

Thyme 36

comes stoundmeal from the typewriter of Roger Weddall, of 79 Bell Street, Fitzroy 3065, AUSTRALIA (telephone: [03] 417 1841). It is available for lots of things including all sorts of news and other, interesting information and - let's not beat around the bush - MONEY (at the following rates): AUSTRALIA: eight issues for five dollars; NORD AMERIKA/NEW ZEALAND: ten issues for ten dollars; EUROPE: ten issues for £5/DM20/a letter indicating interest.

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Don't forget, a big, silver cross next to your name on the front probably means that you won't be seeing any more of these for a while, unless you... DO SOMETHING!

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WHAT HAPPENED (or didn't) AT EUREKA!CON

(A selection of reports on the '23rd National Australian SF Convention')

Roy Ferguson

I understand that Roger was expecting a nuts and bolts Eureka!con report from me. I guess he has got that.

My impression of Eureka!con by Saturday night was that it lacked life, not quite dead, but barely sparking. Certainly compared to Swancon 9, with its emphasis on entertaining attendees with only a few serious items, Eureka!con was very pedestrian both in pace and content. In particular there was a distinct lack of room parties and the best parties I went to at Easter weren't at the con. The other thing that marred Eureka!con was a considerable amount of bitching about the Aussiecon Two committee, which I have to confess contributing to, not that I think the absence of this bitching would have made the con any better.

By the end of the con nothing had happened to change my views of the con as a whole. As so often happens I enjoyed the con more for the people I talked to than anything else. Thus my summation of the con is that subjectively I enjoyed it but objectively it was lifeless.

That is not the end of my report however, as I can still discuss what went on or at least what I experienced.

I attended about half of the programmed items. The programme seemed to be quite tightly run with most items starting on time, and very few changes to the scheduled items, as indicated by the total absence of any change notices in the daily newsheet "News Peek". In the following I will discuss the programme items in the order in which they occurred but without necessarily indicating exactly when they occurred or what items I missed. Any errors must be attributed to my memory being faulty.

The first item after the opening ceremonies was the GoH speech by Goerge Turner. In keeping with the theme of the con, "It's a bad, bad, bad, bad world", George spoke about some of the problems in society now and in the near future; the probability of nuclear war (inevitable to many of us); the inhumanity of man to man; changes or even the collapse of the monetary system. He did put forward one suggestion for something that could be done now that he felt might change things for the better and that is

long term planning for the directions of our society, such as for 20 and 50 years in the ahead (not that he is optimistic that this could actually happen).

I missed Marc Ortlieb's sixty-minute hate, but then so did most people I gather. I believe it was over in more like six minutes. It seems that JustingAckroyd was the main target of "Hate" and remained so for the whole con, but then it is easy to hate someone who is overseas when you aren't, even if he is the GUFF winner for this year. ((Slight correction: by the end of the con, in true Orwellian fashion, Justin had been 'resurrected' into hero of the people, about whom no wrong could be said.))

On Friday night was the "Clayton's banquet". For non-Australian readers this translates as "the banquet you are having when you're not having a banquet", ie. this was the unofficial official banquet. Fifty con members attended a seven course banquet at a Chinese restaurant. The table I was on had a good time. As usual we were very late back to the con and missed half of the film "Allegro non Troppo".

The only room party advertised that night was the Kinkon party which I gave a miss and ended up at John Packer's Claytons room party at which there was a gathering of some members of that now fairly large sub-group of fandom, fans who work vel play with computers. I must admit to being in that group and so participated in the inevitable discussion.

I avoided the only programmed item on Saturday morning, in true fannish tradition, by sleeping late (I am not counting the video room as part of the programme as I consider video room fans as con-poopers).

The first panel after lunch I attended was "The Great Fanzine War" during which Marc Ortlieb, Jack Herman and Leigh Edmonds discussed what makes a good fanzine. There was general agreement that fiction other than fan fiction (ie. the usually humorous fannish stories of the type that Marc and Laigh have published as opposed to straight sf or media-derived fiction) had no place in a fanzine. The amateur fiction using existing characters from published works, tv programmes and films was particularly panned.

The next panel was a look at biomedical ethics with George Turner, Mark Linneman, Sue Grigg and Martin Bridgstock. After short talks from George, Mark and Martin, quite a lively discussion ensued with a lot of audience participation.

After dinner, which is not worth mentioning but I will anyway as I ended up with barely warm take-away lasagne (ask Terry Stroud why it was cold by the time we got to eat), there was the masquerade. The costume parade was very disappointing, with only a relatively small number of entrants. The Vogon poetry contest was the highlight with many groans from the audience for each of the contestants. Sue Grigg won although I thought that Robert Clements gave a particularly loathsome presentation. After the masquerade there was an audiovisual promoting the Swancon 11 bid for the 1986 NatCon followed by a showing of "Hardware Wars" and another parody "Porklips Now" by the same director.

That evening the only advertised room party was the Swancon 11 bidding party which was overcrowded in the first two minutes (a problem with the small rooms of the Victoria Hotel). I took up an invitation to go to Damien Broderick's book launching party, at his place, after spending only ten or fifteen minutes at the Swancon party (and most of the time in the corridor outside due to the crowdedness of the room). I was fairly late in getting to Damien's party so missed the spit roast sheep (which was an amazing sight as it was virtually stripped to the bone). I spent most of my time there in the company of Don Asaby (whom I had not met before) and others. All present had a good time.

On Sunday morning I broke with fannish tradition (along with at least 25 others) by getting up very early for the ASFS business session at 9:30 am. This went on for the full hour and a half allocated (including the site selection which was only about the last ten minutes). Most of the argument could have been avoided had the first motion, to scrap the ASFS constitution, passed. As it was, it only narrowly

on their way back to Sydney (and thence to the U.S. for Peter). This also allowed me to see a few more fans who weren't at the con. A very pleasant finish (despite having to drive back to Melbourne the following day) to a long Easter break.

Roy Ferguson.

John Packer

I left Adelaide early on Friday afternoon; not my preferred time to travel but if you insist on APEX you take what you get.

