to Yankee whalers, for the competition from Nantucket was getting fierce.

Thus the scene is set. Lord Sydney jots down a memo for his bureaucrats, along the lines of "Send convicts to form a colony in New South Wales." Some clerk finds in the files the rejected plans for private colonies in New South Wales, dusts them off, sets up the ships and gives Lord Sydney the papers to sign. Now it is grouse season, and the place stinks, so Lord Sydney, like many politicians before and after him, glances at the things and signs them without reading the details.

Sometime afterwards he, and other members of Pitt's cabinet, read in the newspapers of the decision to colonise this area at the antipodeas.

What can they do? Admit to a mistake? That is not the political thing to do. They make excuses, and the colony goes forward, excusing its failures as a result of the poor breeding stock, and its successes a result of our own true grit and determination overcoming heredity. Thus did we become the most materialist country on earth, all through a public servant. Raise up your glasses, Australians, to the land founded by a red tape tangle.

(C) 1979 Eric B Lindsay

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IRWIN: I've been trying to come up with some sort of neatly, snappily written paragraph which is designed to gently let this fanzine flow from start to finish. The paragraph was going to remark about how at school, Australian history wasn't like that (Eric's article.) It was going to mention how each year, Aussie history was nothing more than 90% revision from what we had learnt in the previous years. I was also going to mention that Aussie history taught in school, was very dull and uninteresting as it didn't show how what happened is relevant to further events that happened in our history, and didn't show exactly why events happened. I was going to

mention how for all these reasons I stopped doing Australian history when I was about 12 years old. I was going to mention that if Aussie history taught in schools was like Eric's article I know I would have continued on with it. But the reason I haven't done all that is because I haven't been able to come up with some sort of punch line.

If you have flicked through this issue, you may have noticed that I haven't had much concern about making sure that each article doesn't start at the very top of the page. This does not reflect the laziness on my part, but that I think this sort of lay-out adds to the fannishness which I hope this fanzine will project.

You see, I am of the view that going to the trouble of filling up a fannish fanzine with lots of little fillas, with the idea of making sure each article starts at the top of a page, is a waste of time. To me, a fannish fanzine, should be a relaxed sort of fanzine, both for the reader and the editor. And from my point of view - as a reader - a fanzine which is set out in this fashion makes for a very relaxing read.

Of course I could go on, explaining and justifying the lay-out of this fanzine, but I strongly suspect that this sort of thing is not the most interesting sort of reading.

John Bangsund, though, provides an article which makes for a very interesting read, and I relieved to see that - after writing the above - John's article is starting here half way down the page, rather than on the first line of the next page.

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THREE WEEKS IN ANOTHER TOWN by John Bangsund

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I have it on good authority that during the three weeks I spent in Melbourne around Xmas/New Year 1972-73, I was drunk all the time and surly, nasty and generally obnoxious to everyone in sight. This comes as something of a surprise to me. It doesn't sound at all like the sober, congenial, courteous and (what was that adjective Gillespie used about me recently? - oh, yes:) mellow chap I have come to know and respect, so I am forced to confess that I don't believe it. (Perhaps it was someone else of the same name.) I know I didn't get to see everyone I have ever known in Melbourne, and many I could have easily telephoned, I didn't. Two lady friends who have been very close in the past, I saw only once. There is a reason for this slight reluctance to re-establish (or attempt it) old friendships and acquaintanceships, a

reason might emerge eventually as I write this. But I definitely do not recall being nasty to anyone. I even smiled at Mervyn Binns once, and snarled at my little niece and nephew in strict moderation (since I was a guest in the house.) Drunk - or pretty close to it - yes; I will admit that I was just that, once or twice - but, dammit, Xmas comes but once a year, and if a man can't get quietly blurred at the edges on a passable red while watching the Pakistanis playing a dashed good game of cricket on the telly at Xmas, what's the world coming to?

