

# *Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment*

Vol. 1 No. 11, March / April 2005

For ANZAPA issue No. 224

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## Editorial

With this issue I believe I am getting closer to an ideal ANZAPA contribution and a two month slice of Sydney SF and life as I see it together with timely replies to other members contributions.

An ideal I aim for is to provide notes of both Futurian and Astronomy meetings, occasional outings to other Science and SF events, as well as reviews of books recently read and notes on the other incidental events in my life.

For this issue there is a return of Original fiction, with the (nearly) award winning Rhidian Rhead piece from the 2005 Magic casements Flash Fiction competition (with a maximum length of 500 words). I anticipate that it will be possible to include a piece of original fiction for each of my 2005 ANZAPA mailings. Acting on behalf of the Sydney Futurian meeting at UTS, I organised for eleven entries for this competition to go in on one cheque and in a single envelope.

This brief exercise in 'Literary Agency' has encouraged me to consider doing more of this in the future, i.e. coordinating Sydney Futurian (and WORDS@UTS member's) entries to Australian SF con short story competitions. Beyond this there are roughly the same number of Irish SF fans and conventions as Australian ones, most Aust / Irish conventions have SF writing competitions for which there is a fairly negligible entry fee, negligible except for the time and cost needed to get an Australian currency draft and airmail postage of the draft and story to Australia. What I am considering is a mechanism where several Irish SF fan writers can email their stories to me and I can print them out and post them off to Australian SF conventions or publications with \$5 Aust. Payment.

I.e. if five Irish SF fans/writers send me seven stories with instructions, I could send off twenty entries with four cheques to four Australian SF con competitions and also to the three Australian SF publications. Ideally this would be a two-way traffic, with Australian stories entering the competitions run by Irish conventions. For this scheme to work, I do of course require an Irish partner.

I hope to see you at some time soon, maybe even at a 2005 Sydney Freecon.

Garry P Dalrymple April, 2005

## Grey Pages – ANZAPA talk

Dinner with Eric & Jean at the Genghis Khan Mongolian Barbeque restaurant 469 Kent Street Sydney, Wednesday February 2, 2005

### Present were:

John August (Sydney Dr. Who),  
 Andrew Baluk Applix, David Bofinger SF  
 Garry Dalrymple ANZAPA, Dianne Fox ANZAPA,  
 John Fox ANZAPA, Kathy Hardman Applix  
 David Horsfal Applix, Matthew Hutcheson Applix  
 Eric Lindsay ANZAPA, Applix, Mark Lovelock Applix  
 Colin McCormack (and four children) Applix  
 Sarah Murray-White SF, Gerald Smith ANZAPA  
 Graham Stone SF, Karen (Womble) Warnock ANZAPA  
 And Jean Webber, ANZAPA

### No Shows –

Only Michelle Hallett's name card was uncollected.

The Restaurant turned out to be only a door or two away from the Kent/Druitt Street corner an almost immediately on the behind the Sydney Town Hall, but as I had detoured to Galaxy Bookshop for a \$25 gift voucher (for my niece's birthday) I set off some way towards Wynyard before discovering my error. Arriving at 6.15 when it was still warm and humid outside, I noticed that most people attending had wet hair from dodging the storm on the way in to town.

For someone like me who is 'strange vegetable' and 'hot spice' phobic, the bill of fare proved disappointing, even though it was a one price, all you can eat deal.

The process was; load your bowl with fragile frozen meat, cram in vegetables to taste, drench it in the oils, sauces or spices to your palate, then present at the In window, the guy chars it over a huge iron hotplate and hands it out the Out window a few minutes later, then take to your seat and eat. Repeat as many times as required.

In my case it was just a meal of dry-ish cooked meat shreds, bean sprouts, soy sauce and steamed rice, should have read the menu and ordered a plate of something separate from everybody else.

**Some** table conversation that I overheard included;

**John August** was animated in explaining at length the nuances of difference between the Australian Skeptics, the Australian Rationalists and Atheists.

**Andrew Baluk** gave his considered opinions on the inspirational leadership of our Uncle Frank Sartor and the saving of our City from Drought.

**David Bofinger** acted as the evening's treasurer.

I handed out a double sided Aust SF events page and my 'SF Discussion Meetings' picture card to all present.

**John and Diane Fox** left early, muttering about impending ANZAPA deadlines and minac commitments

**Kathy Hardman** arrived late with **Jean Webber** (via a portal to a Chatswood restaurant of the same name?) and spent most of the dinner in conversation with Jean, discussing girl talk, tech writing talk? I dunno.

In conversation with **David Horsfal**, it turned out that he was the brother of a long ago Astronomy Association (BAA NSW) colleague, who had a horrifyingly eventful honeymoon in New Zealand.

**Eric Lindsay** is planning to write a book inspired by the large wooden beam over the bed at their overnight accommodation. This loft apartment being just across the street from Collins on Broadway, a Mega bookshop with an excellent range of Science Fiction organised by Leigh Blackmore.

**Sarah Murray-White's** long term residency in the insular inner city may be coming up for heritage listing. This is a considerable achievement among traditionally peripatetic SF fans. She reports that longer term next door neighbours are apparently no longer shunning her in the street!

**Gerald Smith** maintained that a sure sign of employment in the recreational pharmaceuticals industry is the possession and use of two mobile phones. Gerald has two mobile phones. I think he was trying a gambit to improve his apparent social standing beyond that to which a Taxation department employee is entitled.

**Graham Stone** brought along a copy of his latest book, an extensive listing of all Australian Science Fiction published up until recently.

**Karen (Womble) Warnock** is currently between rounds of treatment and I thought she was looking a lot better than I had expected / feared.

**Jean Webber's** work has been recognised by winning an important prize.

I left the restaurant at close to 9.00 pm. Walked to Town Hall through some very strong cold gusty winds, the sort of Antarctic sourced weather that used to come up as far as Nowra and Bega? Caught the 412 bus and got home at about 10 pm for a torchlight tour of the storm havoc under storm cleared starry skies.

**Mailing comments for ANZAPA issue # 223 of January 2005**

**Ancient ANZAPA Moments, No. 4 OBO 223**

– Bruce Gillespie

Read your comments and understand your reasons for saying no. Please feel free to send Felix a newsletter.

Felix's Address; **Unit 9, 2 Moss Street Kingscliff NSW**

He has recently started a 'Quo Vardis' discussion club (possibly including Science Fictional discussions) in Port Macquarie, so sending him a copy or a bundle of past issues of your Zine for his group, might result in ANZAPAN dividends. I think you will at least get a letter of thanks for your efforts.

The Eric Frank Russell piece was appreciated, but the language of it seems similar to something that Graham Stone wrote about the Sydney Futurians Genesis, possibly a common source of just a limited number of ways of covering the same facts?

\*BRG\* 40 – Bruce Gillespie

Read your contribution with interest, but I can't really comment much on people, music and events that were before my time other than to say that your words appear to be sincere and heartfelt, thoughts worthy of the ink spent expressing them.

**From the Lair of the Lynx #29** – LynC

I have probably miss-spoke on this, what I think I am trying to say is that we are some fraction of all of our ancestors, identifying which traits and abilities we have received may help us identify ways to be a better person than just blindly tumbling through life. These characteristics we share with our ancestors may only become apparent as we are in turn (with age, responsibility and parentage) tested as our ancestors were. When I become aware of how I imitate my father in attitudes or interests, I find I have to pause and consider whether this path should be resisted as 'not me' or just passively followed. If I ever get round to having children, then life will get even more complicated! Such is the burden of self awareness and self responsibility?

**GNU Vol. 1, No. 1 BO 221** – Derrick Ashby

I don't know that Beta can ever die out. Professional TV is recorded on Beta, edited etc. and the final product copied to VHS. I

still have a stack of Beta tapes some where and possibly a Beta VCR (or two) in the shed? As for the Democrats, I'm sticking in for the long haul. I remain committed to the principle that a 'third party' in Australian politics is a good and necessary idea. There is a May National Convention for Democrats that may sort out new directions and after July 01, there will probably be 'small L Liberal issues' emerging from the government's conduct. Already there are 'back bencher concerns' being raised in and out of Parliament and not much seen or heard from the Greens.

Re West Wing et al, quite agree with you there! With some satisfaction I note that Channel 9 has jumped the shark in the battle for ratings (no longer the 'One') and I feel that their contempt for us fannish viewers is part of their decline. Their programming tempts me to consider internet based piracy to be ethical under the circumstances.

**Knothole Rhubarb Jan 2005** – John and Diane Fox

Read the TV, movie and documentary reviews with some interest but I doubt I will never be able to see more than a fraction of them. I tend to accumulate half metre stacks of tapes of Free to air programs that wait until wet weekends to be viewed and re-used.

John's bread making recipe sounds interesting but before I try DIY bread making I would prefer to try Stout brewing, now that the weather is cooler. I must remember to discuss this with you at the next Sydney Futurians meeting, I have most of my father's old equipment and several brewing books to hand.

**Intermittent Muse 8 (Reality Module 42)** – Michael F. Green

Read your contribution with interest, nothing much I can comment on other than to say that at some time in the intermediate future, days events notes like these may well help you to place and reconstruct important memories..

**Interstellar Ramjet Scoop** – for # 223 Bill Wright

Oh Dear! Dinosaurs, Electrolux Vacuum cleaners and flowering plants on the same cover, An-Ack-Cron-Ism?

The Bass Strait Bridge may not be necessary, current government plans are to pump up Bass Strait with CO2 emissions, hope this keeps up with global warming sea level rises. Read your explanation of the Tsunami with interest, but no comments at this time.