The trip was enlivened both by my forgetting the name of the con hotel and by the descent into Melbourne being mostly in cloud. The plane finally broke out of the clouds at about five hundred feet and landed about a minute later. I thanked the radar installation as we passed it, left the plane and staggered in shock (the body's reaction to imminent plane crashes) to the baggage collection area. Here I collected said baggage and inspected the route of the airbus, my only clue to my destination.

The Victoria looked familiar....

Once at the hotel I dumped my baggage in my room, and went to registration, and thence to the Acacia room to catch up with people before dinner. On the way I suffered a recognition crisis. I mean I recognised the dog but James Styles sitting in the chair next to him looked too much like Turlough for my own good. But the excellent unofficial banquet revived me.

The dinner was enlivened by the stirring of and the dropping of paintings on Roger, who, depending on whom you asked, was guilty of something between blatant honesty and thought-crime.

After some films - Allegro non Troppo and some Bozzetto shorts - I went looking for a room party. The Kinkon party had apparently been tromped on and after wandering the corridors with some other lost souls, I opened my room and a bottle of what I apologise for calling port. The ensuing gathering went on till 3am and degenerated to a discussion with Angus Caffrey on the ramification of recombinant DNA and organic semiconductors combined in mice which were also four function calculators and figured strongly, along with self-cooking chickens.((??))

The next day, after a morning visit to the Victoria market I attended several programme items, none of which were particularly notable.

This continued to the masquerade which was interesting in that the bar had five varieties of whisky, three of which (the Irish, Canadian and Scotch) assisted me in my ongoing research into alcoholic beverages.

There were more room parties that night, the Perth party being memorable for their wine, which anyone who managed to drink some of would agree. It was comparable with the whisky sour perpetrated by the Kinkon party the night before.

The convention was seeming a little flat at this stage, partially because some interesting people were at other events, such as that other con down the road; or at Rowany festival; and had taken some sparkle with them. This was missed as there was none in the programme.

I slept in the next morning and got to the business session after the vote to scrap the constitution. Pity about that. The other notable point was the amalgamation of Fan Artist and Fan Cartoonist, decreasing the number of Ditmars to ten. After all, it is 1984. The rest of the day wasn't notable, the high-point being the reading from *Transmitters* which merely amused me.

The evening, fortunately, livened up. This started with dinner at Stalactites, which showed every evidence of a bistromatic drive in action. We were short of cutlery, chairs, glasses and bread and butter plates in varying quantities at varying times. It was beginning to look like two nominees and two presenters weren't going to be back for the awards when the food arrived, the change worked out and the walk back was no longer than the walk there.

We got back to have Marc Ortlieb announce that the ceremony was due to start on time (convention time that was - half an hour late). And apparently he'd lost the GoH....

I wasn't expecting to win a Ditmar this year, this being helped by Mandy and Phil who, taking their positions on the awards committee seriously, arranged not to give away anything by confusing me utterly (not hard to do). So I was expecting anything to happen up to Noddy winning Best International on a write-in vote.

The highlight of the convention however was the golden Caterpillars. This injected the levity that had been lacking before, and was the only good laugh I got at the convention, as I had heard the story about the marmoset before, as many gathered.

More notably, however, was the award to Transfinite. I am aware of some of what Transfinite put into both creating and showing their works, and consider recognition of this disgustingly long overdue.

The remainder of the evening continued well with discussion in the Acacia room which included Perth in 86 (a convention which sounds like it is going to be fun to attend!).

This closed to go on a raid (that's the only way to describe it) on the Pancake Parlour, prompted by Valma Brown who was suffering from chocolate cake withdrawal.

This highlighted the major problem with Eureka!con which, in my opinion, was an extremelack of silliness. I have heard the opinion in the past that fans can be relied on to make their own fun, but for my membership I expect to be entertained and unrelieved seriousness gives me the dry rots. Even one humorous item per day would have changed my entire opinion of the convention. Slicker production would have helped also. The only evidence of production I saw was the sound system, run by Terry Stroud. Not only did Terry arrange the committee to spring for equipment hire but he also selected the ideal equipment for the job and used it to train suckers, er I mean volunteers, to do sound for Aussiecon.

After checking out the next morning I decided that I didn't like the look of the rest of the programme and left with Mandy and Phil to tidy their house for the dead dog party. The party was a roaring success and caused people to wonder why the rest of the convention wasn't like it.

John Packer.

John Newman - 'Eureka!con, WorldCons, and other things'

From the things that people say about WorldCons, I imagine that they must be a bit like conventions in Melbourne. Only bigger. There are the same, traditional items, the same gathering of fen from odd places, and most especially there is the fact that most of the attendees are in the minority, and have to search for kindred souls.

Let's elaborate on that a bit. When people come to Melbourne from some other

fannish community, they are like is not going to say something along the lines of "Where is everyone?". In this town we're not always easy to find. When you do find us, you will probably discover that the minority to whom you are speaking will either not like, or not know, whatever other enclaves of fen they are in contact with. It's a very frustrating scene.

Under these conditions it's not unusual to walk into a convention venue and not find anyone you relate to, unless there is a vast number of attendees. Cons with a large enough membership are great in this town, cons that are small are not.

Unfortunately Eurekacon was fairly small for a Natcon. It had a number of excellent panels and program items and suffered from relatively few of those annoying changes of programming that plague some cons. The Victoria Hotel is for the most part co-operative venue with reasonable facilities. The hucksters room was the best stocked I have seen for some time. In addition, this Easter was extended by the Anzac Day falling just afterwards, so interstate travellers could make better use of their time.

So where were the people? Why did so many of those with attending memberships not even come? A question in search of an answer.

Personally, I had a good time. Except for Saturday night, when a headache caused, I think, by lack of coffee, knocked me around. Some really nice people were, and with Peter Toluzzi wandering by as a defacto fan guest of honour all was well

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with the world. It seems to me that the great thing about cons in Melbourne is that at last some of my friends come and visit! Thanks, all!