What did I get for Xmas, you ask? (Go on, ask. Ta.) One tin ham, three pairs underpants, one tin shortbreads, one fancy box exploding Japanese matches, one collapsing wine-rack with Bottle 1968 Kaiser Stuhl Bin 33 claret, three 1800' tapes, one Bulgakov novel, one Xmas cake, one sf paperback (which I'd read), one Renault 16 TS, one Edward Stewart novel, one packet mixed nuts, one magnificent volume of illuminations. And a wombat in a gum-tree. (No, I didn't get that. I've been after one for years, but no-one ever seems to think I might like a wombat in a gum-tree and I know I'll just have to go out and buy one eventually.) Bill Wright gave me one of the Rotsler Australia-in-75 badges from LACon, and let me look at his copy of the programme book. Robin gave me something, too. What was it? One box O'Grady's Whisky Sour Mix ("just add whisky")? No, he left those at my place last May. Ah, a cassette, yes. But mainly what I got for Xmas was a lot of hospitality and good talk with friends old and new. You can't ask for better than that.

On Wednesday 20th December, I drove into town from Burwood and walked into the Degraives Tavern, traditional meeting-place of Melbourne fandom for some years. My arrival surprised everyone except Diane, who knew I would be there, and Henry, the proprietor, who is surprised at nothing. Even as I reached the bottom step (assorted fans recoiling in horror or gasping at their rediscovery of a sense of wonder) Henry was calmly pouring me a complimentary glass of house red, which he presented to me at the bar with the words, "So you're back" - or something polite like that. "Yes, sir," I said. "I've been to Canberra and changed the government, and have returned for further instructions. Sir." "I still think you're a bloody spy," said Henry. "Merry Xmas." "And a merry Xmas to you," I said, raising my glass in salute. He refilled it. "Your friends are over there. You have noticed already. Good. Your wife looks very attractive tonight. I do not know what she sees in you, and I am not interested." Ah, it was

good talking to Henry again.

Elizabeth Foyster invited me to sit opposite her, which I did. Diane did look very attractive indeed, and it was very thoughtful of Elizabeth to keep me at the other end of the table. John Foyster came back from buying food, or some such unsocial activity, and said, "Ah, Banger. If you want something in the next Chunder! I'll need it next week." It felt good to be back. Harding walked in, bearing an enormous bunch of flowers. He caught sight of me, stopped dead, and simultaneously dropped his jaw and the flowers. A born actor, Lee. He joined us at the Paris End of the table, introduced me to Irene and said, "That's the John Bangsund!" "No!" said Irene, who is very lovely and an actor in her own right, "Not the John Bangsund?" "Not so loud," I said, "I'm supposed to be incognito." "You look more like inebriated," said Foyster. And so the merry night went on.

I wish I could remember everyone who was there. It was like a mini-con - at least two dozen of the elite of Melbourne fandom were there, plus Robin Johnson, who is more the pica size. Just about the only great&famous fans not present were Bruce Gillespie, who was home typing up an issue or three of SF Commentary, and Paul Stevens and Mervyn Binns, who had urgent business to discuss privately at a horror movie or something.

On the following Tuesday, Boxing Day, fannish history was made (in an unassuming kind of way) with the commencement of the First Australian Bring-Your-Own Convention. This non-event had been carefully unplanned by Gillespie and Edmonds - to the extent that I was under the mistaken apprehension that the thing was to start on Tuesday afternoon. It started on Tuesday morning. I was supposed to be Non-Guest-of-Honour or something, and a few people had started wondering whether I'd had too much to eat the previous day (I think they said eat) by the time I arrived. Interstate attendees included Paul Anderson and Alan Sandercock, and there were a couple of people from Zambia (I think it was). I couldn't see Kevin Dillon anywhere.

I had brought a stencil for Bruce to run off - a cover for the BYOCon's Do-It-Yourself Programme & Memory Book. A lot of people typed pages for this immortal volume, which Bruce ran off and distributed on the spot. There was a lot of drinking going on (which fills me with alarm for the future of Australian fandom, of course), Bill Wright was trying to teach people some evil board game he had brought back from the fleshpots of Los Angeles or Hagerstown or somewhere, Paul

Anderson was talking about sf, Robin was talking about Zambia, George Turner and I were talking about Dryden or someone, Harding was talking about practically everything (a born raconteur, Lee), and Mervyn was talking in rather uncomplimentary terms about the bloke who had just run into his car and near enough to wrecked it (a born loser, Mervyn, I sometimes think). Relieved that the bastard had run into Merv's Falcon and not my shiny new Renault, which was parked opposite, I had another glass or bottle or three, and next morning I woke up in Harding's living-room.