**Land of 10,000 Loons (for 223)** – Jeanne Mealy

Your Balloon stuff reminded me that Ballooning over Canberra is a local industry. Apparently, hot air is locally available in great quantities in our national capital. At Conflux this year I might end up with a room with lake views and the sight of balloons lifting off at dawn?

The blood loss is easy to explain, back pain and prescribed Voltaren. The back pain makes you take the Voltaren, stomach pain afterwards as your stomach lining dissolves suggests more pain killers are needed. Repeat dosage hourly. In between hourly bouts of extreme pain you urgently pass most of your blood supply into a toilet bowl, at first black purple then mauve pink as you run out of blood cells and bodily fluids. Loss of blood makes you feel warm and fuzzy (amazing dreams as the blood thins) when not in pain and the extremity of the situation makes you deny the seriousness of the situation. When hospitalized I discovered that 'a bit of back pain' was a reading cause of emergency hospital admissions involving stomach bleeding, three out of four in my ward were admitted for that reason. My experiences left me with an ability to see the 'humour' in Ebola virus attacks. To the best of my knowledge no one ever got sick from 'off' milk, although 'sick ups' and the sand bucket was a weekly feature of morning assemblies. I think they were mostly a reflex reaction to taking on too quickly 200 ml of cold (or disturbingly Luke-warm) liquid. Lactose intolerance not then having been invented.

**Les Chattes Parties 75** – Sally Yeoland

Re- Old Friends – As Basenjies are an excellent judge of character Robyn must be a fine friend indeed! And well worth pursuing. A way to find this friend (or eliminate

Australian residence) is that you should immediately proceed to your Federal Electorate's Electoral office and look up the Senate Indexes for States and Territories. If your friend still lives in Australia you will find her listed (as a partial address on the Index) and reference to which electorate book she is in with full address. Cat Killers, shocking news, but is it an epidemic of incidents or just increased media coverage? Glad to hear your back is better, I'm surprised that it is almost April, I'm 120 kilos and still no back pain incidents to date this year (spent most of last year's Conflux in pain or zonked out on Panadol), possibly my water conservation efforts (water scooping, bucket lifting and shifting) are having unanticipated benefits. See also my comments to Lucy.

**Megatheriums for Breakfast 43** – David Grigg  
Not a great deal I can comment on in this issue, other than to say that yes, New Zealand is a nice enough place to visit, attractive scenery, small enough to tour in a one or two week holiday and come away with a (false) sense that you have seen it pretty well. The final word on it could be that Bob Carr the Premier of the State of NSW bought a farm in NZ, for holidays or possibly as a retirement home?

**MOZ three** – Murray Moore

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time. Canada Bay, a part of Drummoyne, a suburb not far from where I live, is named after this group of convicts. I believe that they were treated as political prisoners and given a more comfortable exile than common criminals or the more threatening Irish political prisoner convicts. As for having 'Loyalist' ancestors, if you look beyond the US's self serving 'creation myth' you may find that the people of principle were to be found on both sides of the conflict, as were self serving opportunists. Your comments on Stephen King have gone a long way to rehabilitating my opinion of him, although I remain at this time untempted to launch into a career of reading his literary output, so much else still unread!

**Necessity 62: One of Us** – Jack R Herman

Given powers and abilities that I do not currently possess, June would be a good time for a Sydney Natcon style convention, with the Natcon draw over whelming the 'other plans' distraction of a holiday long weekend. The Aust / NZ Queens birthday thing (one week apart) seems a gift for trans- Tasman con GOH sharing. October to December though seems my best bet for a lesser than Natcon type SF event, being at the end of the year's sequence of Australian SF cons. If I had the offer of an overseas SF writer due in Sydney during October I could probably stir myself to organise a two and a half day Freecon. Read your other comments with interest, but lack the energy to respond to points made several months ago. Frequently in reading heated comments coming back on something I wrote for a TBS&E issue several months ago I find myself scratching my head and wondering, What was it that I said and why did I bother mentioning it?

**Odd News and Nonsense** for # 222– Roger Sims

Read your contribution with some interest, stories of survival and aftermath such as the one you quote have been around and about for some months.

The Boxing Day Tsunami was a full season of the year ago, but this morning I heard on the radio that another earthquake / Tsunami has occurred off Sumatra, let's hope for the best.

**Oz SF Fan #32** – Lucy Schmeidler

Re King James, mistranslations indeed, the English language Bibles were all very political documents. Mystique is fascinating and (at times) delightful, there is a damaged personality in there somewhere and a 'wild' personality as well as all Basenjies are somewhere between 'dog' and 'wolf'. The Hawaiian Telescope is for 'time-shifting' UK school children, i.e. they can access telescopes live during UK (day light) school hours. At CPPS and other NSW schools, children may start at 4.5 to 5.5 years of age, going through Kindy, First and Second Class are Infants, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> are Primary, then High School starting at 11.5 to 12.5 years of age. In the trade this is sometimes referred

to as 'K to 12'. Read your other comments with interest.

**Panopticon 28** – Dan McCarthy

Interlude was quite a pleasant read, I don't as a rule read much Fantasy, but your piece had me in some suspense as I was reading it. I couldn't figure out where it was heading, which was a fault common to all of the 2004 Magic Casements Fantasy entries. If you have similar 500 word stories I would like to help you enter them in the 2006 Magic Casements Flash Fiction competition with the Sydney Futurian entries.

Enjoyed your review of CS Lewis's books, I did read one of the trilogy as a child, just after a first encounter of with Edgar Rice Burroughs's Barsoom. I have few memories of it other than it encouraged me to seek out more Barsoom books and Science Fiction. I tried to read his 'Classic Literature', 'Amazingly Great Book' about an ugly Greek princess, her sister and encounters with delusion / Mythology and found it a painfully laboured read with a transparent plot, giving up half way through.

It was worse that Margaret Attwood's effort which at least gave you something to think about. Re your Bible comments – Born-Againists often respond to skeptical inquiries about the inconsistencies of their faith by asking have you read THE bible, in blissful ignorance of the origins and faults of their (un-stated) preferred version of one form of the protestant bibles. Few have any sense that there is a 'pre-Christian' context of the texts they rely on, as well as a 'post-Christian' sorting of texts to decide which were to be 'in' from among a selection of equally pedigreed versions of some of 'the words of God' and those that were decided to be apocryphal were rejected by someone with a definite reason for rejection. Thoats? I had imagined them to be double legged horse / camel sort of beasts, with their doubled up feet and legs providing surer footing while their riders heroically fuffed around crossing the vast Barsoomian desert / sea bottom plains. Vera Lonergan 'Too self opinionated and rude' surely not! How could anyone hold such a view (within her earshot). I presume that she would be in retirement by now, 25 years on from 1980.

**Ping! (for 223)** – John Newman

Just guessing, but from the size of the scrub and the condition of the Poverty Gully Race I would say that it was a depression era construction, possibly it watered a 'happy Valley' squatters settlement. Reyc to Jack I consider those who choose to disengage from Australia's political problems by claiming "Don't blame me I voted Green" to be among the most culpable for our nations ills. Only someone who can say honestly claim "Don't blame me I considered their policies and voted Green / Democrat / Family First / CDC" is absolvable from responsibility. The same goes double for those who failed to make a valid vote. Sending 'no message' is as bad as sending the wrong message to Canberra

**Siyayilanda 8** – Nick Shears

Read your contribution with interest, sounds like you had a very satisfying Christmas time. Re your comments about burning music to CD, over a four week Christmas break I listed the LPs, 45s and 78s I claimed from the unclaimed possessions of Gladys the deceased neighbour. Some of these date back to the 1940s and will still be playable for many decades to come. While listing them (over 100) I could only wonder at their durability, as I was wondering at the musical education I have to look forward to (when I have the time) It takes only weeks for the sun to destroy the aluminium layer of record grade CDs I have exposed. Are CD and DVD recording a big con, necessitated by the durability of the vinyl recording medium?

**Ultracrepidarian Bounder! 6** – Kim Huett

Read your 'Learning Curve' Dingo story with interest, but didn't find anything extraordinary in it, I suspect you could have got the rake back by using 'the voice of command', a tone of voice well understood by Basenji owners and school teachers. Much stranger and unpredictable things happen if you make the mistake of assuming that a dingo or a basenji is just a dog. In the SMH recently there was evidence of an earlier pre-Flinders use of 'Australia' in an early German atlas. Gondwana Fandom was a fair attempt at a 1500 word attempt at describing Science Fiction Fandom of one sort, but I suspect that

the true origins of something like SF fandom may have a prequel in the explosion of English Literacy and publications like the Strand Magazine and its imitators, fan mail and fan clubs did exist before Gernsback.

Wot No Dr Who or Star Trek?

Surely any discussion of the rise and decline of Australian SF fandom must include the impact of TV, then D & D and Gamers, whether you view these as the 'beginning of the end' or just a change in direction? These forms of SF fandom did spawn a great deal of newsletters as well as Fan Fic. These sorts of SF fandom are alive and well in Sydney and are the definition of 'SF' to a great many of the people John Fox and I encountered while giving away SF books at the University of Technology Sydney.

**You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #97** – Cath Ortlieb

Read your contribution with interest. The bit about clearing a house of forty plus years of memories touched a nerve, my father's garage is still full of stuff and the prospect of a 'moving day' fills me with fear. Us SFnal folk may claim to be the less materialistic than the common herd, but my how the 'precious things' pile up over time and how it hurts to let go things of no saleable worth. Re your flood story, paranoia has left me sorely tempted to invest \$A98 in a petrol fuelled 12V / 240V generator, against the possibility that one day the power will be 'off' at a time of maximum inconvenience due to a backhoe incident, storm, flood or Tsunami etc..

