

I REMEMBER AFPA!

LEE HARDING

(WITH NOTES BY DICK JENSSEN AND JOHN FOYSTER)

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This edition reproduces the content as it appeared in *Boy's Own Fanzine*, including ink-smears and original illustrations as follows:

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From 1939 to 1959 no SF magazines or paperbacks were imported into Australia in any quantity. The few local fans who were around in those drought days were of two kinds: those carried over from pre-war days and those who somehow stumbled upon the numerous fan-groups in the major cities. Sydney boasted the oldest and most organized: the Futurian Society of Sydney. It was also the headquarters for the Australian Science Fiction Society, a 'postal register' begun by FSS leader Graham Stone as a means of keeping the more distant fans informed and in contact with the headquarters. In the beginning, Stone performed this task admirably, although there were those who declared that, in later years, the Society has exceeded the authority which the FSS had originally invested in it, and has become instead a personal plaything of Mr. Stone - but I don't know about that.

When the Australian Science Fiction Association was set up by Graham Stone in 1965, the Association incorporated the FSS. (John Foyster)

For those long years the Australian reader had to survive on an irregular diet of the BRF Astounding, the occasional BRFs of the Thrilling Group, and the few British paperbacks which found their way into local bookshops - more often than not of abysmal quality. One was left to search for the 'unusual' and the 'off-trail' amongst the available hardcover books in order to supplement the meagre ration. (Ah, the junk we read in those days! I remember Ian Crozier's library . . . Dennis Wheatley, Harry Edmonds, Michael Harrison, Rider Haggard!)

And I can recall many a Saturday afternoon spent in scouring the suburbs, searching for the occasional BRF Astounding in one secondhand bookshop or another. The chance of coming across a genuine American pulp of the SF variety was remote - one could but drool over the few battered copies of GS And His Battle Aces and become frustrated and annoyed by the duplication of so many copies of Dime Detective and Thrilling Mystery. Did GIs really have such appalling tastes?

(This was a situation similar to an earlier period of the Harding life: the desperate schoolboy search for the glittering American all-colour comics during the war years. In those days the words 'Printed in the United States of America' possessed a wondrous magic. Our own poverty-stricken publications could never match those fabulous products - but that's another time and another tale. . .)

It was the ubiquitous Race Thorson Mathews who first seduced me into the delights of the nevernever world of science fiction, just as earlier, much earlier, he had corrupted my mind with the garish, and much-sought-after publications known as (hush) American comics. Race, I recall, had a large collection of English penny dreadfuls - the Nelson Lee Library - and I had a father in Shanghai, and then in Hong Kong, who supplied me with American comics. We arranged a

swap, and matters progressed satisfactorily until the Customs began to clamp down on the dreadful influx of corrupting literature threatening to engulf our youth in a decadent tide of Nyokas and Captain Marvels, and Batman, and Sheenas, and Heaps, and Airboys, and Stu Taylors, and Dr. Siveras, and Mr. Mxyztpks, and etc. Nelson Lees dwindled as did the heady wonders of Buck Rogers in Fulcolour.

Trust Race, though. Before you could say SHAZAM! twice he had discovered a tiny place, quite near school and the St. Kilda Junction, which had a supply, small it is true, but a supply nonetheless, of the forbidden fruits. Life was again liveable. Well, Race was in the class below me at school, and I soon had to leave Xxxxxxx to enter the 'Big School'. St. Kilda Junction was out of bounds for a boarder, and I no longer had the pocket money I had been accustomed to, so I stopped frequenting the shop. But not Race.

About 18 months later I was taken away from school on a whim of my father's and whirled around the world to the East and to England for a year, to absorb God knows what, and when I returned Race and I were in some classes together. He reintroduced me to the little shop, this time not for comics, but a far more insidious poison, one which still courses through my veins - science fiction. Astounding, Planet, Super Science . . . ah! even the British titles were hued with wonder, drenched in the promise of interplanetary orgies. Life was again worth living. I remember distinctly the first true SF magazine I ever read - a present from Race - Galaxy for May 1951, with 'The Wind Between The Worlds' by Lester Del Rey, 'Tyrann' by Asimov, 'Goodnight Mr. James' by Simak, plus many others. I have never been the same since. (Dick Jensen)

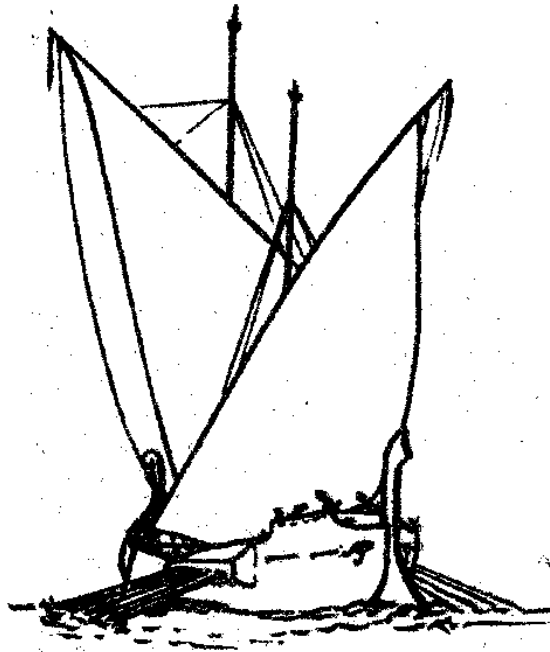
We did eventually get our own local SF magazine - Thrills Incorporated first appeared in 1950 - and it was a bloody awful thing. The nearest comparison I can think of is the short-lived American 'slick' Fantastic Science Fiction ('juv' in's content and generally not recom' DHTuck) which saw two issues during the boom of 1952. The material in Thrills was on a comicbook level. The writers were inexperienced and illiterate - although one of them did bring a breath of notoriety to the magazine when he filched some stories from Planet and Thrilling Worder and presented them under his own bylines - most notably Bradbury's 'Marionettes Inc.'. Somehow the publishers managed to survive this and many other minor catastrophes, and even published the first works of local authoress Norma Hemming and in the last year or so seemed to be making a sincere effort to improve the quality of the stories in the magazine. In all it saw 23 issues, the last in

June 1952.

A dismal picture for the aficionado. Those fortunate enough to have 'discovered' the ASFS could avail themselves of such international services as Ken Slater's OPERATION FANTAST and wallow in as much imported SF and fantasy as they could afford - or shell out even more and move up into the tempting bracket offered by such British book dealers as Ted Carnell and Ken Chapman. And for the non-fans there existed, in Melbourne, still another source of supply . . .