It didn't take Lee and Irene more than an hour or so to wake me up. I greeted them courteously, asked them for details of my conduct the previous night (for future reference), and suggested we go and pick up Leigh Edmonds and drive to the Foyster Farm. Lee sort of looked at Irene with a funny look, and Irene looked back the same way, and Lee said, "We've been asking you for the last hour or so when do you intend to pick up Edmonds so we can go up to Foyster's Farm." I looked at Irene. "Would you like some coffee?" she said. A wonderful little lady, Irene. "Yes," I said. So I had my breakfast and we went to pick up Leigh. He threw a few cats out of the flat, checked that he had his sausages and his score of the Shostakovich quartets, and we were on our way.

At Woodend (or was it Diggers' Rest?) we stopped for some more breakfast, and I walked over the road afterwards to investigate the public facilities. I emerged from same, and stood for a moment watching Leigh Edmonds walking slowly up and down the main street of Diggers' Rest (or was it Woodend?), his thigh-length hair gently flowing about him, silently conducting a Shostakovich quartet, and I felt quietly proud of him. Pimplly little Leigh, who not so many years ago had commenced a letter to me, "Dear Sir", who even more recently had been enmeshed with pop music and drugs and stuff, and I had exposed him to Mahler and Bach, and Harding had exposed him to Haydn and Penderecki, and here he was: walking up and down the main street of a quiet little Victorian country town, humming Shostakovich to himself from the complete score. He's a lunatic, I thought to myself.

Foyster was trying to get the portable barbecue thing started in the barn, since it was a Total Fire Ban day. He was immaculately dressed, as usual, in orange shirt, purple tie and old-slouch-hat-with-the-side-turned-up - which latter he was using, somewhat ineffectively, to fan the barbecue alight. John Alderson solved the problem by pouring some of his home-bottled Mallee Root Dry Red 1972 onto the reluctant

briquettes. In no time at all - scarcely more than two hours or so - we had a roaring barbecue that engulfed tall sausages at a single gulf, and someone handed around salad and stuff and it was a fabulous mess of good eating. Then we went and played cricket.

I have not played cricket since I was in theological college - indeed, there are some who would say I have never played cricket at all. In college I was always last to bat, and never ever bowled. My position was called drawback, if I remember correctly, or deep-way-out-long-stop. Something like that. What it meant was that I stood by the bank of the Gardiner Creek reading poetry, and when the ball came my way everyone yelled at me and I scrambled down into the creek to retrieve the ball. (I played the same position, more or less, in football, too.) In this game, on the Foysters' front lawn, we used a soft ball and everyone was allowed two chances. Someone bowled me out first ball, of course, before I could get my eye in, but under the second rule I was allowed to stay at the crease. (Maybe they made that rule up for me. I wonder about that, come to think of it.) After a while I started playing all kinds of fancy shots, hitting the ball in the process almost every time. I loved that part, but I hated running up and down between the wickets. I decided I'd had enough and started hitting catches. No-one caught them. One went into a pine tree, and it was a beautiful and memorable sight to see the cream of Melbourne fandom gathered in communion under that tree, hands upraised to catch my falling ball. It fell about three feet away from Tony Thomas's back, if I remember correctly. I was wearying. Sport is all very well in its place, on the TV and such, but to be involved intimately, as I was, was taking things a little too far. At last I succeeded in lobbing the ball straight up, someone caught it, and I retired gracefully to sleep off this unwanted exertion for an hour or two in the car.

I have suggested to the Australia-in-75 Committee that in the event of our being successful we might organize a game of grid-iron on Foyster's front lawn, using the same rules. I feel that our American guests would appreciate this. A soft ball, of course, and two chances at the crease. But of course - I am forgetting - you folk in America use a different kind of bat, don't you? (Memo Robin and Leigh: Check with experts such as Harry Warner Jr on correct bat to use in grid-iron.)