**Ytterbium 74** – Allan Stewart

This is probably the appropriate place to explain it, those Train tickets under the staple are in imitation of your Metcard collecting efforts. In NSW we really know how to celebrate 150 years of trains! Note the extravagant use of colour and graphics on these tickets (not). Outside observers may think this celebration is oddly muted. The intention nearly 160 years ago was that NSW as the leading colony, would be the first with Railways in Australia, but by publishing plans etc the Victorian colonial administration (swelled with gold field revenues and unsuccessful diggers to lay the tracks) beat NSW to passenger services and South

Australia was first with freight trains, hence the muted claims on the tickets. Re Your Gor comment – Among my book midden I think I have read a Sci-Fi movies listing that suggests that it might even be **two** Gor movies, a 'serious' one and an 'inspired by' porn one (how would you tell?). No hits with the books read.

## Blue pages – Science/Astronomy

### Sydney City Skywatchers (SCS)

Committee meeting of November 17, 2004

Present were: Janette Brennan, Elizabeth Budek, Elizabeth Cocking, Michael Chapman, Garry Dalrymple, Monty Leventhal, Nick Lomb and Harry Roberts.

Matters discussed during the committee meeting;

- What to do with the old Gold and Silver BAANSW badges previously given to Branch Presidents and Guest Speakers, resolved to give them out at meetings.
- A Sydney City Skywatchers shirt/jumper with the new name and logo, general support that it should have pockets.
- Dates and speakers for 2005, New Membership cards.
- Logo and letterhead, desirability of using a commonly available font. New SCS address labels done.
- Seasonal cards, a season's constellation to look at on one side, SCS contact and meeting details on the other.
- Discussion of the Donovan trust's meetings & finances.
- How to suggest to SCS members that bequests from members would be welcome. There is a great need to get the wording for this exactly right.
- Some correspondence may be being delayed for lack of new official letterhead
- Suggestions for routine (email sent) publicity for SCS meetings. 702 ABC's What's On, Inner Western Weekly, The Wentworth Courier, The Manly Daily, The North Sydney Weekly (North Shore times might be going too far, as it is read in Chatswood?), Cremorne paper, City of Sydney events listing, Georgie

Vestie's 'City Talks' etc. (English Language ethnic and cultural newspapers?)

- A new Librarian is needed, previously when Committee and public meetings were on the same night we needed a Librarian and an assistant for members to access the library before public meetings.

- The Guest speaker for April 2005 is Dr. Nick Canas who will speak on the Psychology of Space Flight, coming from the US for the occasion.

- Discussed suitable 2005 dates for observing the Moon.

- Committee dinner (instead of meeting) 15 December at the Catholic club, between Town Hall & Aust. Museum.

### **Garry's Astronomy Observations report. For September to November 2004**

- During the election campaign I was able to interest Mayo Materazzo, a member of the Australian Democrat MLC Arthur Chesterfield-Evans' staff on considering Light pollution as a legislative environmental concern

- Was able to get a light pollution themed letter to the Editor published in an electorate local paper

- Saw a very bright counter sun (North of the Sun) from the bus on Monday or Tuesday November 9 or 10. This is the latest I can recall seeing this occasional 'winter' phenomena. It was caused by a passing cloud as it was no longer visible when I got off the bus only a few minutes later.

## BAANSW / Sydney City Skywatchers

Public meeting of February 07, 2005

At Sydney Observatory, Speaker: Dr Michael Burton University of NSW

Topic: Star formation and the Wonderful World of Millimetre Astronomy

It is unusual to attend a single meeting where the future direction of an entire area of Science is laid out and an explanation given in advance of where the next generation of 'amazing pictures from Space' are going to come from. Dr Burton's talk on Millimetre Astronomy was such a talk, covering as it did big picture cosmology, with the formation and dynamics of Galaxies as well as Star birth,

Planetary formation and life starting molecules in space. We also saw a cross disciplinary exchange of technologies, as Astronomy learns to incorporate Chemistry and Optical Astronomers integrate Radio Astronomy technology and techniques.

Work in Dr Burton's field of Astronomy, Millimetre Astronomy is the Science of recording what radiation at wavelengths between visible light and Radio waves can tell us of the Universe. Energies at these wavelengths pass through dust and gas clouds, so they allow us to see what is happening at the centres of Galaxies and also in the dark clouds where stars are in the process of being born. Normal optical Astronomy can only see to the 'skin' of these areas of interest.

Dr Burton has observed from Antarctica and the tops of desert mountain ranges as moisture in the atmosphere prevent 'seeing' at Millimetre wavelength.

Other researchers observe from high-flying aircraft and Satellite or Moon based telescopes may be the way of the future in this Science.

What Astronomers are actually observing are the emissions from the chemical bonds between atoms in molecules, i.e. water consists of Hydrogen and Oxygen joined. These joints vibrate differently at different temperatures and pressures.

What is it that is making these Millimetre waves? It is dark, cold dust, gas and molecules, the stuff that may collect to form Stars, Planets and even life. The local temperature and pressure within these lightless regions can be measured by observing how much and what sort of radiation is coming from these dark clouds.

The material that Dr Burton is studying directly interacts with earth occasionally, most people have seen comets and meteors and some may also have unintentionally heard the 'whistle' of unseen meteors as they hit the upper atmosphere, ionise and reflect radio or radar waves.

In interstellar space indistinctly shaped clouds of this dust and gas falls by their own gravity into a flat rotating disc. The heat of a central proto-star causes a sorting out, with heavier warm rocky stuff remaining in close and light cold gassy stuff getting pushed further out, resulting in the sort of inner and out Planets of our Solar system.

High mass, large Stars are of particular interest to millimetre wave observers. They are visible from greater distances and have shorter lives, giving more chances for astronomers to observe critical moments of their live. Eta Carina is such a star, visible from Australia and its gradual changes are keenly observed. These large stars have large cooler regions where millimetre wave observations interesting things can be observed. The main Australia centre for Millimetre wave observation is at Narrabri, where the 'Australia Telescope' (the AT) has had its dishes upgraded. (NB. The degree of smoothness of a dish restricts its ability to accurately reflect incoming radiation, i.e. AT dishes are now true to a parabola, plus or minus millimetres rather than centimetres.)

The range of Australian Millimetre wave observation is limited by air moisture. The driest Australian skies still have about 10mm of water in the air, while at La Silla in Chile the air has about 3 mm of water.

The new instrument that Dr Burton plans to use in Antarctica is a 10 metre array of hexagon packed receivers electronically linked together to produce grainy 'pictures' rather than just observing the strength of signal from the direction of point sources.

Dr Burton showed us a number of existing or planned Millimetre wave telescopes, an alphabet soup of acronyms. Some instruments are almost the size of the ('The Dish') Parkes Radio Telescope. Most Northern Hemisphere ones can only be operated during the local cold and dry seasons, some operate from inside weather proof bubbles. On the other hand, from Antarctica with an automated telescope, the sky may be observed continuously, night or day.

The Great hope for the future is APEX, the Atacama (Chile) Pathfinder Experiment a one Billion dollar project combining the money and skills of Europe, Japan and the US. It will consist of 64 dishes each 12 metres wide and sited across 10 kilometres of high altitude desert in the driest place on earth.

In conclusion, Australian Telescopes will continue to pioneer the broad brush mapping of areas of interest that new instruments like APEX will be able to resolve the finer detail of. In orbit would be a better venue for observing Millimetre wave objects, but cost would be too much and many of the more interesting Millimetre wave 'colours' are still visible with ground based equipment.

**The Sydney Charles Darwin Day event, February 14, 2005  
University of Technology  
Sydney (UTS) Speaker: ANU  
Professor Colin Groves, Topic:  
The Recently discovered  
Floresian Hobbits and Evolution**

I overslept that morning, waking up at 8.45, and had to scramble while still in a 'Bushed' state to get the home PC to yield a satisfactory version of a Sydney Futurian's Flyer, that I had intended to give to John Fox at the UTS before or after the Darwin day event. I had worked on this till about 1.30 last night and it still wasn't satisfactory. I caught a 9.26 bus to the city, assuming that as today would be a Humanist run show, I could rely on a buffer of a 30 minute or so delay beyond the advertised 9.30 start. I arrived at UTS at about 10.05 and it took a few minutes of roaming round the main block of this 'Vertical' (rather than Virtual) concrete University to find exactly where the meeting was taking place.

Entering the UTS that morning I had to force my way through crowds of Christian protesters. Well no, not really. There were herds of Asian Campus Christians on site for the UTS's International (overseas) Students

open day. Some almost certainly would have been from Indonesia.

At the Darwin Day meeting itself, there would have been less than sixty people present. Only one school party, from Sydney Boys had turned up. This is was very much less than last year's effort. Perhaps the event date of close to February 12 is a bad one for schools, being close to the end of January return to school after summer holidays. Maybe this weekday morning to midday session would be better replaced by a Friday Afternoon or 'sports day alternative' spot? As Charlie visited Sydney on his HMAS Beagle trip, a local celebration might focus on his arrival or departure dates?

The future organizers of this event really have to talk to schools / school authorities / Science teachers groups to get the date/time right, rather than just organizing the event for a place and a day and just hoping that school groups will turn up. Fifteen boys from one of NSW's 500 High Schools isn't good enough!

Perhaps commemorating the day of his death might be better its ambiguity could even encourage some Creationists to come to celebrate and to leave with some understanding. An Annual Evolutionists V Creationists Beard growing competition is place where both sides could meet fairly matched and on a common ground? Unfortunately the meeting room supplied was next to a construction site and lots of excavation machine noise kept coming through the walls, making hearing difficult at times.

I believe I missed the judging of the beard growing competition, that is to say that it turned out that the talk had in fact started dead on time, so my late arrival would have been at about the half way stage of the talk.