Unexpected visitors (well, unexpected for me, anyway) were Sue and Vince Martin-Smith from New Zealand. Sue was instrumental in the start of the FFANZ fan fund, and Vince and I turned out to have a lot in common as far as business goes. Richard Faulder paid a visit from the equally far away Yanco. The Perth contingent, Erik Harding, Carolin Strong and Sally Beasley were selling memberships for both SWANCON X & XI. How could anyone refuse!? They throw the cons most widely liked by all over there, after all. Erik had brought a trick Audio-Visual over to support the successful SWANCON XI Natcon bid (THREP IN 68!) and our newly adopted Marc Ortlieb looked after things things fannish for most of the con in the fan room.

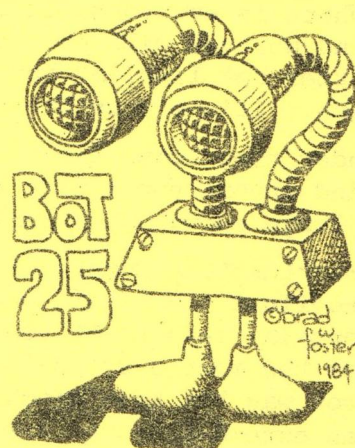
Just the same, some people were disappointed by Eurekacon. The atmosphere was just not there. I hope it is because the fen are holding themselves back, saving up for next year, but there may be a small warning for Melbourne here. The fen, no, make that THE FEN, need to be involved and interested in a convention. A concon is a service to fandom, not the other way around.

John Newman

Tim Redoan ... comments

I was in several states during the Con over Easter - bored, more bored, drunk, asleep and in video-land. These various states come on me at unusual times. For example, I fell asleep (twice) during George Turners address. The only thing that woke me was the muttering of my neighbour in the audience about how damn simplistic George's conceptions were. The panels were no worse and rarely better. I tended to avoid the mainprogram. The best discussion sessions were held in the bar. This is not a bad point, just fact. I did meet some interesting people both from the Con and elsewhere. Eurekacon was too laid-back and in fact was downright soporific. I don't think that this is just because the Con had a literary focus. I have only media Cons to compare it to. By all reports Syncon had no such problems so I don't see this as a reason with any validity. Thus I can only conclude that the organisers are responsible.

The venue was pretty bad. Six times I walked straight past the front door of the Victoria because it was so inconspicuous. The inside was OK as far as Art Decor goes but poorly designed for a Con. You might as well have gone from the main auditorium to the video-room via the Pancake Palour it was so far away ~~for/away~~. The convention organisers thoughtfully provided free vouchers for this purpose. The bright side of this is that I no longer view Medtrek as a bad convention. In comparison to Eurekacon, Medtrek was fabulous. Given the same space even I think that the organisers could have made a better Con. How? Well, with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight and ~~liberal~~ liberal use of the retro-spectroscope. The bar in the main room could have opened every night, not just on the night of the masquerade, the films could have had more SF focus, and what about sex, drugs, rock-n-roll, religion, politics or any other interesting focus for a panel, Martin Bridgestock came close to this with his lecture on Creation Science, there should have been a security team to ensure that paid-up members recieved (sic) the Con facilities, the hucksters room could have been more populated, the "Transmitters" book launch could have been integrated into the Con, and probably a dozen (12) other things which could have been done to increase interaction - a raised dias for the panels, only one hand held mike that actually worked, fewer lectures and more question and answer interaction between session presenters and the audience etc. I don't know how all this will be recieved (sic). I



hope that it raises questions that can be talked about or raved about, I would like to see the Committee Members froth at the mouth and leap for my jugular, it would be a lot more interesting than Eurekacon you can bet.

Tim Redoan

Susan Hryckiewicz, who enjoyed Eurekacon

For a National Convention, Eurekacon was a pleasant relaxacon. The main problem, I believe, was lack of numbers; however, those who attended generally sought and found their own level of enjoyment. The main programming ran reasonably well, not being strained to the limits of timing. Bidding at the auctions was fairly restrained after the excesses witnessed at Syncon '83. The masquerade and Vagon poetry contest ran with smooth organisation although, due possibly to low attendance generally, there were fewer entrants than could have been anticipated.

The long meal breaks were used to the fullest by one and all. This could possibly be one of the few conventions whereat most fans ate well, to the extent that by the last day the people at the local Pancake Parlour were enquiring after the progress of the convention ((in Perth, 'Fast'-Eddies is still trying to work out what a Pancake is)).

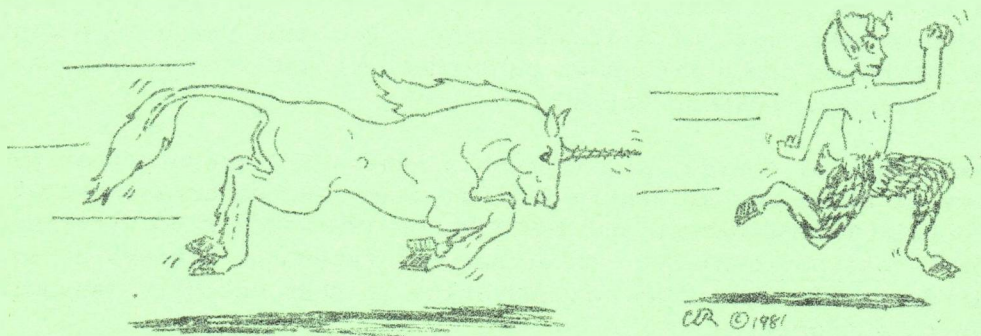
The rooms at the Victoria are extremely compact (to be generous in terminology) thus reducing the size and incidence of room-parties. Although, I understand that on one floor where fen occupied both sides of the corridor as well as the end room, there was an interesting if somewhat noisy room crawl. Then there are the local residents who add colourful tales to some people's conversations.

The committee managed quite well overall when it is remembered the difficulties and problems that beset them before and during the convention - one member very ill in hospital and two involved in accidents for instance.

The 'Dead Dog Party' at Mandy and Phil's place was a decided high point ((it's a pity we had to wait till after the actual con for it though)). People crowded into the back rooms to warm body - against the prevailing cold outside - and souls - which had failed to interact very much during the weekend. Some people played an intriguing table game of test cricket; some played computer games that had no instructions; some ate everybody's food while most chatted about this and that and everything else.

As a general summation looking to the future, let us all support our local and National Conventions because it depends on us as much as any committee to make a Convention fun.