Later in the day, Robin played some tapes of the LACon banquet. We listened to Bob Bloch, Fred Pohl, Juanita and

Buck Coulson, Andy Porter and a whole stack of people we all know and love, and it was really great - except that they all, for some reason, seemed to have American accents. This disturbs me. I am sure Robin wasn't putting us on, so this must mean that American fans speak with the same kind of accent that we hear all the time on television. I am finding this difficult to comprehend. All these years I have believed, without thinking about it, that fans the world over speak with the same cultured kind of voices as Robin and Mervyn, Harding and Edmonds, Bill Wright and myself. Perhaps a few might affect a slightly outlandish (but lovable) lilt like Bob Smith's or Jack Wodhams's, but I never thought that some might have the same accent as Glenn Ford or Dick Nixon or Lesleigh Luttrell. Lesleigh Luttrell! Of course! Why didn't I realize it before? That's why Lesleigh didn't sound like a fan! The lady looked like a fan, of course, but sounded like an American. Even what she said seemed eminently fannish and sensible, but it sounded wrong somehow. Good heavens! - now I think about it, Mike Horvat talked like that, too, and Hank Davis and Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett and Bruce Townley and Ron Smith and Jack Williamson and Jean Jordan and... and... that tape from Jim Blish! American fans talk American!

Pondering this, I missed the third day of BYOCon - a party at Liz George and Peter House's place.

On the fourth day (my sweetheart said to me: four kangaroosters, three Foster's Lager, two knuckledusters, one whistling bunyip - and a wombat in a gum-tree) there was a party at Lee and Irene's flat. I arrived with a flagon of some muck or other and a boot-full of bricks. Lee had mentioned (often) his desire to build some book-cases out of Besser bricks and boards, and had insinuated (even more often) that the Renault had a large boot and I not a great deal to do in my spare time, so why don't we go to a brick shop and buy some Besser bricks? I was forced to steal some of the bricks I had left at my sister's place when I moved to Canberra, and dutifully transported these to the Harding schloss. He didn't want to know about it. "Later!" he said. So I sat down with Don Symons and Steve Solomon and Irene and John Litchen and John's lovely lady Monica Correa, and I listened, fascinated, as Don and John and Monica talked about Latin America. Don has travelled a great deal, and loves Latin America. John has probably travelled even more, and always seems to finish up in Mexico or Cuba or one of those places over there. And Monica... Monica is the sister of Chile's foremost sf writer,

Hugo Correa. I listened. I wish I'd had a tape recorder there.

That party was fantastic. Everyone was there, and anyone who turned up who didn't seem to be especially anyone became someone before the night was over. There was a delightful bloke talking to us at the table for quite a while (I should mention that I prefer talking at a table, and I didn't wander far from Harding's table all night), and eventually I found out that he was Roman Mazurak - one of my subscribers, bless him, but just a name until that night. I knew for sure that he was a subscriber when he said I'd never sent him anything.

Ah, a great night, and impossible to describe. Little incidents remain in the memory, along with a great big good feeling. Robin Johnson, in striped shirt, shorts, shoes and socks, dribbling an empty McWilliam's flagon, as soccer players are wont to do when they have no ball. Dancing cheek-to-cheek with Irene while everyone else was stupidly square-dancing. (Well, maybe it wasn't square-dancing, but it was awfully athletic and individual looking, and Irene is not a lady to be wasted like that.) After everyone had gone home or to bed there was still a little rough white remaining, and Robin, Roman, George Turner and I were the last to leave. I mentioned the bricks. The other three agreed to help me carry them in, and we did the job quickly and efficiently, given the circumstances. Lee and Irene's flat is upstairs, and we didn't feel like carrying all those heavy bricks up, so we placed them very carefully on the lower stairs in such a manner that we could close the door when we left - and anyone coming downstairs later in the morning would have to climb over them.

Roman said goodnight and walked off. George and Robin, who had possibly drunk more, got in the car. I dropped George off somewhere near where he lives, and drove round the corner to Robin's. He remarked that we hadn't had much of a chance to talk about Australia-in-75 matters. I remarked that the night was young yet, and if he had some coffee I would gladly talk with him. So I followed Robin into his flat, and he went off to the kitchen to make coffee, and when he returned I was fast asleep in his chair. I stayed the night.