When I got there Professor Groves was talking about Homo erectus (Standing Man) or Java man and how the facts on these are usually misrepresented and wilfully misinterpreted by Creationists. Homo erectus got the name in 1801 after the discovery of a skull and a femur (long Leg bone) by a Dutch doctor, i.e. a first

vertical pre-human Ape-man. Since then lots of sets of bones of them have been found over much of Indonesia. It suits the creationists to simplify the H.E. story, depicting him/her as either an Ape (not a human precursor) or as a fully Human man (there was no Evolution), rather than admit the fully considered evidence which tells a more complex story. I.e. in Indonesia before the Flores discoveries there were H.E. Remains reliably dated from 1.8 million Before the Present (BP) to 30,000 BP. Apart from some brain growth over time, they don't change that much, indicating that whatever H.E. was, they were pretty well adapted to what they needed to be and were fairly stable as such for a long time, but they were replaced / displaced by modern humans.

## Science Vs Creationism

The philosophy of Science and Creationism were discussed. A point worth discussing as Creationist stuff does try to make itself look 'Scientific' and has a lot to say about Scientific discoveries, while Science does not attempt to make itself appear Theological. Science is about finding out, Creationism is about finding evidence to support a pre-existing belief pattern. Scientist deal in 'loose change' theories, which are freely discarded when some better explanation comes along. By this means scientific understanding changes and grows. For Creationists however, the facts that do not fit the belief are discarded, change only happens as a marketing response to help push the same 'good old' new age religion.

Intelligent Design is only the latest New Age version of creationism. It is a tarted up version of the old 'God of the Gaps' idea. I.e. when Fossil B is found, having intermediate features to fossils A and C, a God of the Gaps' is claimed to be responsible for the change, rather than admit that Yup! There is an evolutionary and transformative process at work here over time. Intelligent Design is claimed by latter day Creationists as a simplifying bridge between the known and the unknown (at this time). I.e. if Science cannot explain the exact mechanism at this time, or it is difficult to explain, then the only 'Scientific'

answer must be that God the Intelligent Designer did it.

Applying Science to the question of the Floresian Hobbit. There were two current hypotheses; they were a Dwarfed sub-population of the Homo erectus line, or possibly they may have been a relict population of an earlier Out of Africa spread than Homo erectus. Resolution of this awaits research that has been delayed and made more difficult by the fossil snaffling of the Flores remains by a sticky fingered Indonesian Bapak.

Teach Creationism in Schools? By all means yes! Creationism has a place on the curriculum. It's place is to be taught as part of the history of the development of Science (Evolution of Science if you like) just like teaching about the Ancient Greek's four humours and 'Phlogiston', illustrates how science changes over time, discarding theories as new facts are revealed. Equal time for the Controversy over Religion? No way, as there is no controversy to teach about, all Science uses Evolution. There endeth the lecture, an advertising break for various Darwin Day, Skeptics, Rationalists and Humanist websites followed.

Apart from me there were no other Sydney Futurians present (last year there were four), although John August was attended.

## Questions – The Fate of the Flores fossils

- The remains were currently detained by an elderly 'head man' of Science in Indonesia who is notoriously slow to publish, doesn't much care for the 'Hobbits' as Homo erectus hypothesis. He is fond of achieving academic reputation by outliving his opponents and is a feudal figure of Indonesian Science using his control of access to fossils as part of an Empire and influence building process.

- The discovery of the little people's remains does not upset the local's belief systems. Flores is mostly Catholic and they wholeheartedly welcome the prospect of more visitors.

- Hobbits and tool use? Some stone tools have been recovered from the dig site, but it

remains to be proven that these are Hobbit associated.

- Folk Tales and Crypto-Zoology, People in the vicinity have folk tales of little people (as do Australian Aboriginals). These could relate to real old (20,000 BCE encounters) or date to just prior to Dutch arrival. These fabled little people have a name, the Orang Pendak and they are said to eat anything, including bugs and stuff that any self-respecting human would avoid. I.e. they may have filled a non-human ecological niche, which provides hope for continued survival?

A Darwin Fish car sticker was then awarded by psychic poetry ordeal, Skeptics DVDs / Videos given to the lads from Sydney Boys etc. There followed a Lunch break and then a video on recent Evolutionary discoveries.

The video was a second choice of the organizers as they had failed to locate a speaker on Evolutionary Psychology at short notice, Evolutionary Psychology being in the news of late, being used to explore and predict future terrorism and suggest counter measures. Richard Saunders gave a vote of thanks to the Humanists, did a hands on heads/bum clutching, psychic toss off of a coin to detect most psychic (or fraudulent) person present.

The video did demonstrate two points - Language acquisition among humans has an age limit. I.e. if you do not encounter and use language by age 7 to 12 then it is difficult to ever pick it up. Also the size of band or family unit is important, i.e. small groups of 'Language Ready' Homo sapiens or Neanderthal may have been genetically capable of language use for a very long time but were only able to 'gain' language when band or family group sizes. There is evidence that Neanderthals had smaller groups than Homo sapiens.

The other point was that of 'mind reading'. They tested children at 3 to 5 years of age. There is a stage where they begin to be able to describe what they think is going through another mind. I.e. the child observes A place an object at 'a', B comes along and hides it at 'b' the child is then asked 'Where will A look

for the object?' At some age the human child is able to say 'a' is where A will start looking for the object, instead of just stating 'b' which is where the child last saw the object. Apparently Ape minds never reach this stage and can't make this distinction between what they have seen and what another might think. If you like, this being able to imagine the thinking of another's mind might be the precursor to religion. I.e. until you can think what another human might be thinking, you cannot begin to imagine what 'God' might be thinking or want you to do. Makes you think doesn't it?

So, can you imagine what I'm thinking about now?

## Sydney City Sky watchers Public meeting of March 07, 2005

**Topic: Report to members of a tour of Museums and Observatories in England and Paris by Nick Lomb, Curator of the Sydney Observatory Museum**

14 Members and guests present at 7.15 pm.

Member's observations (partial, as I arrived late, partway through this part of the public meeting)

**Alan Plummer** distributed (and presumably discussed) a one page article illustrated by light curve graphs on the Variable Star L2 Puppis.

**Monty Leventhal** displayed several projected images of his photographs of Solar Flares. Of particular interest was an 'over the Horizon' shot of a flare and a massive pair of filaments which stretched fully half way across the Sun's diameter.

**Harry Roberts** gave a power point presentation based on his drawings of the December 28, 2004, Solar Flare event. He was observing the Group 715 and made several drawings that charted the lifecycle of this very active flare group. The flare event was observed with a tuneable H Alpha filter, i.e. he was able to alternately observe to the blue (approaching) or Red (receding) light of ejecta as its motion caused it to be Doppler shifted from the central H Alpha wavelength characteristic of 'stationary' neutral Hydrogen gas. An interesting fact disclosed was the

existence of an altitude based reversal layer at the sun's photosphere, where emission lines and absorption bands reverse. I.e. The photosphere emits light at nearly all wavelengths (like a white hot filament) while Flare ejecta emits light at select frequencies (like a neon sign) and absorbs at a few other wavelengths which are seen on Earth as dark bands. This event lasted for 38 minutes and several drawings were made at nearly five minute intervals, catching just over half of the event's duration. Investigations of the magnetic polarity of the 715 Flare/Sunspot group revealed that the violence of this event may have been powered by an unusual reversal of polarity.

**Nick Lomb** revealed that earlier that day the Observatory had been visited by the Crown Prince of Denmark and his Tasmanian born wife. They unveiled a Hans Christian Anderson Bust that currently stands on a plinth in Observatory Park, just beyond the Observatory's back fence. The royal couple toured the facility just in time to observe the drop of the one o'clock Time Ball drop. **John Dobson** (of the Telescope design) will be giving a talk at the Sydney Observatory on Sunday March 20, very limited seating and a \$20 entry charge, bookings essential.

**Nick Lomb's** trip to London was principally to oversight the return to Greenwich Observatory / Museum the Shelton clock, one of the clocks that was displayed at Sydney Observatory's recent Cook and the Venus Transit exhibition. He was away from Sydney for about two weeks in January.

While in London Nick visited and gave an illustrated talk on seeing;

- The Millennium 'horizontal' suspension bridge across the Thames which vibrates if more than 165 people are walking on it at the same time!
- The London Planetarium which is inside the Madame Toussaud's wax works
- At the British Museum Nick visited the new Courtyard which surrounds the Reading room
- The original of the Rosetta stone
- The display of Babylonian Cuneiform clay tablets depicting the first World map and Astronomical records which included an account of Halley's Comet
- The Fitzroy Barometer, Fitzroy was the Charles Darwin's cruise director

- Jesse Ramsden's Three Foot Theodolite (used for the original Triangulation surveying of Great Britain and many more 'first' astronomical or time keeping equipment.

Other Highlights of other Museums include;

- Troughton's 1774 Dividing Engine (for Angles)
- Cook's Venus Transit equipment
- Herschel's Home and workshop, now a Museum and featuring Telescopes and mirrors
- A 1715, hand made John Harrison wooden clock with an Alarm bell!
- A Raingo Orrery clock of 1832
- At Oxford he visited the Museum of History of Science, more Herschelians Telescopes, Astrolabes, Armillary Spheres and Cameras owned by Charles Dodge son (Lewis Carroll) and Warren De La Rue who made the first Moon Photographs.
- While in Bath, Nick found the Herschel Home and Workshop Museum very hard to locate, passing it three times. This museum featured Telescopes, mirrors, workshop and a back Garden. It was from the Garden of this house that by Herschel discovered the planet Uranus.
- A look at Royal Greenwich Observatory was followed by a trip to the Library of the Royal Society and a look at the journal of Lt. William Dawes, Nick's First Fleet predecessor as a Sydney Astronomer.
- Via the comfort of the Euro star train Nick then went on a day trip to Paris. There he visited the Paris Observatory and its Cassini room, seeing much of interest for possible future Sydney Observatory displays.
- At the Musee Des Arts et Metier he was able to see Foucault's workshop (built in a church) and even more Clocks (enough to satisfy a former Australian Prime Minister!).
- At the Cite Des Sciences Et De L' industry there was a huge Technology barn with a good 'Sun' display. Then back to Sydney and a date with Royalty!