Susan Hryckiewicz



The next morning, some ~~few~~hardier and less hung-over fen donned cars and headed off interstate to Canberra for the day. Jean Weber relates:

"The travelling Peter Toluzzi Party reached Canberra on Tuesday 24th April, where it appeared to a small but enthusiastic audience at Mark Denbow & Kim Lambert's house. Also

on the programme were Barbara de la Hunty & Geoff Jagoe (did I spell that right?) from WA, and Roy Ferguson. Considering the main GoH and his famous parties, this one was relatively sedate - though it did continue till 4 am in proper traditional style. I'm told (I departed about midnight, as is my style). Just as I was leaving, Swancon 9 videotapes were being shown; we'd previously had a look at some AVs of advertisements for Viking Columbus, and other odments which I don't recall. Kim provided half a dozen types of delicious candies (Kahlua-flavoured chocolate balls were my favourite, barely beating the fudge), Peter had the dregs of a bottle of Cuervo 1800 tequila (how did that survive Earekacon, I wonder), and numerous other eatables, driables and smokables were in evidence."

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DITMAR AWARD comment

The 1984 Australian Science Fiction Achievement Awards continue to attract comment, in particular, the decision not to award the Atheling Award this year. Damien Broderick writes:

"I trust we are to hear more about the cancellation of this year's Atheling Award - and especially about the hipposhit being sprayed on us by the committee. Any suggestion that though 'there was enough good criticism published in 1983 ... no-one bothered to nominate it' has to be substantiated by a published list of the nominated candidates.

I'm in no position to know about more than a fraction of the nominations, but I do know that almost the whole of one Nova Mob meeting was taken up (because of the absence due to illness of the announced speaker) with mumblings and mutterings and listmakings and suggestions and nomination-form-fillings by most of those there. Some attendees, such as Russell Blackford, took their nomination forms away and mailed them in later. Others, such as Jenny Blackford and myself, handed over rather amply stocked forms to the Ditmar committee member present at the meeting, Cathy Kerrigan, who volunteered to bear them to the counting house.

"If these nominations went astray, I want an explanation. I'm not interested in the kind of pureed crap which Marc appends to his letter in *Thyme*: 'It appears that... We have no idea how...' On the other hand, if the nominations submitted by Jenny, me, and others at that meeting were disallowed because 'none clearly fitted the category of criticism', I want to know in detail why that is so.

"I might add that, though I was not a member of the Convention and therefore had no vote on the Ditmars, I have heard from more than one paid-up member that actually getting their voting forms from the committee required a measure of arm-wrestling and loud shouting. So we might suppose that the body of less committed fans who comprised the con might have been at even more of a disadvantage. How many votes were cast in each category? I would like to see a breakdown published, if not necessarily in the detail with which *Locus* discloses the Hugo voting.

"The Ditmars themselves, of course, are in such a state of disrepute that Wynne Whiteford and Russell Blackford evidently felt no shame and embarrassment at the sight of their modest novels *THOR'S HAMMER* and *TEMPTING OF THE WITCH KING* sitting there as candidates for Best International SF. If either had taken the Ditmars seriously, surely he would have withdrawn his work from consideration in that category (assuming that such an option is open to authors)."

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Not everybody went to Eurekacon over Easter to grumble about what a low-key time they were having, or even to move curious Constitutional motions at curiouser business meetings (the various controversies, scandals, not curious at all ... sigh!). No, instead some people got dressed up in strange costumes, beat each other over the head with large sticks and enjoyed themselves immensely (or so they claim) at ...

Rowany Festival 1984 -

Rowany! Event of the year for medievalists of even the most diffident kind. Sorry to miss Eurekacon, good people, but SIX WHOLE DAYS is not to be missed: one sojourns in a pavilion decked with bunting and banners, drags oneself cloak - wrapped soon after sunrise - to cook breakfast over a communal firepit; the days are spent in armouring, fighting, chess & archery, and the evenings in in feasting, drinking, singing & storytelling. Can six days of damp freezing unwashed strenuous archaic activity pall? NEVER!

I must admit we had our doubts on the first evening, after driving for 10 hours through heavy rain and heavier traffic to the site (on a farm 75km south of Sydney) and finding it pitch dark, muddy, & reputedly inaccessible to cars (('period' justice perhaps)). Well, we from Stormhold (Melbourne) were unbowed and ploughed through the (authentic medieval) slush, endured a night of leaking tent and soggy bedding, but lived to enjoy the warm, clear days which followed. The hordes continued to arrive: familiar faces from Innilgard (Adelaide) and Aneala (Perth), from the new groups in River Haven (Brisbane) and Politikopolis (ouch! - Canberra), the locals from Rowany and a sprinkling from inipient Shires in many other localities. The festival site mushroomed with pavilions of all shapes and sizes & colours, from humble two-man tents (filled not with men but heaps of dismembered armour) to huge mansions featuring house flag and rows of pennants, crammed with sheepskins and woven rugs, wherein clean & comfortable lords and ladies disported themselves, complete with goblets & candelabra & silver platters. Oh, to be rich!

Highlights: (1) the traditional Little Rock Wars; in which two armies drawn up on either side of the steep, tree-grown field dispute possession of the box of Incredibly Valuable Rocks. Ah, the bray of the trumpets, the barking of the hysterical farm dogs, the roar and clatter, and confusion and rush, the clobbering and splintering and dying! Heaps of slain and a totally futile prize.... the perfect war. Areally gorgeous spectator sport - unlikely the archery war in which the spectators ~~died~~ were set well apart for safety's sake and were deprived of ~~death~~ enjoyment when the two armies retreated for strategic purposes into the bushes. Oh fie!

(2) The Quest! Picture if you will small parties of confused but determined Questers travelling through dark wet bush to rescue the enchanted Princess.... encountering lying enchanters, weeping ladies and candlelit phantoms; being pursued by snarling trolls and the enigmatic Tiger Man. Somewhat improperly - but successfully - the Stormhold party bribed both heads of a troll with a bottle of Scotch we happened to be carrying, and after several chances and peradventures succeeded in resuing the Princess who was somewhat unconvincingly portrayed by a bearded man in full armour.... well, she was under a heavy enchantment. The best part of the Quest was definitely the Elixir of Life from which one had to sip, back at the starting pavilion, in order to be raised from the deaths being liberally handed out by trolls and other monsters.