I could go on indefinitely about the good times I had in Melbourne during those three weeks - getting to know Lee and George all over again, talking with Robin and Bill and Irene and John Julian and John Litchen and Paul and Mervyn and Leigh and Valme and many others, and meeting Lindsay Cox again and

carrying on where we'd left off last time (same joke, even). I could talk about the chess marathon with my brother-in-law, Barry, and the good times I had with him and my sister Ruth. I could wax philosophical about how I realized that I am no longer a Melbournian-in-exile, that for better or worse I am a Canberran; how I realized that some friends from the past must remain in the past now, others become closer friends than ever in the future. But it is after midnight, which means that it is now 23 January 1973 - Shayne McCormack's birthday (happy birthday, Shayne) and the day I return to work (happy work, John).

I will mention that I returned to Canberra on the 8th with my mother (spending a happy night with Irene and Noel Kerr, who stayed here for a week or so), had a quiet time playing scrabble and cards with her until the Friday, when I drove her over to Yass to catch the train home; that Shayne came down from Sydney on the Saturday and stayed (by day with me, by night with Helen and Leigh Hyde) for a week - a good week of fun and work; that last Saturday I drove to Sydney, met Mrs McCormack, and stayed in the tranquil/stimulating atmosphere of Lyn and Bob Smith's place, dined with Margaret Oliver, and all in all rounded out my holiday in the most happy and satisfying manner. It has been an excellent start to what I am confident will be a memorable year.

* * * * *

Postscript, 1979: I don't know why I was so confident about that, but as it turned out, 1973 was a most memorable year. There was the day I met Sally, for example, and the day Sally met George Turner; and the days when Sally met John and Monica Litchen (newly married), and Robin Johnson, Bill Wright, John Julian, Eric Lindsay, Leigh and Valma... Was there any fan who didn't meet Sally in '73? Despite that, she married me, early in 1974. (Oh, yes, she didn't meet Paul Stevens until we were married - another stroke of luck.)

Ah, 1973! Labor was in office and all seemed right with the world - my world, anyway. It was a good year for me. What I wrote on 22 January 1973 (part of it published here, the rest in ANZAPA and FAPA) brings back, to me anyway, the marvellously joyful feeling I had in those days about being part of fandom.

Since then I've moved from Canberra to Adelaide, from Adelaide back to Melbourne; we've had a World Convention and Malcolm Fraser; there's been, as someone said, a lot of blood under

the bridge since then. I haven't written much that you could call joyful in that time. But I still enjoy being a fan, believe me.

In an odd sort of way I even enjoyed Irwin's pestering me for an article for his fanzine. For one thing, I was honoured that he should want me in it. For another, I was delighted that he should keep up the fine old tradition of badgering contributors.

I'm just sorry that I don't have time to write something new, fresh, vibrantly original, for this issue. I console myself (what you do is your business) that just as old books often have new things to say to new people, old fanzine articles may have interesting things to say to new fans.

JB 30.5.1979

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IRWIN: 1973, was, for me, a good year as well.

For one thing, 1973 would be just about the most enjoyable school year I had. And something like that, must be the foundation for a very good year.

It was around about then, when I was football mad, and Carlton Football Club - my team - had a good year. They lost the Grand Final that year, which really hit me hard, but it did mean they were the 2nd best team, which meant that as a true blue Carlton fan, I got to see a goodly amount of success. That year, I went to the football 17 Saturdays out of a possible 26, and there had to be some pretty good reason to keep me away from watching Carlton on those 9 Saturdays.

On the 26th of May, I had what I suppose was a good reason. That was the day of my bar-mitzvah (something I have written a lot about, in another place.) Needless to say, it was a big part of my 1973 as I had spent the previous 9 months preparing for that one day.

I must of missed 2 or 3 of those football matches as a result of going up to Mt. Buller with the hope of getting in some skiing. They sure were wasted weekends, as that winter hardly any snow fell on the slopes at Mt. Buller. I was most disappointed about that, as the previous year I had, while going off a ski-jump, broken my leg. And I was determined to conquer that ski-jump, and I reluctantly had to wait till 1974 to fulfill that ambition.