The Speaker for the April 4 meeting will be

**Dr Nick Canas** from the US who will be talking about **Madness and Sanity in Space**.

**Notes from the Sydney City Skywatchers Committee meeting of Wednesday, March 16, 2005**

At the back of the Observatory is a space for a large Marque. It has a very good view out across Sydney Harbour and is used to hold weddings, Christmas parties and other corporate events, helping to subsidise the cost of running the Observatory Museum. When I arrived (late) for the committee meeting, Nick Lomb was showing the rest of the committee that the tent was gone. The Powerhouse Museums has submitted plans to build a permanent reception centre on this site.

A feature of this new building is likely to be the Club's massive 19<sup>th</sup> century Hoskins Telescope, currently on loan to Macquarie University. It will be set up as a centre piece display.

After discussing the usual committee business of accounts, payments and guest speakers, we spent some time discussing the 'Colourful people' frequently encountered through Astronomy Associations. It seems that each Astronomy Association has room for at least one resident eccentric. At one point the old BAA NSW Branch was riven over the controversy of one member being denied a right to speak about UFOs at a meeting and then given the opportunity to add a monograph on the same to the next issue of the Branch newsletter. More recently noticed eccentricities include cross dressing at NAACAA Conferences and claims of Extra-terrestrial origins.

To be fair, I do recall stranger things / people occurring among the membership of UFO and Space Enthusiast groups.

## Green Page

### Rainfall and the Great Flood!

#### Lake Eulabah overflows - Inundation!

#### Freakin' Water world - Wolli Valley Floods!

#### Motorists stranded on flooded Bexley Bridge!

#### ANZAPA Archive narrowly misses destruction!

### Basenji gets feet wet in backyard flood water!

At number 1 Eulabah Avenue we are effectively the lowest house on our side of the street, there is a drain easement running down one side of the front of our land, so in periods of extreme rainfall (or stormwater drain grill blockages) street in front of our house can fill up and overflow down our driveway (Lake Eulabah).

There was an extreme rain event during the afternoon before dinner with Eric & Jean. From my office window vantage point, 9 stories above the streets of Bankstown the storm displayed some of the thickest rain and driven cloudy stuff that I have ever seen. The Bureau of Meteorology rain radar for Sydney showed lots of spots of red, for rainfall exceeding 100 mm per hour.

There was so much rain, fearing an overflow of my measuring equipment over night; I measured the amount of rain at 10 pm (instead of waiting till 8 am next morning). By my measure there had been 23.44 mm of rain, which was less than I have recorded on some other rainy days, but according to mum this all fell within half an hour.

We ended up with the worst flooding in the 40 years of our residency at Eulabah Avenue, water flooding in from two sides, as run off from the next two houses up the street were (undergoing renovations and with unuttered rooves and backyards of are earth or concrete) combined with water coming down the driveway.

### Elsewhere

The rush of rainwater caused the Wolli Creek to overflow, causing several cars and motorists to be trapped on the bridge between the M5 Freeway and Bexley North Railway Station. With global warming / increased intensity of Sydney rainfall (but less rain over the full year) this seems to happen during every heavy rain burst, supplying local papers and TV with dramatic images of motorists huddled on the roof of their cars or dramatic helicopter rescues.

At some point it is going to occur to some RTA genius that it would be cost effective to simply re-build the road bridge four metres higher instead of bearing the cost of helicopter rescues, M5 access and loss of motor vehicle insurance claims each time we get local moderate rain fall that cuts North South road access.

### Effects

- The floors on both Garage floors were awash, 100mm deep most places, with unprecedented mud flows on the floors.
  - Outside the Garages water was in places, knee deep!
  - The 240 litre wheeled Garbage bins and several empty water saving buckets were floating across most of the backyard.
  - A 205 litre Steel drum had been toppled by the flow of water and shifted.
  - About 150 kg of 'lucky stone' pebbles from the ground we lease from the Water Board that is adjacent to our driveway were washed down the driveway and into the back yard. It took mother ten trips with a bucket load to put them all back.
  - The brick that I have placed in the gutter to throw floating debris onto the roadway rather than having it block the efficiency of the drain grates was washed away by the force of water.
- 'Lake Eulabah' formed outside our place before flowing over the driveway and towards the garage doors.
- The 'Slan Shack' corner of the garage narrowly missed disaster. My stack of ANZAPA records, all mailings received to date and spare copies of TBS&E narrowly missed toppling into the garage flood waters. Only a few recent copies of TBS&E were blown off the stack and into the mud.
  - A suitcase of 1985 to 1988 records (many fannish) was on the floor in a non-waterproof suitcase. I lost many pages of hand written notes (thoughts on early Freecons I think) as the pen ink simply dissolved and ran off the wet pages.
  - A thick stack of melamine chip board earmarked for 'future bookshelf' or similar projects got their ends soaked (and expanded), reducing their useful length.
  - Unknown damage to my late father's power tools, will only know when I try to use them.

- Oh and of course my basenji got her feet wet every time she had to patrol the perimeter or go have a twinkle. Basenjies enjoy getting wet as much as cats do.

A lot papers more would have been lost but for the fact that anticipating this sort of flooding, most stuff stored in the Garages is placed on Milk crates or similar to raise them off the concrete floor. While making up a bookshelf during the Easter long weekend I discovered more waterlogged chip board damage and a 'high tide' mark that was 137 mm above the concrete floor.

The Bloke next door at number 3 reckoned that it was all the fault of the guy next to him, at number 5.

A post script to this was that a few weeks later 'Michael' the guy who lives behind our garage went up to see the owners of Numbers 3 and 5 to point out to them that he was not a happy man. His pool, just behind my garage was flooded with muddy water.

He had spent two weeks emptying his 70 cubic metre swimming pool, cleaning out the mud, replacing water and chemicals etc. to the cost of about \$200 to \$300 as a consequence of the muddy runoff that had pooled in our backyard and garage before moving on to his backyard.

## Golden Pages – Science Fiction

### **The Sydney Futurian Meeting, UTS Broadway Friday February 18, 2005**

Rather fewer people present than was desirable, but were able to read and discuss three stories intended for the Magic Casements Flash Fiction, ahead of that competition's closing date.

### **News**

- GD and John August were seen at the 2005, Darwin day event (four Futurians last year) which was about the Floresian Hobbits.
- Three out of five pairs of Penguins at Bremhaven Zoo (Germany) are gay! Hot Norwegian Penguin chicks (or Danish

Penguins porn?) are going to be used to straighten them out. This resulted in a World wide chorus of protest, let the Gay Penguins be! (Not that there is anything wrong with that!)

- The Cassini / Hyugens Titan landing was mentioned

- The Australian Museum is giving up on the Thylacine Cloning project, although it was unclear if this was a scientific or an office politics based decision?

- Most present attended Eric Lindsay's (a Past-urian) birthday party earlier this month.

- Graham Stone has a new book out which lists all the Australian SF published until recently

- Cow cloning is becoming more successful by using a double Embryo process, which might encourage human cloning sooner.

- Erica Lacey and her disappearance from ANZAPA was much discussed on the Eidolist

- Some Queensland dogs have become addicted to 'Toad Sucking' (Bufo Marinus), enjoying the psychoactive ingredients of deadly toad mucus!

- Diane Fox is still working on a truly loathsome fan fiction piece.

- John Fox explained that a recent award winning Student film on how people use their Mobile Phones was shot entirely with .....

A Mobile Phone!

- CSFG News, an ACT government grant towards its activities, A CSFG cookbook and Spec. Fiction Anthology is in preparation,

- A single Author Horror Anthology will be launched at Conflux.

- Conflux News, they will have an international standard Art show, but no SF&F Short Story competition this year. Half the people attending Conflux (and most of the committee?) are likely to be published writers!

- Canberra had 3 ½ writers at the Clarion South SF&F writer's workshop.

- This year's Continuum (Melbourne) is likely to overshadow the Thylacon (Hobart) Natcon.

- John Fox received \$100 for sharing his brain with UTS researchers for three hours.

- ASIM's inner workings were explained, apparently all of ASIM is written by a single individual, the table of contents names are merely the names of the blood donors who make a weekly sacrifice to keep the ASIM monster alive and writing!

- Gillian told us some other stories about ASIM but they were all just too shameful and terrible to describe here!

- ASIM Editors are commissioned to do a single issue, and if they are quick, they might get to press before a slower working earlier appointed Editor.

- Apparently the Editor of ASIM picks a theme for his/her issue then finds the Fiction in the Slush pile (or commission additional pieces) and then the non-Fiction is written to fill the remaining spaces of the 120 page 'block'. I.e. an 'Extremely Good' story may languish on the Slush pile until an Issue of that theme is envisaged. Or a brilliant story may stimulate an Editor to run with that theme for their issue, resulting in almost immediate publication for that story.

### **Loose and irresponsible speculation:**

- "I fear Canberrans bearing Books"

- This year's Continuum (Melbourne) is likely to overshadow the Thylacon (Hobart) Natcon.

- The Canberra people could run a Worldcon but the ACT may not have enough hotel beds to qualify and the CSFG people are all busy on individual projects. On the gripping hand, they could carry off a slightly smaller, World Fantasy Convention. Perth could do it, but doesn't have a venue, Brisbane Could host and run a Worldcon, off the back of their Summer of Spec. Fiction and they would be good at it.