Old Man Franklin kept a booming paperback and marriage-manual business at the tall end of Bourke Street, where the Southern Cross (site of the 1975 World Science Fiction Convention) now squats in its sugary splendour. At the rear of his shop, in what used to be the Western Market, he also ran the largest lending library in the city. Some time prior to 1952 he bought up a lot of pre-war pulps from somewhere and had them all individually bound, and opened a special SF section of the said library. The joining fee was a whopper, and indicated the importance placed upon 'American Magazines' in those days: £2/10/0, as against 10/6 for regular library membership. In those dry days before the 1959 deluge (when most publishers must have dumped in Australia the accumulated backlog of five years publishing), dozens and dozens of eager fans must have found their way to Franklin's and cavorted happily

amongst the hundreds of volumes to be had. By some method available only to a crafty bookseller, Mr. Franklin took out subscriptions to Astounding, Amazing, Fantastic Adventures, Thrilling Wonder, and Startling Stories (apparently he had never heard of Galaxy - or the others), and had each issue bound and placed in the library - and THIS at a time when there was no way for an individual to place a subscription for an American fiction magazine. Later we found that there were ways . . . such as arranging a sub through Chapman or Carnell in England.



For a fifteen-year-old fan (such as I) this was indeed

treasure trove unearthed. I can recall weekends - and WHAT weekends! - struggling home on a tram loaded up with five or six hardcover Startlings or Thrilling Wonders. (Even in those days the very mentions of the words 'Ziff-Davis' was offensive to my ears. ASF was all right, but it didn't have the letter-columns. . . .)

By the time I discovered Franklin's (1957) this SF library was being slowly sold. Or so I surmise. After I'd been going to Franklin's for about six months I discovered some uninteresting old magazines (such as 1932 editions of Wonder Stories) selling for 3/6. After buying all of these I was told that there were some more 'out the back'. Here I found what remained of the famous library. Again, I bought what I could of these. In about 1961 Franklin's moved to its present location, and slowly the SF section has declined. In the middle sixties I bought five years supply (without any breaks) of Galaxy, ASF, If and F&SF, at 20¢ each, within a month. Nowadays the SF sells for 35¢, and more for the more expensive paperbacks: there are hardly any magazines these days. I should, perhaps, correct Mr. Harding on a small point: Franklin's did have copies of Planet, Galaxy, and Famous Fantastic Mysteries, amongst others, hardbound. I suppose that the best purchase I ever made at Franklin's was of the first six issues of FFM, in good condition, for 15¢ each. (John Foyster)

Did I hear someone mention letter -columns? Migod - but they were marvellous! I thought at first that they were some sort of personal joke on the part of the editor - but I soon found out otherwise. After that, the SF world seemed even more remarkable.

It was maddening to read the letters out of sequence, back-tracking and side-tracking the various feuds in progress, but I waded through those pages - sixteen, sometimes twenty, never less than ten - with as much interest as I devoted to the stories preceding them.

A tentative letter to Ken Slater, prompted by a mention in Sam Merwin's fan column in Startling Stories, and I had Arrived. I became yet another Australian Member of OPERATION FANTAST and settled down to await my first parcel of American mags.

Even now I can clearly visualize the contents of that historic posting: an issue of Thrilling Wonder featuring 'Abercrombie Station' by Jack Vance (pseud. for Henry Kuttner), issue no. 13 of New Worlds and no. 3 of Science Fantasy (two British magazines not seen in Melbourne at that time), a copy of the very first Wonder Story Annual, and two Avon paperbacks - Wylie's 'Gladiator' and Merritt's 'Ship of Ishtar'. Hardly an impressive lot - but then

I was rather low on cash in those early days. But before they arrived other interesting events had occurred. . .

I received a letter from Rog Dard in Perth, welcoming me to OF, as Aussie rep. He gave me the address of Melbourne's big, big, BIG contact point: a Mr. Race Mathews, of 8 Barnett Street, Hampton. So after exchanging a few short letters with Race and receiving an invitation to visit him, I cleaned myself up one Sunday and went - in suit and collar and tie on an exceedingly warm summer's day, to meet Mr. Mathews. Race was sitting out on the front lawn when I arrived, engrossed in 'The Onslaught From Rigel' in Wonder Story Annual, and after a rather uncertain handshake was exchanged, he took off his dark glasses and escorted me inside. He was a remarkably baby-faced youth of eighteen, long and lean and lanky, with legs that sprawled out upon carpets like a tarantula. We chatted of things SFictional for a few hours, and I left with a vague promise that I would attend a fannish gathering he had planned at his home in a few weeks time - this was to be the unofficial inaugural meeting of what became known as the Melbourne Science Fiction Group.

The fen of Melbourne began to meet in each other's houses sometime in 1951, I believe, and the first I attended was at Race's. That 'bus trip from the station, Middle Brighton, was a focal point of space-time, for on my journey I met Bob McCubbin. We were, as I recall, the only two on the vehicle and, somehow as these things happen, began to talk and discuss our common passion. I soon discovered, however, that Bob had many another passion, and by the time we had reached Race's I had learned that Japanese women had beautiful (the word conveys most inadequately Bob's look of remembered joy) purple nipples, firm and delightful to touch, hold, and squeeze. My mind had been opened up to whole new worlds, for Bob had been most loquacious on subjects whose delicacy forbids my mentioning them here... (Dick Jensen)

As a result of my enrolment with OF, I eventually became a member of the ASFS (No. 151, I think), and looked forward to Stone's monthly mailings with interest. They usually contained: a copy of 'Stoppap - a letter, circular, or publication'; produced by Stone, it was a semi-foolscap affair, intensely serious, and confined itself to prozine and book reviews and reports of Sydney happenings - but chose to ignore any of the more controversial topics of fan politics. There would also be: publicity handouts from FANTASY and GNOME PRESSES and other publishers, as well as an occasional copy of Vertical Horizons, a fanzine published by a Sydney femme group, and Science Fiction Review. SFR, an excellently-conceived and produced publication, was published by Rex Meyer. It mostly ran to twelve quarto pages and appeared irregularly but at

least every few months. A battery of literate reviewers dissected recent prozines and hardcovers - the average review running to 250 words - and was generally well-received by the local fans.