I would have to say that the biggest part of my 1973, was this house. In the morning of the 6th of October, 1972, my parents bought this house at an auction, (and in the afternoon, Carlton won the Grand Final: what a marvellous day that was,) and we took possession in February 1973. For the next 8-9 months we renovated this house, and I grew to hate the whole idea of moving in. As very often we would be driving through the area, and we just had to stop, "Just for five minutes," and I'd be forced to spend the next two hours looking at every new nail that had been driven into the wall. It wasn't till we moved in - during the last week of 1973 - that I really appreciated this house, and the area.

1973 was also, possibly, the major year in me being in science fiction fandom. One day I picked up The Hobbit, went on to Lord of the Rings, and later read the fantasy novels of Ursula K. LeGuin, Katherine Kurtz, etc. For a while I wouldn't touch science fiction - titles like Have Spacesuit, Will Travel and R is for Rocket really turned me off. But one day I picked up a copy of Asimov's Foundation, and the rest is - as they say - history.

Oh yes, 1973 was the year when John Foyster was taller than Andrew Brown.

* * * * *

As some of you may have noticed from John's postscript, most of his article is a reprint. It first appeared in Philosophical Gas 18, back in February 1973, and appears here, with a few revisions. I could print the letter in which John tells me about the obstacles which stopped him writing a brand new article, but I think I will let John tell us about that in the next Parergon Papers, even if it takes him six months to get that out.

In his postscript, John mentions Aussiecon, a convention which is very important in Australia's fan history. Now we would like to have another worldcon down here in Australia, and as such there is going to be a bid for the 1983 worldcon. Well we at the Sikander editorial offices were wondering how the bid is going, and so we sent out reporter Scoop Edmonds to find out, and here is his report:

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QUIET NIGHT OVER ADELAIDE by Leigh Edmonds

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It is a cold clear night over Adelaide. The hour of midnight

approaches and everything is still and quiet. The halls of commerce are still, the typers are all sleeping under their dust covers, the duplicators rest from their long days churning, the staplers stir not in their dazed stupor after another day of being hit on the head, and even the ethnic cleaners who sing their quaint ethnic filksongs as they work have long departed.

All but the most disreputable fan clubs have closed their doors for the night and the at-home discussion groups for sercons have broken up. Only the diehards are still in the streets, mostly trying to find their ways home to their own beds and collections a little under the weather from too hard a collating session or a daring oneshot or two. In the suburbs all is quiet by this late hour. Even in the homes of the fringe-fans and neofans all are asleep or at least in bed. Only the insomniacs who have nothing else to do are watching the late-late movie, although earlier in the evening whole families gathered around the tv set to watch such favourite shows as "The Late Chunder! News", reruns of the everpopular "My Favourite SMOF" and "Charlie's Femmfans", the latest situation comedy hit "Ford and Foyster" and the ever popular show for the action minded, "The Wonderful Wide World of Conventions!"

Deep underground in the mail exchanges the night shift work solidly to distribute the previous days letters and fanzines to the mailboxes of the populace the next morning. The little oriental folks, who were selected for the job because they could not read any English but addresses (any normal fan couldn't handle the mail without trying to read it), worked from sundown to sunup to make sure that everybody has their mail waiting to welcome them in the morning and to give their day that extra and enjoyable start.

We drift high over the sleeping city in our MINNEAPOLIS IN '73 blimp, surveying a city at rest after another hard days fanac. Everything is quiet, dark and restful as it should be.

But what is this we see? A single light shines in the top storey of the tallest building in the city! What can it be? What could be keeping anybody up so late in such an important place? Let's use the spy-scope, shall we?

It's a large room, most of it is in darkness except a table with a large desk lamp on one end of it. Two people are crouched over the table studying pages of computer printout by the light of the lamp and conversing in hushed, urgent tones.

In the gloom it is just possible to see one long wall taken up completely with overflowing filing cabinets and the other wall is covered with charts and graphs.

The people at the desk are Roman Orszanski and Jeff Harris, the leading SMOFs of Adelaide fandom. Obviously we have stumbled upon their Secret Masters Back Room and we've caught them in the middle of their secret deliberations. This should be interesting. Hold on while I get the sound signal synchroniser tuned... Ah!... there we are...

"And these are the latest reports from the spy satellite over Sydney," says Roman as he offers yet another thick sheaf of computer printout to Jeff. Jeff looks at the lot glumly, "Do I really have to read it? If it's as depressing as the last lot..."