### **Discussion Topic –**

#### **The Medieval in SF, getting it right**

On this occasion it was mostly listening to Gillian has her say on a topic that she knows well and teaches (at the ANU and in Sydney).

Gillian's long delayed Second book is out soon, 'The Art of Effective Dreaming', and has an authentic medieval flavour.

A lot of Medieval set SF is either an Alternate History or a Secret history, the 'true' story behind the familiar. Historical Fiction writer's often make glaring errors about the abilities of authentic protagonists. Many SF writers distrust Historians as their crafts are dissimilar.

The relatively new Arthur Movie was based on 'research', but the biases of what they chose to research biased the resulting movie.

It is important to get the right Historian rather than the closest / best one i.e. Sydney Uni Medievalists have no weapons specialist, but otherwise their Celtic history coverage is excellent.

Best way for a writer to get it right is

1. To do courses, as existing books are seldom written as reliable source material.
2. Get the infrastructure right, by figuring out what you want to do in a medieval world, and then fit in the heroics.
3. Learn to write well and what you need to fit the places you choose to describe.

Following this Three of the Futurian MC3 Flash fiction entries were read and discussed.

## **A Sydney Dr Who Tavern meeting at the Lansdown Hotel – Friday March 04 2005**

I arrived at 6.50 pm, after having visited Leigh Blackmore at the Collins on Broadway Bookstore, just as he was about to close up the shop. Leigh is the Assistant manager and is responsible for their very good SF&F selection. I wanted to speak to him about SF&F stuff for the March 17, Jules Verne, 100 SF&F book giveaway at the UTS clubs day. Some bookmarks pledged.

The Tavern meeting currently takes place on the second (Smoke Free) floor of the Lansdown Hotel, which offers \$5.00 meals, usually Pasta, Salad or a Steak. This offer seems to bring a lot of people in. I'm not sure if the drink prices are adjusted to cover this? As the room filled up it got Very loud, almost as loud as a live band, so loud that I couldn't confirm that all serving staff were Irish. First there were Christian Kent and John August. Towards 7.30 more people turned up, eventually forming a group of eight. Present were; John August, 'Avon', Carl, Peter Hart, Graham Hoskin, Christian Kent, Tony and myself. Not present this night, but other regular attendees include Brendan, James, Joel, John, Dave Kenyon and Todd.

Briefly I had a conversation about Kingsgrove and other local issues, but then Tony arrived and the conversation moved on to ... families and Club competition Soccer! What a fannish / cultish lot these weekend sports people are have the Dr Who Cricket loving faction been deposed?

This was then followed by even more soccer talk as the que for food and drink grew ever longer.

They have a full-length bar downstairs, but upstairs it is just a booth from which to order both food and drinks, leading to slow progress and dehydration. The upper, Non Smoking area seemed much busier than the street level area, so much for smoke free areas being the death of pubs. In the background John August was showing people a colour brochure about 'AUSROC' a project to develop an Australian Ground-to-Orbit Rocket. John is currently the project manager for this.

Conversation did eventually turn to 'Who Country', with speculation over whether 2, 7 or 10 would win the Sydney free to air broadcast rights to the new Dr. Who. 'Lost Episodes' and unexplored video archives were discussed, the Sydney ABC video stores being a potential King Tut's tomb of undocumented riches. It was mentioned that the ABC may have an archiving backlog that would need over 20 man years of cataloguing labour to bring up to date.

The merits of the currently broadcast stories were discussed, general agreement that twenty years on you notice different aspects of the adventures. Target novelizations got a mention, verdict; Terrance Dicks – prolific but crap, Robert Holmes – good story background and world creation, best writer for portraying the Dr. Who companion 'Leila'. 'The Terror of Fang Rock', the current week's program was discussed as well. The conclusion being that Electricity was the essential factor of this adventure, an interesting Science Fiction detail. Dr Who's most claustrophobic adventures were listed as 'Robots of Death', 'The Terror of Fang Rock' and 'Ark in Space'.

Just as I was leaving at 8.55 pm, 'John' turned up with a new number two haircut, leading to talk of failed bets. The Sydney Dr Who Tavern meeting is one of several almost monthly, partly social meetings; others include Folding nights for the club newsletter – Dr Whom Data - and frequent Video/DVD nights. These meetings take place at an irregular roster of member's homes. The typical attendance at a Sydney Dr Who Tavern meeting is highly variable, eight people present is usual although four to fourteen people have been known to show up. Most will arrive at 7 to 7.30 and some will leave at 8.30, although, being a Friday night and in a pub, some may stay on until closing time.

### **The UTS Clubs day held on level 3 of the UTS Tower building Broadway on the afternoon of Thursday March 17, 2005**

It all came in a rush. At February's meeting John announced that we had been proposed for type two affiliation to the UTS Students Association, after this we were approved and we discovered that the Clubs day was to be on St. Patrick's day, the day before the Futurians meeting, the day before Magic casements. So much to be done in so very little time. I had been aware since last year that Jules Verne had a centenary (of his death) during 2005 and I had resolved to include this in any Sydney Freecon that I organised (as well as Albert Einstein). The idea of a book giveaway partly came from the fact that I had a heap of books left over from the Sydney Freecon table auctions, making it up to 100 seemed likely to be difficult to achieve but worth doing as an attention raiser.

I approached this day with some trepidation, John Fox and I had put about as much effort into this as I usually put into running a Sydney Freecon but without even that tenuous level of feedback or support. Would the Students of UTS give a damn about Science Fiction?

#### **What we had**

**50 DVDs** from Garfield Barnard  
**160 plus new and used SF&F books**

A mixture of SF, Fantasy, Horror and Star Trek given by Garfield Barnard, Elizabeth Budek, Garry Dalrymple, Diane Fox, John Fox, the Galaxy Bookshop and Susan Smith.

About **30 sampler books from Galaxy Bookshop**, each giving a first chapter of several newly published books. Clearly getting 100 SF books from Sydney SF fans in two weeks was not a problem, sorting and listing them was.

**A fist full of ASIMs** from Leigh Blackmore and the Collins on Broadway Bookstore

**Over 120 Sydney Futurians Fridge Magnets** 'Sydney Futurians are So Cool, they don't need to put magnets on Fridges' and 'Living with an Addiction to Science Fiction?'

There is no cure, but at the Sydney Futurians self help group we can talk about it'

And **100 Sydney SF&F Show bags**, UTS Students Association supplied bags filled with whatever SF&F stuff we could manage to gather at very short notice

The Sydney SF show bags included;

**Conflux** Leaflet and post card

A **CSFG Anthology postcard/order form**

Various bookmarks supplied by **Collins on Broadway**

A **Dymocks** leaflet

**Nexus, the Galaxy Bookshop** newsletter and bookmarks

An **Infinitas** flyer/mini newsletter

The magazine of the **NSW Writers Centre** (hosts of the Magic Casement 3 event)

A flyer from **Sappho's Bookshop**, a second hand bookshop (next to Gleebooks) with an upstairs SF&F room

A **Sydney Futurians** at UTS meeting leaflet

A **Southern SF and Fantasy group** leaflet

And a four page leaflet '**Where's the Science Fiction in Sydney**', giving a personal view of the Sydney Science Fiction scene.

And from our 'near fannish' friends there were;

An **Australian Skeptics** Flyer

An **Australian Democrats** newsletter

A bookmark and application form for the **Library of the Mechanics Arts Institute** (good SF section in their Library, long term collection policy)

We also had stuff from the October Anime event (and a stack of Manga books), but we

handed these over to the UTS Anime club where they would be better used.

There are several fairly obvious omissions from this list of 'players' in Sydney SF, but time was short, next year we might have the time to do a more comprehensive job, not everyone could come up with 100 copies of a flyer / recruiting document in two weeks.

### How did we go?

85 of the Show bags were given out, as were 40 of the DVDs, most of the Fridge Magnets went and over 100 of the books were taken. So we can claim to have achieved the stated objective of celebrating the Jules Verne Centenary by giving away 100 books. Each book contained a sticker explaining that the book was a free gift and giving details of the Sydney Futurians @ UTS meetings, a message of goodwill that we hope will spread by Viral Marketing to reach more people like us.

### Thoughts for next time

- More notice to 'players' in Sydney SF
- 85 show bags went on one wet afternoon at a mostly part timer's University campus. If we attended two or more Uni campuses, 200 show bags could be easily be distributed with any leftovers easily absorbed by the Magic Casements 4 crowd or taken to a Canberra.
- 'Feminist' SF was called for several times and 'Big Name' Authored books went fast. UK Le Guinn and Sheri S Tepper were mentioned. Might be worth trying 'you pick one and I'll give you one' to clear some of the lesser authors books.
- The new (and big) Dean Koontz books went fastest, if we collected 10 to 20 New 'Big-name' Author books (branded as being from Bookshop X) and gave then out as part of a 'register for the draw'
- 'Bundle' Big name US/UK Authored books with Australian Authored books (or second hand copies of ASIM etc.?)

- With a longer lead time it might be possible to see a better balance of specified authors rather than just getting a large quantity of SF books.

- What to commemorate next year? What Science Fictional event happened in 1906? – Some HG Wells book or go for a 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and celebrate some 1931 event?

### A Big Idea for Next Year?

Some months at Glebe Market are real slow, stall holders take a break, and spare stalls are more available. At \$30 for a half share of a \$60 table, two SF related or bookish groups could do a Hundred book give away. If several groups were to combine it could be news worthy event, and quite a recruitment / public awareness occasion. Doing it at an Inner-city Market might cost more than at a University Open Day, but you would be more likely to meet adults with disposable income who would be more likely to follow up and join up.