A strange forecast! Eighteen months after writing this article Lee Harding was involved in the editing of the Australian Science Fiction Review, a publication not unlike the earlier one. The greater amount of available made the latter publication rather more presentable, but the aims seem to have been very much the same. Rex Meyer is now a BNF in Education Fandom. (John Foyster)

(An indented word here on the general policies and appearance of Australian fanzines at this time. Those mentioned above typify the general approach: semi-foolscap and quarto size, the former averaging eight to twelve pages, without illustrations of headings - typescript throughout. The general atmosphere was serious and restrained and, for the most part, devoted to the discussion and furtherance of the SF Image Glorious. This was a pattern which had earned for Australian fans a generally stuffy and unapproachable personality. Rig Dard, who was geographically removed from all this, remained an exception and, by consistently writing for American fmz and participating in American fandom, often seemed like one apart from the rest of Australian fandom.

Past history was only vaguely different from this picture upon my entrance into the national scene. The 'Futurian Press' had published a few absurdly pretentious short-story booklets ('Blinded They Fly' by Vol Molesworth and 'Zero Equals Nothing' by G. B. Stone and Royce Williams) on their hand-operated press, as well as a few lightweight fanzines (?) - Nick Solntseff's Woomera and Arthur Haddon's Telepath. There had also been the first installment of Vol Molesworth's 'Outline History of Australian Fandom', and possibly a few more titles I've forgotten for the moment. . .)

Ron and Sue Clarke have commenced publication of Vol Molesworth's 'History' in full, in Ark, and I hope the long task will not prove to be too much for them. Kevin Dillon has plans for publishing other stuff from the period, and BOF may do its own bit. (John Foyster)

My enthusiastic correspondence with Rog Dard revealed two important things: the relentless war being waged upon him by the Perth Customs Department, and the mystifying structure of Australian Fan Politics. From what I could gather there had been a schism within the Sydney group at some time or another, leaving a sharply-divided fandom. On the one side were Haddon-Veney-Cohen plus Dard, and on the other the all-powerful Stone-Molesworth junta. A while later a guy named Lyell Crane came along and tried the role of peacemaker but only

succeeded in complicating the situation further. But this is as far as I can go with this misinformation.

I first met Dick Jenssen on a Brighton 'bus en route to Race Mathews' get-together. I can't for the life of me remember how we spotted each other as SF fans - but I do recall that we waxed enthusiastic over our favourite stories for many miles. As it happened, he was also a member of Old Man Franklin's 'special' library, and was surprised to discover that it was I who was given to scribbling rave notices alongside various stories I found overwhelming.

It would also have been Race who introduced me to Franklin's library - I doubt I would have found it myself - and I know he put me on to Slater, Chapman, and the other big sellers of the stuff. (Dick Jenssen)

I believe Dick was my senior by two years. Even now you wouldn't know it.

Race's function was a great success. Many of the oldtimers turned up: Bob McCubbin was there, and I'm pretty sure Marshal McLennan and Wog Hockley were, too. From then on the group held monthly meetings at member's houses in rotation - those members who had decent homes and whose wives/parents et al. were tolerant enough to allow the onslaught of eighteen to twenty fans plus supper afterwards.

And who was responsible for the founding of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group? Can't rightly say - I missed out on the formative meeting - but Jenssen was there, maybe he can enlighten us. As I recall the original idea was a sort of collaboration between Bob McCubbin and Race Mathews, but apart from that the picture blurs a little.

Race, I'm sure, was the guiding light in the foundation of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group, for it was he who brought together those who would constitute its nucleus. (If it seems remarkable that a 16-year-old could accomplish this - that is, the formation of the club, not the seduction to science fiction of a youth of but 15 tender years (me) - it must be remembered that Race was a boy of remarkable precocity. He always seemed old to me - an Olympian of wisdom. Baby-faced he was, Lee, but rather in the manner I've always imagined Odd John would be. I remember my mother saying, sighing really, once to me after Race had just left: "He's very handsome, dear. He'll break many, many girls' hearts." I couldn't see it, but then . . . Anyway Race was married quite young - he was nineteen, I believe - and any hearts broken would have

been through sheer frustration at his unattainable status.)
The Melbourne Science Fiction Group, if I can trust my failing
memory, was formed around 1952/3 after a round table
discussion in Val's Coffee Lounge. (Dick Jenssen)

When the group had grown out of all commonsense size we decided that
'official' quarters were necessary, and we finally settled on Val's
Coffee Lounge, a convivial spot in the very heart of busy Melbourne.

It had a reputation, too. At first we thought it was rather exciting
holding club meetings in what appeared to be a front for a bordello,
but as time went by other truths became apperent, and we didn't
feel quite at ease amongst the numerous consorting lesbians
whirling around our tables. One night I forced down a late meal of

ham and eggs swimming
around in some
godawful liquid that
just could have been
jissom - and swore
that this was the
last time I would
ever etc. etc.



Our landlady
heard that I was
going to Val's
for the meetings,
drew me aside one
day and whispered
conspiratorially,
"Be careful Dick,
they're a bunch
of queens". I
didn't know what
a queen was, but
if she had said
"poofsters" I
should have
caught her meaning
instantly.
Luckily I didn't,
and guilt
feelings about
going to science
fiction meetings
in a house of
inverts never
troubled. But at
that first
discussion were
Marshal McLennan,

Ian Crozier*, Bob McCubbin, Don Tuck (? but he was no founding member), myself, and some other, whom I cannot remember ... perhaps it was Race ... yes, I think so.
(Dick Jenssen)

* Lee Harding forcefully denies this. (John Foyster)

But Bill Veney visited the group while it was still resident at Val's. He stopped by from Tasmania on route for sunny Queensland. I've only met Bill that once, and it is a very long time ago, yet I find that I can recall his face with alarming accuracy. Don't know why. There must have been something terribly important about the man - perhaps it was because he gave up so much of his time to me. Or was it the fact that we discussed Bradbury so keenly? Anyway, Bill left me with the promise that I would join a Group Letter circulating between himself, Rog Dard in Perth and Lyell Crane in Sydney. I looked forward to its arrival uncertainly.

The bulky envelope finally turned up - and there they were, three happy clowns disporting themselves over pages and pages of typescript. I was appalled to discover therein not one mention of the literature I loved, but quite a lot on local fan politics and the world situation in general. Faced with such awe-inspiring supremacy, I felt that there was little I could do but append a humble apology for my ignorance of the subjects discussed, and forward it to Roger.

After this initial shock had dissipated, I found that I looked forward with increasing interest to each new installment of the GL. It circulated for about nine months and then petered out. I'm not sure why, but I think there was some dissension in the ranks. Crane was playing at peacemaker with the Stone/Molesworth junta and Roger wasn't having any. Something like that.

Meanwhile my little mind was busy with other things.