I'm scribbling this report in the car going home, tired, but happy, to a Stormhold now considerably enriched in prestige in the known world. Our seneschal, Sean the Wayfarer (Sean McMullen) must be very proud of his, not least because the baronial lists tournament was won by our own James the Sinister (Jim the Noone). James made it a thoroughly memorable day by marrying his lady, Alwyn A'Goch (Angela Hanslick), on the very same evening, in a pavilion under the stars and surrounded by all their friends.

So that was Rowany. Come on medieval fans - don't dream it, be it.

- Lady Susan of the Black Forest (Susan Tonkin)

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The Adventures of Justin Ackroyd in Britain

The Story so far (Pre-Con trip report):

I arrived safely in New York just before midnight 31st March. Plane to Minneapolis the next day. 2-3rd April travelled around Minnesota with Joyce. 4th: Caught up with Denny and bought my first books of the trip. 5th: Went to a half birthday party in the evening. Flew to New York 6th and went to a gathering that night. Subway travel at 2am is quite good fun. 7th: went to a play and saw the Academy Award Shorts for 1984. Joined up with some local fans for dinner and went to Andy Peter's place later. Spent 8th touring and saw Greystoke. 9th: went to Staten ((? not very decipherable)) Island and flew to U.K. that night; met by Joseph at Heathrow. I've done plenty of looking around and met a few fans and have become an official Surrey limpwrists.

Seacon comments and News:

Once everyone got past the barbed wire, Gestapo guards and radio-wally's, it wasn't such a bad convention - if you did your own thing.

Complaints about the organisation of Seacon were heard from all sides. The bookroom where most stalls had been set up by ten o'clock Friday morning was not allowed to open until 1:00 pm. As a result of this, the general auction which started at 3:30 pm had a small attendance and very little was raised for GUFF and the Shaw Fund.

The committee did not appear to have informed all the programme participants of when they were to give their talks, especially for the second and lesser strand items.

From the Seacon programme sheets: "The Fan Room in itself is much more than just a venue for programme items. It'll be a meeting place, a place to escape from the rest of the convention, and to this end we'll be providing its own bar, a number of comfy chairs, tables and general flop space, together with fanzine displays, fanzine sales desk, the British SF Association Desk, numerous displays and information about local groups and that added extra ingredient, yourselves! Who knows what impromptu items might get started."

From my point of view, the Fan Room was the biggest failure of Seacon. As a meeting place, it was a disaster. It was a room up a fairly well hidden flight of stairs. There was no activity in the Fan Room until about 9:00 pm Friday when Ian Sorenson's Rock Opera *Elmer T Hack* was presented, and the seldom open bar was opened for the first time. The comfy chairs were non-existent, the fanzine displays I couldn't find, the fanzine sales desk was minute and the information desks were elsewhere. The Fan Room had all the charm of a mausoleum.

As part of the Fan Programme I was interviewed by Judith Hanna in the Fan Room. It had been brought forward two hours and this change, unadvertised, resulted in the audience fitting around one table. At least I got to draw on the table-cloth.

Elmer T Hack and the *Britain in '87* party were the only successful events in the Fan Room. The Main Programme (what little I saw of it) had Dave Langford tearing *Battlefield Earth* and other great 'sci-fi' to literary shreds, Bob Shaw giving a 'serious scientific talk' and Chris Priest not complaining about being poor were its highlights.

The alternate strands of programming went by unsighted except for the Trivia Bowl where I competed on the Surrey limpwrists team. We were beaten in the semi-final by a pair of leaden underpants.

It was the people who made the convention - D. West wandering around selling his collected works for £4 or 'double or quits' (Martin Tudor paid £0); Dave Langford, one hand to ear and the other holding a pint, always ready to memorise some new scandal; Roelof Goudriaan and Anne Marie van Ewyck, two of the nicest people you would want to

meet. There were too many others to list here; suffice it to say that all the fans I met left a lasting impression.

The GUFF/Aussiecon Two party held on Saturday night was well attended and successful. The crowd was constantly changing, but for a few ever presents - Brian Aldiss, Joe & Gay Halderman, who send their best wishes to all Australian Fans, Dave Hattwell, whose rendition of *Teen Angel* will long be remembered, Fran Skene & Lee Smoike ((?)), two of a fairly considerable American contingent. The beer and wine flowed at a considerable rate until 4:00 am when most trundled to bed. (I wandered down to the foyer and discovered the bar was just closing)

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CONVENTIONS UPDATE

CON AMORE

Dates: 8th till 10th June, 1985

Venue: Park Royal Hotel, Alice St, Brisbane

GoH: David Gerrold

Fan GoH: Susan Clarke, Dennis Stocks

Rates: \$25 attending till 1st October, Supporting \$10

Mail: P.O. Box 231, Cannon Hill, Qld 4170

Theme: "with enthusiasm". A "Science Fiction Media-Literary Convention" with nett proceeds going to the Red Cross Society. The organisation appears to be a little more sorted out than it was. Progress Report No 1 contains the following note: "We would like to apologize for previously advertising Marc Ortlieb as Fan guest of honour. This announcement was based on incorrect information given to the co-ordinators by a person no longer involved in the organisation."

Kinkon

Dates: 9th till 11th June 1984 (Um, back to this year again)

Venue: The Victoria Hotel, carefully hidden away at 215 Little Collins St, Melbourne

Guests: Alan Finney, John John Flaus, Paul Harris, George Turner

Rates: For you, probably \$25, or \$10 day membership

Rooms: The committee says you should have booked with them by April 30

Claims to be "The convention for the socially aware" (which perhaps means they'll talk a lot about things like Unemployment, and Political Prisoners in Third World Countries). It is probably accurate to say that this is a convention.