I could see this proposal involving members of: The Sydney Sherlock Holmes Club – The Richard Three Society – SCA – Sydney Dr Who – Sydney Futurians – Southern SF – Sydney's SF bookshops – The Arthurian Association of Australia - 'Writers of the Future' – Conflux – Shutists – Friends of Science Fiction – Best of Both Worlds – Sky Walking – Lost In Space Australia – The Farscapers – The Next Clarion South – The CSFG/ASIM to launch their latest issue - The Papadeases - Anime people – RPG conventions – NSW Writers Society etc.

Not all would need to have books to give away. Most could give away newsletters etc., but if a few of the groups could, it might have the attractive critical mass to bring in enough people, like a Sydney Natcon without programming or entry charges?

If this was done near the beginning of the year, it could kick ahead the traditionally poorly attended first meeting of the year and bring in new people to replace the subscribers of last year whose interest/commitment has faded over the year.

If something like this event were to become an annual open to the public fixture, then it could provide a 'touching base' point for older semi-gafiated fans to come back or at least meet old friends once more without further commitment.

Well? What do you think?

## **The Sydney Futurian meeting at UTS Broadway on Friday March 18, 2005**

As this was a meeting the day after the UTS Clubs day and we were having visitors from Canberra, I did not pay as much attention to note taking as I usually do. For this unusual meeting of Sydney and Canberra fans John Fox had booked the Harry Heath meeting room for us, instead of our usual meeting place.

By 7.10 pm those present were:

Zara Baxter – Canberra (Marrickville)

Stuart Barrow – Canberra

Diane and John Fox

Garry Dalrymple

Kiril – UTS Student

Nicole Murphy – Canberra (Nowra)

Gillian Polack – Canberra

Ann Rankins

And Brian Walls. Apologies were received and noted from five others.

All present were offered Free SF books, Sydney Futurian Fridge Magnets, Sydney SF Show bags and plied with cakes, scones and jam. We even had a typed meeting agenda.

### **News**

The New Dr Who episode that had escaped onto the internet was described as 'good and fast paced' by those present who had seen it. Our friend John August has a two page article about the medical industry in the current issue of the Australian Skeptic.

BW – presented several recent articles about SF&F managed to make it into papers recently, Brian brought along copies. His biggest news item was that Colin Steele, a Canberra fan has donated his impressive collection of SF to Sydney's Fisher (University of Sydney) Library. Was offered first to ANU but they declined.

GP considers that the Fisher Library is Australia's best for SF and Fantasy stuff and second only to the National Library in size of collection.

BW added that tours of the Special collection can be organised.

NM & GP – Report on progress towards Conflux, Art exhibition to die for, all else well.

SB – Launching a SF&F Anthology and cookbook, a story to go with each recipe. A panel of Conflux committee member were delegated to try and taste test each recipes.

SB – Announced the launch of The Grinding House, a single Author Anthology of Horror stories, the latest CSFG

ZB – Had to hand several copies of the latest, (17 Th.) issue of ASIM which was just out, provoking several sales on the spot

GD & JF – gave a report on the Jules Verne Centenary 100 book giveaway and other interactions with the Students of UTS on Clubs day.

GD – The Futurians sent in eleven entries for the MC3 Flash Fiction competition (4 last year). This year there were 120 entries (7 or 8 last year). One of our entries made it into the final 10 (3 winners and 7 commended) and will be read tomorrow.

### **The Topic – Sex and Drugs in SF**

The Topic was chosen by CSFG members, but pointedly I did not advertise this meeting as 'A night of Sex and Drugs with the CSFG'.

### **Sex in SF**

Sex beyond normal reproduction has been a feature of SF since its earliest days, only now it is a bit more open and 'Science Fictional'. The covers of many early SF adventures featured the lascivious BEM entangling the busty space maiden while the heroic Spaceman battled the BEM for possession of the space cutie, others features the hero pilot, the Senior Scientist the attractive Scientist's daughter / secretary and the swarthy sinister Scientist's assistant with a sub plot of the hero's winning of the heroine. 'Slash' style fan fiction was mentioned as being mostly always about sex / relationships, as were the Authors **Robert Heinlein** and **John (Gor) Norman** (writing about what you are not getting?). Heinlein pretty much owning cross generational incest and John

Norman..... Well what can you say about Gor in mixed company?

**Aldous Huxley** in his 'Brave New World' may have been the first major SF writer to have a book where Science Fictional reproduction was the new world standard and 'normal' sex something quaint and unusual, i.e. 75 years ahead of GATICA? (Makes you think?)

**Dr Who** was mentioned, as in, 'the Doctor isn't gay but some of his companions might be', but who can say if the new series might change this perception?

**Larry Niven** introduced Rythustra, cross species sexing, to SF readers. A non-fertile alternative to contraception for alien races with a biologically compelled to sex drive.

Strange and dangerous Sex can be found in Barbarella (A tablet / drug instead of physical Sex!) and as Mankind's downfall in Species. The Aliens sequence of movies is all apparently a misunderstanding about sex, with 'monsters' alien and human trying several sexual and reproductive methods until the get it right? **Michael Moorcock** and his swinging sixties projected 1970s attitudes into SF, i.e. just see what Jerry Cornelius and his friends gets up to.

### Drugs in SF

Beyond the usual recreational instances of drugs, **Cordwainer Smith's** Norstrilla Universe has the longevity drug 'Stroon' and **Frank Herbert's** Dune Universe had 'The Spice'. Numerous books based followed based on working through the implications of these two drugs.

**Alan Ginsberg** and **Phillip K Dick** (a different drug for each book?) were thought to be drug energised writers, as were **William Burroughs** (Nova Express) and **Edgar Alan Poe**.

Stories about The Invisible Man, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde have a newly developed drug as their cause.

A related point raised during discussion was that SF stories about Chemistry pretty much cease around the 1950s.

At the end of discussions, the remaining SF books were boxed and sent home with the Canberra fans (they had a car) to be shared among Canberra fans or taken to the Magic Casements event next morning.

## Garry's Magic Casements Three Report

As Magic Casements Three was the big event at the end of a week of fairly frantic preparation, I was fairly relaxed about it; nothing I could do on the day would have any effect. I already knew the relevant Flash Fiction competition results, removing a source of anxiety and anticipation. I planned just to turn up, see what was on, attend what interested me and then to head for home when I'd seen enough.

For those who haven't seen the program, MC3 had two rooms each featuring Four 90 minute panels/ presentations during the day. It didn't occur to me, and I was a bit surprised when he said it, but on the bus ride in Rod McLeod described the program as being a 'Writers' room and a 'fans' room. I had pencilled in attending program items in both rooms.

Rod's opinion has some merit, as during one panel there was a forest of raised hands at the question to the audience, 'Who writes here?' while during a panel in the other room a similar response to, 'Who knows what Fan Fiction is?' I. e. Writer / reader some split!

The four program items I attended were;

### 1. Myths and Tropes of Speculative fiction

Speculative fiction is as old as the Bible (the Kalavala) and other communally owned oral folk traditions, only recently has it been written down and 'owned' by writers and has originality become an issue. Think of how many apocryphal Christian Gospels there were by the end of the late Middle Ages. The big thing is the rise of fan fiction. Mostly written by women who are writing about the 'feelings' between Sci-Fi TV characters which they feel are left unresolved by the commercial product. Fans are writing enormous numbers and volume of adventures for under employed fictional characters, partly because the refuse to wait for the return of cancelled programs or for the next annual Harry Potter or Lemony Snicketts story.

## 2. Short Fantasy Fiction

Is the short story Dead/Dying? No not quite, just harder to notice it getting published. Small press Rules and non-book publication options abound with new technology. Ended up as an 'if you want to write for my publication', type Q and A sessio

## 3. The changing face of Fantasy

Left this one early to seek nourishment, can't say I paid that much attention to it

## 4. The Role of the Military in SF

Military SF is alive and well, the surviving heir of Space Opera. Military SF is adventure where the motivation of main characters is immediately understood. Military SF is where you can expect to find both conflict and 'new toys' as part of the story.

Space Battle scenes resemble either;

1. WW2 Arial Dogfights
2. WW2 Aircraft Carrier group battles
3. WW1 Battle Ship Fleet battles

It was a surprisingly fine day, warm and sunny with some wind. The previous two days and the week's weather ahead of the Saturday. I had given up a day at Glebe Market to be there, so I was slightly disappointed that there had been no rain at all during the day!

## Conclusions

MC3 was subtly different from the preceding two, settling into a trend of being more of a writer's and would-be-writers event than a SF reader's or fan's event. There were noticeably less people there than last time. This year the event seemed to have been less well advertised and they printed a much smaller number of programs. It was very much an event for those 'in the know' (to be fair it was also supposed to be a wet day and it was up against the first week of the Sydney Easter show).

Last year they introduced a 'Flash Fiction' competition. I believe that the NSW Writer's Centre did so because they were familiar with hosting stand up and read Flash Poetry events. Last year they, with the obligation to be there to read it out they received three

entries before the advertised cut off and they found seven or eight starters. This year, without the obligation to attend and read they received 120 entries.

I doubt that 120 people attended Magic Casements. I do not have the stats to back it up but I would not be surprised if the NSW Writers Centre Flash Fiction competition is now a nationally significant Speculative Fiction event, rather than a quirky end piece for Magic Casements.

The Clarion South Writers proved to be more 'clannish' (but not Fannish?) than last year. With this year's recent graduates they sat as a block during some presentations and staked out a their own patch of grass during the afternoon

More of a Writer's turn out, and audience member said he'd go to a Freecon provided it was more for readers than MC3

The quite sensible policy of staggered the panel starts by 15 minutes unintentionally reinforces the Writer reader divide coz the people left for you to talk to while waiting for panels to start are either writer or reader fans.