Shortly after becoming a member of OF I established a few overseas contacts, and then the very first fanzines began to arrive: Hyphen, Slant (the very last issue), Spaceship, Peon, Star Lanes. I was flabbergasted - and inspired.

"We must put out a fanzine" I told Dick, and he agreed. Being the junior members of the Group it seemed natural that we should plan this venture together. And later on, when Mervyn Binns joined us, that seemed equally logical. Almost cosmic, you might say.

Let me say that I think that Lee is being a trifle modest (here and later) about his role in the Perhaps aetiology. I know that this is hard to believe, and I had to fight my own incredulity, but modest he is. If it hadn't been for Leo, for so he was known then, not only Perhaps but Etherline would never have been born. I'm one of those

who always have grandiose ideas (100 pages, stories by Kuttner, van Vogt, Miller, etc., artwork by Paul, Bergey, Rogers, Urban - in seven colour prints - glossy paper, SatEvePost size, selling for 15¢. I'll have an office, of course, in a 70-storey building) but who never do anything about them until they're pushed. And then they discover that the dreams are just that - useless fictions. Well, Leo not only provided the push, but he did most of the work. He wrote letters, contacted people, suggested story ideas, cover illustrations, solved layout problems, told Mervyn when to turn the duplicator handle, and in short was the driving force (spiritual) behind Perhaps. Mervyn Binns was the driving force (material): he found us a duplicator, fixed it when it went wrong, forced it into action and was, in short, thoroughly indefatigable on the production side. I? I obeyed orders, and produced all the little fillers designed to round out those big blank space between the highpowered stories and articles. Anyway, most of my stuff was rejected. (Dick Jenssen)

By now the Group had moved into more or less permanent quarters at the Oddfellows' Hall at the top of Latrobe Street. We had the basement room and the use of a cupboard for the library in the hall outside. Hardly convivial, but in those days we weren't particularly interested in the comforts of home.

However, members now went for supper to Mirka's, a convivial spot in the very heart of busy Melbourne. (John Foyster)

Despite the endeavours of the more voracious fans - myself included - the Group staunchly resisted any attempt to 'organize' itself in any way, and still manages to do so until this very day. Bob McCubbin was the self-elected Chairman at all times, but there were no organized evenings and no minutes were kept. We were just a bunch of guys getting together and swapping yarns - and trading a few magazines at the same time. Since then we've acquired a duplicator, a movie projector, a table-tennis table, three toilets, an hydraulic lift, and instant coffee machine (Mervyn Binns) and a taste for such refinements as 'The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari' and 'Siegfried' and Norman McLaren, but things proceed pretty much the same as they did in the Old Days.

Well, that was true back in the Good Old Days of the middle sixties. (John Foyster)

While Dick, Mervyn and I were still mulling over the prospect of our fanzine and where we should get some material for the first issue, the first issue of Forerunner arrived from Sydney.

Doug Nicholson's effort has since become one of the landmarks in

Australian fan publishing - but at the time we weren't particularly impressed. For one thing, you couldn't rightly call it a fanzine - and it didn't fit into the FSS and ASFS scheme of things either. Doug's confessed aim was to "pave the way for an eventual Australian professional magazine". I don't think that he did - but the experiment was worthwhile.

Forerunner 1 was an eighty-page duplicated magazine bound with a clasp and with an oversize cardboard lithoed cover. The stencils were well cut but poorly duplicated. It was Doug's fault - his inexperience with handling a duplicator, he said. Later on we were to appreciate those words. The magazine printed STORIES. Fiction. Almost exclusively - there was one article. Part One of a serial by Vol Molesworth, himself a professional writer of textbooks and pulp pocketbooks and longtime guiding light of the FSS, and shorter fiction by Norma Hemming and others. Precedent was set with the introduction of artwork in the discreet story headings and illustrations throughout the magazine.



I have no idea how well Forerunner was received overseas, but I can imagine it bolstered the familiar sercon image of Australian fan publishing.

An image we were destined to shatter.

Perhaps, as our-brainchild was called, would turn out to be a strange hybrid. Bound by a pretentious photo-lith cover and subtitled "The International Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction" was material which, quite frankly, looked like one of those pverty-stricken UK fanmags.

The fault was mine. You see, the little Harding had delusions of grandeur and that explains to some extent why Perhaps was such a dismal failure. But I'm jumping ahead a little. Back to basics.

I had bought a typewriter with the intention of trying my luck with the promags. Having met poor response to my first story, I decided that I might as well turn to fanzine publishing as a sort of second string.....

We planned nothing quite as elaborate as Forerunner. And neither did we have the services

of two excellent typistes. We only had me, a guy so inexperienced with stencils that he had never heard of correcting fluid. When I made a mistake I either struck it out like ~~xxxx~~, or ~~xxxx~~, or crossed it out IN INK on the finished copy. Yike!

In the original planning stage, Perhaps was to be in the conventional semi-foolscap size ("It's like digest-size" said Dick - smiling), with typed headings and a few illustrations from Jenssen.

We didn't intend to muck about too long. We were KEEN, you understand. And my fingers were itching to get to that typewriter.

At about the same time, word circulated that Race Mathews was also planning a fanzine - and this was to be a Big Deal. I had seen copies of the fabled Nekromantikön of Banister's at Race's home and had an idea of the sort of magazine Race envisaged. He even had a title (Xanadu) and a cover design and interior illustrations by Keith McLelland, a Group member who was also a commercial artist. I was stuck with Jenssen - and it was on Dick's well-reasoned advice that I chose not to pay too much attention to Race's much-touted magazine, and concentrated on updating Perhaps.

Once I realised the difficulties I would encounter typing foolscap stencils on a portable Remington (they would have to be cut in half and joined together again) I decided to abandon the 'traditional' format in favour of the quarto size. This move would allow a more generous use of artwork throughout the magazine - a fact received with enthusiasm by Marton Kruss, Martin James, de la Faye, T.L. Martin, Dick Jenssen and Harding. The contents were roughly laid out in mid-November. There would be an article promised by Rog Dard and another by Bill Venev. Ken Slater also had an article in the offing. The issue would be filled out with an editorial by Harding, the first part of a serial by Martin James, some odd poems and assorted artwork by the fanmish Ed Emshwiller (Jenssen) and an article titled "What's happened to ASF?" This much decided, I felt that it was time to prepare the local fans for our initial publishing venture. I stencilled a two-foolscap-page Preview, wherein I outlined our aims and ambitions, and promised Great and Wondrous things to come from Melbourne in the next year or so. The stencils were, of course, complete with typos, strikeouts, etc. So armed, we three ventured to McGill's one afternoon and did do battle royal with Rex-Rotary.