ARCANA CON

Dates: 23rd to 26th August 1984

Venue: It doesn't actually say.... but there is a map with a very small arrow pointing towards University High (Royal Pde, Parkville), Victoria

Rates: Verry complicated. Probably they want \$30 (\$26 students/unemployed)

Mail: (no personal approaches (!!)) 105 Cardigan St, Carlton 3053

Rooms: Billets available - contact Damien (03) 458 4029

To quote the expensive looking flyer: "Arcanacon is Australia's most diverse RPG ((Real Pro Gamers?)) convention: we'll be featuring more games systems than anyone in Australia has ever done." What more can I say?

PARANOIACON

Dates: Probably any time but 28th September till 1st October

Venue: The El Toro, Homepride Ave, Liverpool, NSW (but you might be the only one there)

Rates: \$25 till 16th Sept; \$35 at door

Rooms: \$48 per day (\$5 per extra person) booked with membership (include deposit)

Mail: GPO Box 429, Sydney 2001

CONQUEST 84

Dates: 29th September to 30th September

Venue: Sheraton Hotel, Turbot St, Brisbane
GoH: Mr Takei
Rates: Attending \$35 (\$17.50 Students) till 1st September; \$40 up to 26th September (\$20 Students); no rate set for membership at door. Supporting is \$5 or \$10 with a "Con-Pack and autographed Con Book"
Rooms: \$70 per night (at Sheraton) for a 2-double bed room. Payment of a deposit is a necessity to ensure being included in the con block. Please state preference for sharing purposes.
Mail: GPO Box 1376, Brisbane 4001 or phone Martin Bridgstock: (07) 48 7651
Yet another Media Con. "A regenerated Conquest Committee hereby announces the conception of a new, exciting Conquest 84.... there was a great disturbance in the force ((sorry, THE FORCE))" goes the flyer; it goes on to say
Conquest invites entries for its 1984 ((writing)) competition. An overall prize worth \$100 is offered ((the word "worth" is interesting)). Announcements about prizes for individual sections - and the definition of the sections - will follow. Written work is welcomed in the following broad areas: Non-fiction, comedy, short fiction (all SF related, of course), and general (non-media) science fiction.

CIRCULATION 3

Dates: 30th November to 2nd December
Mascot: Kim Huett
Venue: Southside Motor Park, Canberra Ave, ACT
Rates: \$15 till 2nd October, \$20 at door; \$6 supporting
Rooms: \$22 single per night, \$5 per extra person (motel section). Cabins, tent sites, caravan sites available also.
Mail: PO Box 42, Lyneham ACT, 2602
In the tradition of former Circulations, this convention should be a fairly relaxed one. There will be various discussion groups organised; if you would like to lead one, or have a topic you'd especially like to see discussed, let the committee know.

SWANCON X

Dates: 26th to 28th January 1985 (about)
Venue: A secret
GoH: A secret
Fan GoH: A secret
Rates: \$15 till 1st October, \$20 till door, \$25 at door; \$5 supporting
Mail: PO Box 318, Nedlands 6009
Swancon 10 is a relaxacon. Another secret is which particular members of SF Fandom they wish to embarrass (and there's something about looking back on pre-luney SF in the theme).

And finally we give you: Everything you wanted to know about (drum roll)

AUSSIECON II

and were not afraid to ask-

Dates: 22nd till 26th August 1985

Venue: The main hotel, where all the major programming items will be conducted, is the Southern Cross, at the corner of Bourke and Exhibition St, Melbourne. At the hotel, which was the site for the 1975 Worldcon, all convention areas are on the same level.

The secondary hotel, where the Art Show and some smaller programme items will be held, is the Victoria, in Little Collins St, only a block's walk away from the Southern Cross.

GoH: Gene Wolfe, whose works of fiction have received much justified acclaim. Perhaps the best known of his works are the three-part novel *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, the story *The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories*, and more recently, the tetralogy *The Book of the New Sun*, beginning with *The Shadow of*

the Torturer. He has also written a highly regarded mainstream novel, *Peace*.

Fan GoH: Ted White, long prominent in the science fiction community as a fan, writer and editor. He has worked as an editor on such professional magazines as *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Amazing Stories*, and *Fantastic*. His own fanzines have included *Stellar*, *Void*, *Minac*, and more recently, *Pong*, setting the highest editorial and publishing standards.

Rates: Attending \$45, Supporting \$28 till 30th June 1984. Then till at least 31st December 1984, the rates will be \$50 attending and \$30 supporting. The committee's intention is to hold the supporting rate fixed up to the date of the Convention if possible.

Current conversion rate from Supporting to Attending membership is \$17, this will become \$20 after 30th June.

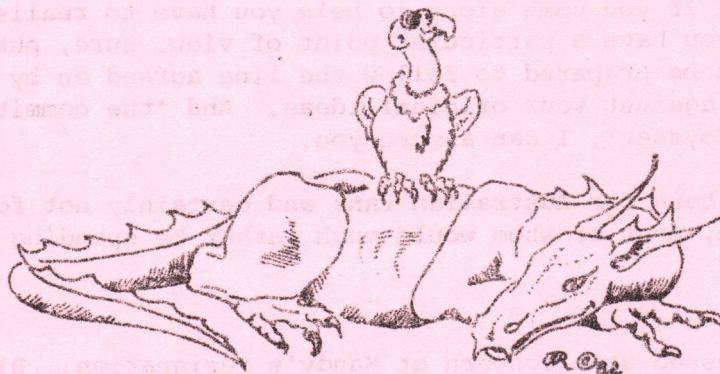
Rooms: Accommodation space has been reserved at both hotels, but because 1985 is the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Melbourne, there will be many other activities in the city at the same time as the Worldcon. The demand for hotel rooms will thus be high.

For this reason, you should make firm plans as soon as possible if you want to stay at these hotels, so that we can make bookings on your behalf. If you decide to get a room at the last minute, you may well be disappointed. Rates will be published in Pr#2.

Mail: GPO Box 2253U, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA

Aussiecon Two is the 43rd World Science Fiction Convention. For all Australian science fiction readers and enthusiasts, the holding of the World Convention in Melbourne represents a rare opportunity to meet with scores of writers and fans who would otherwise never come to Australia. The 1985 Worldcon will be ~~THE BIGGEST~~ and ~~most impressive~~ celebration of science fiction ~~ever~~ held in this country. You should make sure you are there.