"It's worse. Just let me read you two key points." Roman takes the reports back and fumbles a bit as he tries to find the places he's tagged previously with pages ripped out of an old SF Commentary, and then comes to the spot. "Photographic reconnaissance suggests that in excess of 50 tonnes of fanzines are being exported weekly by air to Los Angeles and London for distribution to the rest of the fannish world..." He flutters through a few more sheets. "At this juncture it appears that the Eric Lindsay Memorial room party endurance epic is in its eighth day and more than fifty teams are still in the running".

Harris leaps up, and turning on a light which spots one of the wall charts, he runs a finger along a line and down to the base. "How can they do it?" he cries in dismay. "Our target is 50 tonnes of fanzines isn't due to be reached until three months before the bid is made." He goes along the wall to another chart and peers at it for a second or two. "And we still haven't got one party team that can go for even six days, not yet." He turns to face Roman. "What is the situation with our best team?"

Roman tosses the spy satellite report aside and flicks through another thick pile of printout. "Doctor Swift is supposed to be working on a new secret formula which will give undreamed of endurance at room parties to keep those Americans happy, but the latest status situation report says that she hasn't made any progress."

"How can we hope to run a Worldcon bid," cries Jeff, "When half our key personelle aren't performing properly." He stamps a foot in anger. Roman is about to make an explanation

but Jeff waves him quiet, "Yes, I know that she is dedicating herself almost exclusively to tending the Middlemiss sprained typing fingers, but surely she could drag herself away for a few minutes."

Roman leaps to his feet in a flash and rushes to the other end of the room where he crashes head first into a large padded wall panel. He falls to the floor, and after a few seconds, gets to his feet and trudges back to his seat at his table.

"I wish you wouldn't do that," says Harris, "I know it's the way you like to use to relieve your tensions and frustrations, but it worries me." Roman's voice carries just a tinge of sarcasm as he replies, "But it doesn't stink up the room like your setting fire to your beard for the same reason."

"Okay, okay," says Harris, pocketing his modified cigarette lighter. "Let's get back to business. We've looked at how the Sydney BNFs are performing... I don't know what we'd do without our spy over there, Jack He..."

"Don't ever say that name!" cuts in Roman, "The walls have ears you know."

"Sure, sure," says Jeff quickly as he begins pacing back and forth, passing Roman as he paces back and forth the other way. "We've really got problems, haven't we? The National Convention is only six weeks off and our efforts to show the rest of Australian fandom that we can mount a better bid than those Sydney Swine is being bettered by them at every turn. Our training programmes are all falling behind schedule and our key people are slacking."

"Yes," continues Roman, "Even though we've marshalled the whole of the city behind us and have massed rallies every weekend we learn that the Sydney people are going to go onto a twice-a-week schedule... and put away that cigarette lighter."

The two figures pace up and down the room, doubled over in worry. After a while Jeff Harris comes to stand behind the table.

"Look at this," he says, holding up a file, "Paul Stokes has been discovered off reading comics and has been reported to have been seen out with certain young femmfans. And when he's been told more than once that he is to concentrate on his critical work, and just for variety, dirty filk songs!"

"He claims it's for the research," puts in Roman.

"I don't care what he says, it's the bid that comes first!" He slams the file to the table and picks up another which he opens and glances at. "And how about Ortlieb and Smith. He's been told that the Goons are out-of-bounds for the duration, and as for this gliding lark... a fan could get killed, apart from the time it takes." He slams that file down and picks up the next one, "Paul Anderson, you wouldn't believe what it says here..." and then "Swift and Middlemiss you already know about!" He flings their file to the table loudly in frustration and looks up to see Roman lying, dazed, on the floor at the bottom of his padded wall panel.

Roman gets up and goes over to one of the filing cabinets and opens a draw, takes out an armful and goes to the table. "Here's a lot more of the lazy beasts." He takes up the top one. "Here's Gary Mason," he says dramatically. "It says here that he'd been backsliding dramatically, and look at that bit," he says stabbing at one line with his finger. Jeff takes the file and reads bugg eyes as Roman picks up the next couple. "Here's Clark and McPharlin, slacking too. My Ghod, what hope have we got!" He throws up his hands in frustration and the files flutter to the floor.