The food serving area was a shemozzle. Just like the old CCCP style of retailing, with only one entrance/exit to the food area you had to que to see the menu cards, then against the flow of more people coming in, fight your way through to choose, pay, receive and finally leave with your choice.

I met Rod McLeod, David Bofinger, Mark Phillips, John August and last night's Sydney Futurian attendees. Of the Sydney ANZAPANS there was me, both Foxes, Gerald Smith and Womble. I managed to meet very few Sydney Freecon Faces.

I didn't stick it to the final item, the reading of the three Flash fictions winners and seven recommended stories. I was feeling just a bit tired (had a 10 hour sleep when I got home!) after the lead up to Thursday and Friday, so I left the Writers Centre just a bit after 5 pm taking two busses and a train to get home just on 7 pm.

**Books Read, February to May, 2005**

31 Jan to 05 Feb. 'Metamorphosis and other Stories' by **Franz Kafka**, 218 pages, individual stories, © 1916 to 1931

05 to 09 Feb. 'Analog April 1988'

By **Various Writers**, 192 pages © 1988

13 to 21 Feb. 'Rockets in Ursa Major', by **Fred & Geoffrey Hoyle**, 124 pages © 1969

28 Feb. 'Wayne's World' by **Mike Myers & Robin Ruzan**, 96 pages © 1985

01 to 10 Mar. 'Stasi Land' by **Anne Funder**, 288 pages © 2002

06 to 09 Mar. 'The Fortean Times – Jan 2005' by **Various writers**, 96 pages © 2005

March 19 to 99, 'Andromeda Spaceways In flight Magazine # 17' Edited by **Sally Beasley**, 128 pages © 2005

March 25 to 31 'The Shadow's Edge'  
By **Alan Powell**, 346 pages © 1988

NB my reading list this issue is fairly slight as I spent a lot of time and effort writing stories for the MC3 Flash Fiction competition and then organising things for the UTS Clubs day and the Jules Verne SF Book give away.

'Analog April 1988' was an enjoyable read, one or two of the stories felt slightly dated, much less than the 1967 issue I read recently which was full bore cold war paranoia.

I found 'Rockets in Ursa Major' to be a great disappointment. It seemed to be a pale imitation of a Heinlein Juvenile and a throwback from the 1930s in that it had a cardboard premise and characterizations but an interesting McGuffin, the disposal of a belligerent alien battle fleet by provoking a Solar Flare! Clearly Hoyle Senior did the Science and provided the University College / Science researcher lifestyle elements leaving Hoyle Junior to do most of the rest! An Attwood level effort. I suspect that after Fred died there was no more SF written by the House of Hoyle.

'Wayne's World' was a TV/Movie tie in product, a very slight read, 96 pages of mostly pictures, amusing but not outstandingly so.

'Stasi Land' – read like Science Fiction, well ... no, not quite, it wasn't that original. **Phillip K. Dick** did 'weird' better and **Brian Aldis** 'Enemies of the System' gives a more

original voyage into a world view of totalitarianism. Not bad for a mundane writer, but not that big a deal to someone whose High school reading was **Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451**, **Solzynitsyn's, Gulag Archipelago**, and **George Orwell's Animal farm** and 1984 (before the movie).

I bought my copy of 'Andromeda Spaceways In flight Magazine # 17' from Zara Baxter at the March Futurian meeting. I have the first year's issues of ASIM at home but I have only read half of them, as my interest in the project TKO'D half way through my initial subscription by some mind numbingly indulgent pieces, i. e. the Uplifted Ape (read coloured person in the 1950s) and US Baseball story 'Mighty Joe Young', that just went on and on and on beyond the two pages that were all that were all that were needed to wrap up the story. With this 17 Th. Issue I will try again to be approach the matter with a rested and makes it difficult to give a fair review of ASIM is that with a rotating roster of Editors each choosing a theme for their issue, a randomly chosen issue of ASIM may contain good stories, and a strong theme, but if you are greatly influenced to write in the style of that issue then you have little chance of meeting the mood for following issues.

Issue No. 17 seems to be about Medieval and Supernatural Horror with a toothy front cover. 'Trouble leaves a scent trail' is a story about life as a police bug in a GM employing Hive society. This story made me re-consider how I would write about Hive life, as I have plans for a series of Human / Hive War stories from an Australian POW perspective.

'Impractical Magic' is about getting a demonic study buddy (Does Brendan 'The Voucher' Nelson know about this?). 'Team mate Reference ....' is a cautionary tale about choice of language in front of otherworldly guests. 'The Red Priest's Homecoming' is set in medieval Venice and features 'Grey Mouser' type adventures and a pseudo vampire assassin. 'An Alien abduction' is a werewolf revenge story for all those Alien abduction / probing stories. 'A Game of Knight Court' is a courtly adventure of guile and ritual combat by board game. 'The Memory of breathing' is probably the most

Science Fictional piece in the issue and is slightly chilling (or prescient) in that it manages to be in an issue that is current at the same time as episodes of the Terri Schiavo controversy are being served up on the nightly news. **ASIM No. 17** was an OK read, competently held together as a sort of themed issue. This issue was mostly of the end of the 'Speculative Fiction' continuum for which I have no great sympathy, so I can give this particular issue only a B plus (and mostly for Gillian Polack's piece and the Memory of Breathing), while the ASIM project in general (if they send me a 'full Science Fiction' issue) is probably worth an A minus.

**'The Shadow's Edge'** is a non academic single volume history of WW2 centred on Darwin, the capital of Australia's Northern Territory and its most bombed city during WW2. The bombing of Darwin was a sequel to America's Pearl Harbour and proportionally and arguably bigger crisis to the Australian War effort than the fall of Singapore. My father served in Darwin. It gives some sense of what the Darwin defenders put up with, 1942 to 1945.

## Award Winning Original Fiction

This story was one of eleven entries from the Sydney Futurians for the 2005 Magic Casements Three Flash Fictions (500 word limit) 'Speculative Fiction' competition. This story was one of seven 'Commended', placed behind three winners out of a field of 120 entries. I.e. you might say it was placed fourth to tenth. I hope to be able to publish several more of these Sydney Futurian Entries in TBS&E during 2005. – GPD 21 Mar., 2005.

## I'll take the stairs

- By Rhidian Rhead 495 words, 11Feb05

Don't get me wrong, I love gadgets. I've got drawers of tech trash at home, usually bought on whim.

It's just amazing what the new tech stuff can do. I mean, for less than a bottle of good red, you can buy stuff with applications that

you would have had sold your soul for a few years ago.

It was a Monday, minutes past nine. The lift was empty but for me and this guy with a handheld, one of the real new ones, with camera, internet, games, calculator and God knows what else.

He'd jacked it into the lift's emergency phone port and was desperately trying to connect with the in-building security system. He'd ridden the lift up and down a few times.

In classic Monday morning confusion, he'd left his security pass at home and now he was struggling to convince the lift's brain to stop at his 'Secure' floor and then to convince his office door to let him enter as a guest-visitor.

We never found out exactly what caused it. It may have been a password miss-keyed, some maths symbols, a virus or even a fragment of code from a game like 'Doom XX' left on the handheld after his son had used it last night.

But it happened. The lift lights blinked and I heard a Tardis like screech.

The lift stopped, doors opened and people came in.

Blue people. Blue people with horns or wriggly feelers on their heads.

Maybe we had arrived at floor number Pi, e, square root of minus one, or maybe some place with sulphur in the air!

The lift hadn't changed, but we could see through the lift doors as they opened and closed that everything else had. Foyer carpets rippled with life. Wall colours changed, moved and much much more.

As they passed, even the floor numbers were alien.

For half an hour we rode that lift up and down, numb with shock, not daring to leave the lift and step out into ...

Into what?

Not knowing how it happened or how to get back, we tried the one thing that occurred to us. Using the logic of 'Hand held in', 'Hand held out', we hit 'last call' using the phone function, then switched to calculator function, hit 'add to Memory' then 'Change sign Memory', then back to the phone function and then hit 'memory recall'.

It worked like magic. Again the lift lights blinked and we heard the Tardis like screech.

The lift stopped, doors opened and people came in.

Ordinary people. Ordinary people with hats on their heads, not horns or feelers.

People who were startled to find themselves in a lift with two blokes in business suits embracing and dancing for joy at the same time.

So you'll understand now, even if it makes me late for a meeting, when I see someone in the lift reaching to use some hand held technology ...

I'll always take the stairs. - Rh. Rh.

### LATE BREAKING NEWS – Back Cover

#### **Garry's Observing report of the conjunction between Jupiter and the Moon, 26 and 27 March 2005, Easter Weekend**

I observed from 12.30 till 2.15 am from my suburban Sydney back yard, going to bed while Jupiter was 3/4 of a Moon diameter away from crossing.

The sky was exceptionally clear for a full Moon. With the naked eye I was able to clearly see four Musca stars and five Southern Cross stars of the Southern polar region without difficulty and was able to see with the naked eye some Milky Way nebulosity to the South and West, furthest from the Moon.

Observing off and on for about 100 minutes, I passed the time by comparing the view from a

76 mm folded reflector (Seymour I) and my newer 80 mm 'Astroscan' like Newtonian reflector (Seymour II), while watching the progress of the creep of the terminator shadow at the Moon's leading edge.

At all times I was able to see all four Galilean satellites and several times I noticed occasional 'sparkle' which may have been averted eye vision detection of some lesser Jovian satellites (is this possible with a 80 mm mirror?).

While observing I noticed no meteors or satellites, not anticipated under a full moon seeing conditions.

I conclusion, I was very pleased to be able to do some observing of an Astronomical event during the full moon dominated Equinox public holiday break. The clarity of skies over this long long weekend does make you think about global dimming. - GPD 31Mar 2005

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