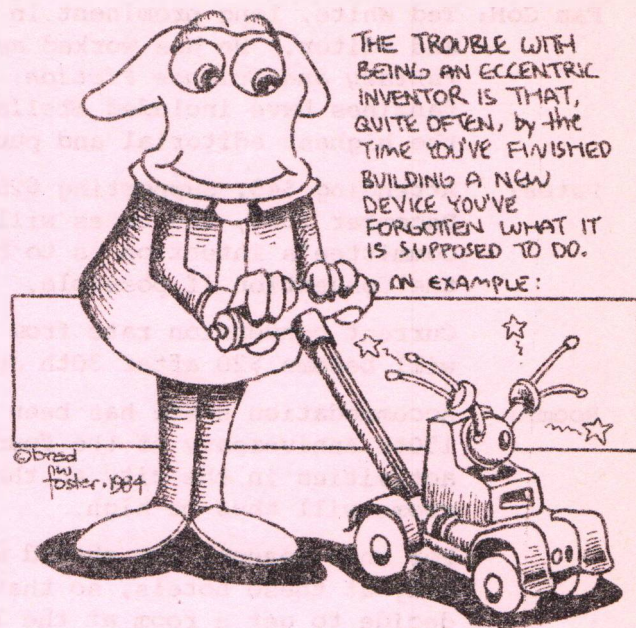
HELP! It hardly needs saying that a Worldcon doesn't run itself. If you would like to volunteer to assist the Committee, please let them know as soon as possible, and indicate what area you think you would be most useful in.



And so we come to a brief moment of truth. The events reported in Thyme #34 and the resignation of Mandy Herriot from the Aussiecon II Committee have sparked much response. David Grigg (committee member in charge of Publicity & Publications) writes:

"I must say that you paint a delightful picture, quite worthy of George Orwell. John Foyster as Big Brother, and Mandy Herriot being dragged off by the Thought Police! ((By trivializing a problem, you can sometimes make it go away - or at least appear to go away)) And Roger Weddall leading us in a Two Minute Hate. The truth alas, is rather more mundane.

"I have to say from the start that some of your criticisms, stripped of their colourful clothing, have some basis in fact. As Committee member in charge of Publicity and Publications, I have to take at least a good portion of the blame for any lack of communication between the Aussiecon Two committee and fandom in general. I won't bore you with my personal excusses, but I know quite well that we haven't been doing anywhere near as much work on the Publicity side as we should be. In part that's a personal failing: my experience is wholly in producing publications (it's what I do for a living), and I'm not only inexperienced in real publicity work, but I have lost most of my fannish contacts these days.



However, I hope things will improve dramatically from now on, as Marc Ortlieb has agreed to help me on the publicity side. Already he has helped me produce our one-sheet flyer which is directed entirely towards Australian Fans, explaining about the Worldcon and letting non-fans know what a Worldcon is all about. We've printed 1000 of these, and will probably print another 1000. They are being distributed through bookshops, libraries, and at conventions. Much more needs to be done.

We really do need all the help we can get. From Australians. If we don't get that help, we're going to collapse in a big heap. But if you volunteer, you have to expect that we're going to weigh up where you'd be most useful rather than giving you the job you might first ask for.

And you have to expect that if you come along to help you have to realise we're not running a cake stall. If you have a particular point of view, sure, put it as forcefully as you can - but be prepared to follow the line agreed on by the committee as a whole, even if that goes against your original ideas. And 'the committee as a whole' doesn't mean simply 'John Foyster', I can assure you.

"The Worldcon is being run here for Australian fans and certainly not for the egos of the Aussiecon Two committee, most of whom would much rather be spending their valuable time doing something else."

Bjo Trimble has also expressed some concern at Mandy's resignation. Bjo was in Australia in March as Guest of Honour at Medtrek 84 in Sydney. Although she is best known of late for her interest in Star Trek Fandom, her involvement in SF Fandom, Worldcons, publishing and writing for fanzines, stretches back more years than many of us can remember ("a somewhat daunting thought...." she writes). She and John (her husband), as a team, started and handled the Art Shows for WorldCons and Westercons for 17 years; often handling three or more shows a year, when they accepted for smaller conventions as well. They built "fan art" into a well respected medium, that now sells so well at WorldCons that Art Shows are a good source of covention revenue.

She says: "As a former Art Show director, I have an interest in seeing Art Shows at conventions run well; as an artist only now returning to the fan scene, I have a very vested interest in seeing that Art Shows are well-run. It is a natural thing for me to talk to Art Show directors, at any convention where I happen to be. I had no indication at the time I set up a meeting with Mandy (I was in Sydney; she in Melbourne) that

there were any problems in connection with discussing the Aussiecon Two Art Show with her. It was only after we were well into conversation that she said there might be trouble caused by my talking to her.

Frankly, I didn't really believe it. Fans continually see wrong in others' actions, but somehow I seem to be a perennial innocent in expecting convention committees to have a more mature attitude. Perhaps Mandy, as a younger fan, was exaggerating things. It was a shock to return home from an exciting and pleasant visit to Australia to get first a letter from Mandy saying that she'd resigned from the Aussiecon Two Art Show, and then to get *Thyme #34* and discover that I'm listed as more or less listed as the cause of it!

If everyone on the committee thought I was going behind their backs to talk to Mandy, they weren't present when I met with some of them at the Danube Restaurant, and then went to the Foyster home to talk into the evening. Speaking the n about the Art Show, I made no secret of my discussion with Mandy on some tips to help her make the Art Show better and make it easier on her to run it. I reiterated my desire to help the Aussie Con Art Show, and offered some suggestions that the Trimble had found to be workable during the 17 years we put on Westercon and Worldcon Art Shows in the U.S.

There seemed to be some question in the committee on making the Art Show a sort of showcase for modern, non-representational, high-tech art. I advised against it, pointing out that fans liked representational art, and that was what they bought at Art Shows. The Trimble made just about all the mistakes anyone could possibly make in 17 years of running art shows, and we discovered long ago that fans just aren't all that interested in new wave or high-tech art, or anything else that looks like squiggles and foot prints. If this stepped on any toes, I was not told of it (and here I thought Australians were noted for their up-front honesty too!).