An infernal machine if ever there was one. From the very first turn of the handle it did its best to thwart our noble designs. Not one of us had ever used a duplicator before - and we couldn't figure out why each sheet came through with a three-inch wide ink smear on the back.

"There's ink on the rollers," Dick announced after peering and poking around underneath the machine, Mervyn just grunted sourly and set

about removing and cleaning the said rollers.

This took quite some time. And when they were replaced and the machine began thumping over again the very same ink smears were on the back of every copy.

We just couldn't figure it out. "The hell with it!" I said, disgusted and tired and fed up with the whole business, "Let's run page two off on a separate sheet."

And we did. And the two ink-smearred sheets were stapled together and sent out to roughly a hundred fans listed in the ASFS directory. A separate bundle was mailed to Dave Cohen in Sydney, who dished them out to the locals at the weekly meetings.

The response to all this effort was an empty-sounding nil. Not that any of us were surprised. There was enough inexperience in that Preview to frighten off even the most tolerant Aussiefan.

A few weeks later, just prior to the editorial board embarking upon their Christmas holidays, Mervyn happily informed us that the reason we had been getting the ink smears was that the stencils I had been using were exactly one inch too short for the duplicator. Thus, on each revolution of the duper, that much ink was deposited on the rollers. Ugh!

Now Bill Veney had arrived in Queensland late in 1952 and wasted no time in contacting the local fans and 'organising' them into a loose body of monthly meeters. A few names to remember: local journalist Frank Bryning, author of several 'space' stories in local slicks and soon to cover himself with glory by submitting a steady string of acceptances to Fantastic Universe and, later, New Worlds; John Gregor, the Tapes . . . After a few months had gone by Bill launched his fanzine Ugh!, a quarto-sized effort averaging four to six pages and issued at intervals of approximately two months. The general tone was parodistic, and Bill's warmly ingratiating style contrasted strongly with the sardon bibliographers of Sydney, and it was obvious that his intention was to have at his old rivals in a most modest and amusing fashion. Ugh! continued as a thorn in the side of Stone and company for some time.

Ugh! - the thorn in the Stone

Material was generally slanted towards fan politics and mostly was written by Veney himself. A little later Harry Brook was roped in as assistant editor and together they forged a strong alliance against the FSS dictatorship.

While we were wrestling with the problem of the first issue of

PERHAPS, and all this was going on in Queensland. Graham Stone in Sydney was already setting up SCIENCE FICTION NEWS, his entry into the you-tee-can-publish-like-Taurasi stakes. It would be a four-page lithographed newsheet along the lines of SFTIMES, and would tentatively be distributed through the ASFS mailings and later on through the personal efforts of Mr. Stone himself.

But perhaps you are more interested in the contents of OUR first issue. Well, it looked roughly like this now: a scraperboard cover by Dick Jenssen (already deposited with the lithographers). It was originally intended to illustrate a serial by Dick that somehow never got beyond the planning stage - we overcame that by labelling the cover 'First Contact' and left it at that. I had the articles by Rog Dard and Ken Slater which both came out as autobiographies of a sort, Bill Veney contributed an article on the early Australian SF writers (THE FORERUNNERS) and Bob Silverberg in New York had been kind enough to send an airletter with all sorts of portentous things about the forthcoming 'world fandom' typed thereon, and the indefatigable Jenssen had written what I thought was an impressive short story - but there was still a lot of space to fill up.

The cover story of PERHAPS 1 was to be a serial, as I recall, because it was intended to be about 10 000 words, or thereabouts, in length. I remember writing the first 2000 or so and then for some reason fading out. Here I think Lee's memory is somewhat at fault in respect to (a) the cover and (b) the date at which Ian Crozier made the fan scene. For it was I.C. who was responsible for the lettering on the scraperboard cover - neatness being one of my many non-realised virtues. This would mean that Ian would have been associated with AFPA some two or three months earlier than Lee remembers. In every other respect, though, he has what Oscar Levant terms 'total recall'.
(Dick Jenssen)

It was about this time that Bert Campbell began running fanzine reviews in AUTHENTIC, and I was emboldened to write him a begging letter in the hope that he would turn round and write a little something for our first issue (nothing like having a PRO name on the masthead!). Sure enough, two weeks later came a letter from Bert, and the first installment of what was to be a regular column. This made us all rather drunk with power so, the line-up completed, I began stencilling.

I had just received a copy of Silverberg's SPACESHIP duplicated on a nice, shiny, semi-slick paper, and I was so impressed with this radical departure from the customary American blotting paper stock that I scoured around paper houses until I found something similar. It cost more than twice as much as the regular Roneo paper, but the way I figured it would be the least of our expenses. There was

only one catch: our duplicator ink was somehow incompatible with this particular paper. I have seen copies of that first issue of Perhaps with the ink still wet three years after publication.

And we were stuck with four reams of the damned stuff. We couldn't bring ourselves to just throw it away - so we slip-sheeted as best we could, but to no avail.

First mistake, but there were many more to follow. As the pages reeled off our expectations sank lower and lower. Was this to be the much-touted International Magazine of Science Fiction and Fantasy? But the worst was yet to come: our regular paper was a good quarter of an inch smaller than the slick stock - ah, how well we learned to stick to one brand of paper and no other. Nobody seems to have agreed on a standard quarto size over here.

With only a few pages to go, the Rex-Rotary finally gave up the unequal battle and collapsed into sullen ruin. And it refused to budge. Crestfallen, we packed up our stuff and slunk out of McGill's leaving the busted machine to be fixed by The Firm.

After a hurried consultation we decided to ask Bob McCubbin for a helping hand. We knew that Bob had an old-fashioned flatbed duplicator which he used to run off the occasional MSFG 'newsletter', and we rang him up and said that we were wondering.

So one night I took over a couple of reams of paper, some stencils, and Dick Jenssen to Bob's place in Hawthorn, and there we stood and watched Bob wield that mighty roller for a couple of hours. With somewhat limited success. For one thing, we discovered that a flatbed delivers roughly fifty to sixty copies before the stencil starts to crease and go to pieces - and we had been running off an optimistic hundred and twenty copies of Perhaps. Still, we had to be thankful for small things.