Jeff picks up another file, "Hey Roman, here's your file. I wonder how it came to be in that cabinet?" Roman makes an attempt to grab the file away from Jeff but it's too late. "Oh Roman," begins Jeff in dismay... but he is interrupted by the buzz of the office intercom which Roman is only too pleased to answer.

"Yes?"

"Your special assistant is here to report, sires."

"Very good, Miss Arnott, send him in this very moment." The intercom clicks off. "It's our special assistant back from a special assignment," but Jeff is too busy reading to pay attention.

The door at the other end of the room opens and a figure enters on all fours. It crawls up the length of the room and comes to stop at Harris's feet. The figure begins licking Jeff's boots.

"Very good Bray?" exclaims Jeff in delight. "The sack cloth and ashes are a good touch, your grovilling has improved a hundred percent since we introduced the lash to the course."

"Yes," added Roman, "If you keep on improving at this rate we'll let you handle the hotel liasion and the Guest of

Honour. You can do my boots next, but first your report!"

Allan Bray retreats a metre or two and prostrates himself before Jeff and Roman. "I have, sires, just returned from an exhausting and lengthy interstate trip. I have some good news and some bad news to report."

"Stop the funnies, underling," commands Roman. "Get to the point!"

"Certainly, your magnificence. As you may have heard, there is a rumour abroad that Robin Johnson and Carey Handfield have not been active in Sydney fandom for the past few weeks. I have been checking this rumour, and I have the pleasure to report to your supremaicies that it is true."

Jeff and Roman give exclamations of joy, clutch each other and start jumping up and down and laughing with excitement and relief. They obviously think that with those two Sydney fans out of the way it is possible that Adelaide can still get the nod at the National Con.

(We all sit back from the spy-scope and play cards and drink blog for the next ten minutes while Roman and Jeff jump up and down in excitement and kick Bray in their enthusiasm. But gradually they exhaust themselves.)

Bray is licking Roman's boots as Jeff and Roman discuss a celebration convention and Jeff is defacing the graphs and charts showing the comparisons of the Sydney and Adelaide Bid training programmes and he remembers that there was something else that Bray has to report.

"Say, underling, what was the rest of the news you had. Not that there is anything you could tell us that would dampen our high spirits."

"Oh yes there is, your greatness," replies Bray. "Johnson and Handfield are no longer active in the Sydney bid and because they have moved back to Melbourne to join the other Melbourne "Oldies but Goldies of '75" who have announced that they are going to also put in a bid for the Worldcon."

"But they can't!" exclaim Jeff and Roman simultaneously.

"Why not?" asks Bray.

And with the sound of two pairs of feet running, followed by the sound of two bodies trying to thud into one padded wall panel head first at the same time, and then falling unconscious to the floor, we set a course for Sydney to see

what their reaction to the news is.

* * * * *

"Hold on captain!"

"What is it?"

"Sir, I'm getting a long range spy scope picture here on a fan party in Melbourne."

"What does it show?"

"They're all falling ^{about} on the floor laughing. They've got a spy scope there, sir. I think they've been looking in on Harris and Orszanski."

"Do you think it might all be an elaborate practical joke?"

"Hard to say at this range, sir."

=====

IRWIN: Well! What can I say?

Of course! Why didn't I think of it earlier! All events in the preceding article are fictional, any resemblance, etc.

Which brings us to the end of this issue. At least for you it is the end. I still have to duplicate, collate and all that. Another week of work at least. Then I can start thinking about the next issue.

I've got a few ideas for the next issue. Nothing concrete though, but I don't intend to ask people for contributions till a week after this issue goes out, so I've got another two weeks in which to decide such things. One aspect of the next issue which I am certain about is that there will be interior art, in particular art which for the most part illustrates the text.

And I can't forget to mention that there will be a letter column, which will be brilliant. And that's an order, you hear. So go write that brilliant letter.

By the way, this fanzine supports: Curtis for DUFF

The donkey vote when filling in the ballot form for the site of the 1983 worldcon.

The idea of a world-wide fan fund.

And I leave you with the following thought:

Michael Collins should go down in history as being the first person to ask them, "Well? How was it?"

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