Speaking with Mandy, I simply pointed out that more than 17 years of fan-oriented Art Shows have pretty well proven that non-representational art is not a big favourite with the fans. Those are known facts, folks, and conventions ignore them at their peril. If Aussiecon Two wants an art display only, without any of the revenue from Art sales, then the convention can certainly go ahead with a high-tech show. That was not meant to be an attack on anyone's 'artistic integrity'; it was meant to be helpful advice.

Art Shows, in most U.S. conventions, are not under programming; they are an entity unto themselves. Why would the programme Chairman want to take on any extra work, when the Art Show Director is supposed to handle all that?"

((Aussiecon organisation is divided into 4 divisions: Administration (under Peter Darling), Publicity & Publications (under David Grigg), Programming (under John Foyster), and Operations (under Carey Handfield); the Art show is included under Programming.

Bjo goes on to talk about what she, as an American, would like to be able to get out of a convention such as Aussiecon Two))

"Somehow, it seems to me that Aussiecon Two is missing the main point of having a convention outside the US. Fans coming all the way to Australia from everywhere else in the world are going to expect something more than a clone of a US convention; they are going to expect something 'especially Australian'. Else why spend all that money? Most of us could just plan on staying home, and going to a Worldcon clone, NASFiC, instead.

So give us all the things that we can't get at home; give us Aussie things! Show all the US fans how to eat Vegemite on toast, or the correct manner to eat meat pies from paper bags. Give us a trip to watch fairy penguins on Phillip Island; a walk through William Rickett Sanctuary; a chance to - hokey as it is! - hold a koala.

Do you know what one of my strongest memories of Australia is? About 300 sulphur-crested cockatoos, screaming over the roadway, pushing and shoving each other off branches of gum

trees, and filling the trees with raucous noise! Beautiful, wonderful, comical (the beauty of the birds did not match the Martha Rae screams) and totally memorable.

My other favourite memory of Australia is the fans. In general, some of the most open, generous, honest and forthright people I've ever met. They reminded me of the old-fashioned traditional Texan (forget what you see on 'Dallas'!) in their warmth, and hospitality. Australia could become a favourite place to visit, as often as possible, just to see fellow fans, whom I grew to like and with some, to love a lot in a mere 20 days.

I'd like Aussiecon Two to be something I remember as a fun convention. Not something being run as a 'competition' to what the committee thinks is a 'big time US convention'. I've asked everyone who remembers the 1975 Aussie Con, and nobody remembers the programme; a few remember the Guest of Honour speech. What do they remember? They remember the thrill of visiting a foreign country; the fun of meeting fellow fans and trying to figure out what they are saying through the accents; the wonders of Australian Beer; the fannishness of standing around ignoring the programme and meeting everyone in the halls; the parties; the getting acquainted with all the fans who had up to then been only names in fanzines....

Do you get the idea? Practically nobody in US fandom remembers any carefully planned convention programme; very few people remember what went on in the formal part of the con. Almost all remember the sheer enjoyment of going to an interesting country and meeting fellow fans!"

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

CHANGES OF ADDRESS and things

Melbourne: Alison Cowling and Micael Docherty were engaged on 5th May 1984, no date has been set for a wedding. Robyn and Torbjorn von Strokirch have returned from overseas only to face further spacial dislocation: they will be moving to Brisbane in mid-June for three months and thence to Hobart for a rather longer time. Dennis Callegari is now at 22 Waltham St, Richmond, he thinks his phone number might eventually be 428 4686 but then who knows the ways of Telecom.... Grendall is now resident at 79 Bell St, Fitzroy. MUSFA's Winter Solstice Barbeque will be held on the Banks of the Yarra on the evening (maybe 7pmish) of Friday 22 June. For those who don't like the dark and the cold, fans gather regularly Friday evenings (6-6.30) at Stalagtites Restaurant (cnr Russell St & Lonsdale St) for a meal ~~of \$5.00~~. Nova Mob continues to meet first Wednesday each month: Danube Restaurant for tea, thence to 21 Shakespeare Gve.

Sydney (and NSW): Stewart McGowan has moved to Wilcannia to take up a permanent teaching Position, new postal address c/- Wilcannia High School, Wilcannia, NSW 2836; he would like it known that he is interested in reading and writing for fanzines to break the monotony of outback life. SCA will be holding their mid-winter feast over the weekend 16-17 June.

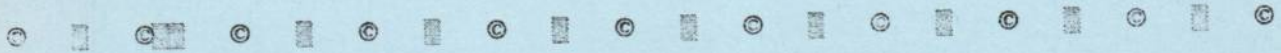
South Australia: Paul Anderson has become engaged to Brenda Wirth for a wedding in late July; he explained that this was the reason for his not being at Eurekacon. SCA will be holding their mid-winter feast over the weekend 30 June to 1 July.

Perth: Mark Loney and Michelle Muysert are now resident at 2/51 McDonald St, Como 6152 Ph. 367 6745. In not quite the same breath, Julian Warner now lives at 2/22 Milson Ave South Perth 6151 Ph. 368 1524 with plans for Jo Masters to move in when her TEAS cheque finally arrives. Christopher Nelson 36 Michael Tce, Mt Pleasant, WA 6153, reports that Harry Stubbs (Hal Clement) and family will be holidaying in Australia at around the time of Aussiecon Two. They would like suggestions as to spots worth visiting. In order to colate such info, Chris has initiated The Stubbs to Us Fan Fund: Itinery Thoughts! or STUFFIT. Any reasonable suggestions should be sent via Chris at the above address. He is also putting together a Bob Shaw bibliography to aid the Shaw Fund, and is looking for information about the anthologisation of Shaw stories since 1978. If anyone can help him with this, he would appreciate it. He's also short on info about American Editions of Bob's work. This is strictly professional writing rather than fan writing.

Queensland: Lorrie Boen has moved to 64 Cleveland St, Stones Corner 4120.

NZ: Terry Collister now lives Top Flat, 31 Charlotte Ave, Brooklyn, Wellington Ph 842 310

VICTOR!!!



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