This was by no means the last Australian fanzine produced on a flatbed duper. Mike Baldwin produced three issues of Extent on his (middle 1950s). I must remark that a fourth issue was stencilled and partly run off - I have seen the stencils and the run off pages. I even offered to finish the job, in a weak moment. Fortunately this came to nothing, like my offer to print/publish Forerunner 3. If Dillon and/or Nicholson don't nail me quickly on that one it'll be too late. Then, one grim Sunday many years ago John Baxter and I assaulted the home of Baldwin, and amongst the booty we hauled off was Baldwin's duper. That week we ran off what was (I think) the last Aussie fanzine to be published on a flatbed, Bob Smith's Sui! No. 2, which went through SAPS a couple of years later. I think John returned the duper to Baldwin, in which case it probably vanished while

Mike was on holiday. We found the experience of using this kind of machine, ah, a challenge, and not an experience to be repeated hastily. We didn't publish enough copies to have the stencils crease, but I think we both developed Baldwin's Cramp. (John Foyster)

A few weeks later the Rex-Rotary had concluded its convalescence. I retyped the butchered stencils and we ran off the remainder of the first issue - and then sat about waiting for the covers.



The Touch of Awareness

Revised

And what about the finished product? Frankly, it looked awful. Years later, and many, many fanzines later, I was inclined to think more kindly of that first disastrous issue (after all, there is Emanation to compare). But at that time I was dismally disappointed. Nothing had turned out the way I'd hoped - and the blame was on me and my ignorance of the stencilling process. I suppose I was wallowing in the traditional first issue blues. After I had done what little I could to hand trim the pages into a semblance of unity, I mailed out copies with a heavy heart. I sent a few dozen copies to Dave Cohen in Sydney to hand out to the locals. Nominal charge was

1/- a copy with the proviso of 'no charge' if the buyer felt it was unwarranted. A few of the more tolerant fans tossed in a bob, but most opted out.

I also sent a bundle to my Stateside contact, Charles Anderson in Phoenix, Arizona, and apart from commenting in a rather embarrassed manner that "the locals aren't much interested in foreign fanzines," I heard nothing and, under the circumstances, was rather pleased that I didn't. I figured that it was better to concentrate on a better and less messy Perhaps 2.

But I had other plans as well. As was the custom in those dry Australian years, I devoted some space in Perhaps 1 to news from overseas. Under the heading ETHERLINE I printed what little gossip was to hand at presstime, knowing full well that this would be out of date by the time the issue appeared. Anyway, I had talked this over with Mervyn and Dick, and we had decided to go ahead with a sort of Victorian Newsletter to compete with the Sydney fanzines, and we had hopes of issuing it on a firm fortnightly schedule. More of this later.

And, just prior to finishing off Perhaps 1, in a moment of tension, another ball started rolling. That was when I received a frantic 'phonecall from Dick informing me that Race Mathews had decided to go all-out with his own project and would have it lithoed in the microscopic Fanscient size and all sorts of great and incredible things. I was momentarily stricken. To be overtaken at this stage of the game. . .

I had to do some quick thinking.

"Dick," I said, "We've got to join forces".

By thus combining with the rival I might well manage to secure some of the promised thunder, so the following evening we both went over to Race's home and explained our proposition.

Rather surprisingly, Race thought the idea was a good one, and agreed in principle to our plans, namely, a pooling of cash and material for Perhaps and his own Bacchanalia (nee Xanadu), the whole being lumped under the general name of Amateur Fantasy Publications of Australia. I just had time to find space at the end of Bob Silverberg's page to type 'THIS IS A PUBLICATION OF THE AMATEUR FANTASY PUBLICATIONS OF AUSTRALIA, WITH WHICH IS AFFILIATED BACCHANALIA, THE FANTASY FANZINE', and was able to sit back and relax again. In the meantime Race made impressive growling noises and continued preparing his first issue. At the same time I was determined to have a photolith Perhaps 2. The question was: how?

A thirty page octavo fanzine would cost in the vicinity of \$120-160.

Where on earth would we get money like that?

But we had promised Race support for his first venture, alternating with Perhaps. Oh, we were wild and impassioned in those days, my friends, our heads in the clouds and most unrealistic.

Gradually the letters of comment trundled in on the wake of Perhaps. Surprisingly, they were for the most part generous and affirmative. The Sydney fans were staunch in their 'no official comment', although it wasn't difficult to ascertain that the general reaction was that our product was 'juvenile and childish' in the extreme. Rog Dard was most conciliatory and Don Tuck in Tasmania was enthusiastic. I guess most of them figured "what the hell, it is a first issue and it is a radical departure from the usual Aussie fanmag, so. . ."

Better to give us the benefit of the doubt. I don't mind admitting that it helped - a little. I still thought that our brainchild had aborted, but I was thankful that a few people thought that the effort was worthwhile.

And about this time the first issue of Stone's Science Fiction News appeared. We were impressed, but doubted his ability to keep such an expensive product going. The layout was faultless and the photographs well taken and distributed. In all, a remarkable, if predictable, Australian fanzine.

Editor Stone found space to say some clever and very tasteless things about Perhaps and, indeed, began what was to be a personal vendetta against those childish and immature Melbourne fans who dared publish fanzines in violation of the Approved Manner.

I never, at any time during my stay in fandom, exchanged a letter with Graham Stone, or felt inclined to. I thought that most of his vitriolic reviews were tasteless and prompted by a fear of healthy and successful competition, rather than by the genuine pursuit of good journalism. And I suppose that I was marked from the very beginning by my association with Dard and Cohen, but. . . I managed to keep myself out of the fan politics for as long as I published, for I could see little sense in this teacup wrangling and intercity jealousy.

Because Race seemed to be undergoing an unduly long period of gestation with Bacchanalia, it was decided that Perhaps could have first crack at the photolith business. Most of the material was already in: an excellent eye-witness account of an army A-bomb test supplied by Hal Shapiro via Rog Dard, an article by Dard on censorship (an extension of his piece in Perhaps 1), some poems from Orma McCormick (again contributed by Dard), the second of Bert Campbell's columns, and a story or two by Dick Jenssen, depending on



the amount of space available.

On one thing we were determined that the layout and artwork in this issue would be genuinely presentable and unmarred by the inexperienced stylus-wielding of the first issue. We already had a fine scraperboard cover by David Rose, a compatriot of Jenssen's and, in this case, NOT one of his pseudonyms, and a general layout in readiness. We had all of us chosen to forget the fiasco of the previous issue and go all out for a redemption. There was also the matter of the 'newsletter', for which I was already collating material with hopes of an early issue. It would be semi-foolscap in size, and average eight to twelve pages per issue and sell to the local fans for sixpence.

But as for the problem of finance! It worked out something like this: if each of us contributed \$20 towards the cost then we would manage the \$120 necessary for a thirty-page issue of Perhaps 2.

This was agreed upon by Dick, Mervyn, Race and myself. Informing Rog Dard of our plans was but the work of a moment, and I was astonished to receive twenty bucks in the next mail as Roger's contribution towards the costs. Somewhat taken aback, I realised that it was about time for an official recognition of Rog's material assistance to the publication of Perhaps - after all, he had supplied most of the material for the first two issues, and I felt that our acceptance of his generous offer made him a full member of AFPA. And so it did, and for some time thereafter Rog remained a remote and silent partner to all the hectic ups and downs of the AFPA organisation.

He also sent me something else: the address of the newest Melbourne member of Operation Fantast, one Ian J. Crozier.

With the appearance of Ian Crozier AFPA was very soon transformed from a casual group of fanzine publishers into a firm group devoted to somewhat different principles - the production of semi-professional magazines to be marketed through various fan outlets throughout Australia and by direct retail sales. This was Australian fan

publishing with a vengeance.

A week or so later Ian Crozier was formally introduced to the MSFG. I remember a passing handshake and a vague impression of smiling, youthful vigour that shone undimmed amidst the customary indifference of the Oddfellows' basement. Dick and I retired to our usual corner to discuss our plans, Dick commenting later in the evening that, as Ian worked as a Customs Agent he must be, in Dard terminology, no less than an OGPU spy in the pay of the Government, and we had best tread warily lest our nefarious activities be discovered and reported. We had only a vague idea of what a Customs Agent actually did, but we were sure that it wasn't a governmental department and, besides, he WAS in contact with Roger and presumably our friend was aware of his activities.

From the beginning, Ian's influence on the Club could be felt. We were a lethargic bunch with little or no inclination to become organised. Dick, Merv and I deplored this situation but hand't the gumption to do anything about it. This commodity was soon supplied by Mr. Crozier. He was smooth and affable: excellent executive and leadership material. Also, he was our senior by a number of years and we were soon awed by his talent for organisation.

It must have been the following week, when Dick and I had Bert Chandler sweating in a corner of the room while we enticed him with Perhaps 2 artwork in order to get a promise of a contribution, that Ian boldly entered our sphere of activities. While Bert breathed a sigh of relief and slunk out of range, Ian evinced an interest in our proposed photo-lithed issue, and eventually asked if we had ever considered using electronic stencils?

Frankly, we had never heard of them. It was a new process, he explained, only just released. Reproduction of line work without resort to a clumsy stylus. The possibility of printing half-tone and photographs as well. If we liked, he could get us some samples. . .

And he did. And we were astonished at the flexibility of the system. Not only was it cheaper but it would also allow us to print a much larger magazine than we had envisioned, and without the cramped logo of the photolith format. Even Race, who had been working all the time on his projected Fanscient-sized Bacchanalia, was won over by the process.

There was only one catch. Extant duplicators could not handle electronic stencils. We would have to buy one ourselves, with TWO ink drums so that we could fool around with two-colour printing. And all this would cost a cool \$300!

Quite a sum - beyond what we had originally intended to outlay.

Still, the way Ian put it, it would be to our advantage in the long run. We could buy the machine on the never-never, and with the meagre profits we hoped to make from Perhaps and Etherline(!) and our own enthusiastic pockets, manage to pay for the machine in three years. In the meantime, we could do an awful lot of publishing.

I believe I have mentioned our blissful optimism already?

We were all of us much impressed by Ian's drive and enthusiasm. Indeed, such seniority was sorely needed to channel our own enthusiasm. I don't think that any of us, then, felt like the pawns we would eventually become. In no time at all I was 'President' of AFPA, a paid-up member, and plans surged ahead.

Now the original idea was for each AFPA member to contribute \$20 to the costs of photolithing Perhaps 2. This was rearranged so that these monies went towards the purchase of a Roneo 500. Roger was in agreement - although I don't to this day know whether or not his contribution was ever reimbursed, or if he ever received any thanks other than my own for all the many, many months he provided a steady stream of news for Perhaps and Etherline.

The first issue of Etherline, as the newsletter had been called, was run off on the resurgent McGill's duplicator. It was semi-foolscap, about eight pages, and sold for five cents. I dummied up the copy and Ian cut the stencils and Mervyn cranked the handle. I wasn't too happy about cutting the severed stencils on my old machine and hadn't bought a new one. Ian offered to do the job and I thankfully handed the task over to him.

The first issue appeared in April 1953 and thus began a regular fortnightly appearance until 1958, when Etherline moved to three-weekly and then faded away.

The front page read 'Edited and arranged for AFPA by Ian J. Crozier'. This was the first indication I had of Ian's plans for Etherline. He wanted it for his baby while I was free to concentrate on Perhaps. I must admit to a slight pique at the outset. I mean, after all, Etherline was my idea, and I felt that there were a number of things on which Ian and I did not see eye to eye - his generally derogatory opinions of fanzines, for example, and his appalling sloppiness in ~~xxxx~~ regard to presentation and headings.

But after we had talked the matter over in innumerable coffee shops and cafes, it was generally agreed that it would be best if Ian took over Etherline while I concentrated on the big plans I had for Perhaps. This I agreed to. There was no point in being greedy. Ian WAS enthusiastic and he WAS keen to get cracking and I WOULD work better if I could concentrate on one magazine. Besides, even I had doubts of my ability to stick to the fortnightly schedule. Ian

had none, and was to prove his ability time and again. So I relinquished my editorship of Etherline and thereafter supplied Ian with the news material I received from overseas. This he combined with a few fillers and snippets of his own and turned out Etherline steadily week after week.

But this vague irritation persisted. There was something not quite RIGHT about the whole set-up. I couldn't understand, for instance, why Ian continued to run the names of the overseas correspondents on a front-page block but avoided my own name in any editorial connection. I assumed that this was because he wished to disown himself from the activities of those responsible for perpetrating Perhaps 1, but if this was the case then it was a damned funny way to carry on. There were a number of things we never suspected about Ian in those early days: his ability to make friends and manipulate people, and a ruthless attitude towards publishing fanzines which was matched only by my own.

Etherline was received with enthusiasm throughout Australia. Regular parcels were forwarded to Dave Cohen in Sydney and John Gregor in Brisbane, where they were dished out at the weekly or fortnightly meetings, and a drive to establish the fanzine as a selling proposition over the McGill's counter was begun.

Any unwise fan careless enough to bend near the piles of SF at Mervyn's pad was soon surrounded and threatened with dire unhappiness unless he subscribed to Etherline. Gradually the circulation increased and, despite the snide attacks of Graham Stone, the magazine continued to grow.

With Etherline firmly in the control of the great octopus, I began work on the second issue of Perhaps. For this issue we had now added a story by Ian Crozier's country cousin which eventually had to be re-written to clear up some inconsistencies, and was inadvertently labelled 'by Rick Conroy' instead of 'by Rick Jordan'. (Conroy had just had a novel in Authentic.) Harding did some book and magazine surveys under the byline John Ditmar - a sort of house-name for Dick and me. Our issue had grown to forty pages, in two colours.

We went a bit haywire with the electrostencils, scattering red and black illos throughout the magazine. The editor's inexperience was made rather obvious in his pleading editorial, while Crozier took a smarting crack at Sydney fandom in his 'Viewpoint' page - fated to become a feature of the growing Etherline. The reproduction throughout was an improvement, though spoiled by a half-hearted attempt to justify the right-hand margins. But the magazine was very successful with the local fans. Overseas reception was again dismal - with the exception of a long letter from Walt Willis taking exception to certain things Rog Dard had said in his article. This was printed in full, together with Rog's rejoinder, in Perhaps 3.

The general impression was of an overcrowded layout - but with so much terrific artwork on hand from Dick and Keith McLelland we wanted to squeeze in as much as possible.

I suppose AFPA's greatest folly was in the misguided idea that one could produce magazines which would make a profit. For this Crozier must accept the blame because the idea was his originally. As I never had access to the subscription list of Etherline I have no way of knowing whether this actually happened, or exactly how much was donated by the MSFG towards the cost of Etherline. The whole financial side was Top Secret. Although we were all part of a Publishing Company, we never really had any idea of our financial commitments.

Perhaps 2 cost a lot of money. So did Race's Bacchanalia when it appeared soon after Perhaps. And the dupes cost a great deal. Does anyone have a possible explanation of our survival?

My part in the scheme of things was to edit Perhaps and that was that. It is still a mystery to me how we managed to absorb the losses entailed in the production of the two major magazines. If this was the case (a considerable loss) then perhaps some sense can be made out of the peculiar events which were to follow.

Our 'production' side took six months leave of absence: Mervyn had to serve out his national service in the Air Force. This left only Ian and I active on the publishing side, as Race had now only a vague interest. He kept talking about Bacchanalia 2, but I don't think that even he believed it would ever see the light of day. It was about this time that I began to notice some strange behaviour on Ian's part. Nothing drastic - just that he didn't speak to me. He did his best to avoid me. Maybe I had bad breath, or perhaps he thought I had homosexual tendencies. At any rate, he soon fell to coddling Race and talking of 'our' forthcoming Bacchanalia 2.

I was understandably concerned. I couldn't for the life of me think of anything I had done to upset the Big Chief. It was now clear that he wanted me OUT, but the reason or reasons were far from apparent. Did he want AFPA all to himself, or was it just that he wanted to finish Perhaps and save some money? I'd like to think it was the latter, but later events make this seem rather unlikely.

Matters began to come to a head when I decided to dry up Etherline's main source of news (Anderson's column) and produce a more fannish magazine while I readied the next issue of Perhaps.

This was Wastebasket. My original idea was for a FANzine, something at the opposite pole from the loftily-intentioned Etherline. The ill-fated first issue of Wastebasket was a parody of the American fanzine with sly digs at Sydney personalities and a laboured attempt

at Goon-type humour. The major item was withdrawn on the advice of the sercon Doug Nicholson, who said that 'This sort of thing just wasn't proper for Australian fans'.

I was weak. I apologised for departing from the Way and ordered Dave Dohen to destroy all copies he had received for distribution. Instead he sent them back, and asked why.

Suitably chastened, I immediately stencilled another issue 1, and had it mailed off within a week. For material I filched from Opsla and Star Lanes, and added some material by myself and other locals. The magazine was well-received, and the convention report by Bill Veney was perhaps the best article to appear in fanzines (Aussie) for a year or so.

Several new Sydney fanzines began to appear, but they kept to the tried and true format - terribly uninspiring. On the other hand, Etherline went on from strength to strength. There were vague rumours going around concerning Crozier's NEW magazine. Though I was a member of AFPA I hadn't the faintest idea of what they were talking about. And I was more interested in the lineup I was assembling for Perhaps 3 and the surprising overseas response I had received to the monthly Wastebasket.

Crozier became more direct in his effrontery as time went by. Kevin Wheelahan, a new MSFG member, was often seen in earnest consultation with the Great One, and I began to sense how the wind was blowing.



Mervyn returned - and almost immediately Crozier convened an AFPA Court of Enquiry. Bob McCubbin mediated. I was charged with producing a magazine in direct competition with an AFPA publication! Presumably this was Wastebasket 3, wherein I ran a few pages of news along with the usual goonery, as well as switching from quarto to semi-foolscap. With a smug sort of satisfaction Ian displayed a copy of Etherline in one hand and the despicable Wastebasket in the other for all to see. The verdict was obvious - and besides, after the water-torture of the previous few

months, I wanted out.

So I was excommunicated. Quite nicely, of course - one mustn't forget that. Poor Mervyn, he had been away from things so long he didn't know what to believe, and I think we were all glad to get things into the open and over with.

Crozier hadn't exactly been sitting still. He had loads of illos from the British Fantasy Art Society and Keith McLelland was turning out a goodly number of fillers and cover drawings for Etherling.

Crozier began receiving Fantasy Times and mainly derived his 'news' from that. He must have made some US contacts, for very soon reprints from Rhodomagnetic Digest began to appear.

I was left to carry the burden of my own publishing. But they were kind. So I would not forfeit my original \$20 'entrance fee' I could work it off by having my duping taken off as credit: at \$3 a ream.

Perhaps 3 took care of that: it was a farewell issue, and the best. The reproduction was, by now, quite respectable and the layout impeccable. A talented Sydney non-fan named Bruce King contributed some fine artwork (Jenssen having now deserted fandom for a university career, as reported in Wastebasket 3 and Satura 12) and Lyell Crane contributed a smoothly professional story that was to have been continued in the next issue. Bert Campbell had a lengthy piece on the paperbacks, Bert Chandler a short piece of his own and one of George O. Smith's concerning the problems of TIFF, and there were reprint poems by Bob Stewart and Philip Jose Farmer as well as the 'discussion' between Willis and Dard. Tom Cockerfoot provided a bibliographical article on Robert E. Howard and Kevin Whselahan an article on the more improbable weapons of SF, ably illustrated by Bruce King. Scriptwriter Bruce Heron authored an emotional story - and this time there were no book reviews, and a page and a half by me announcing that thereafter printed covers would cease, so far as Perhaps was concerned, and that the magazine would be leaning more heavily on good quality fiction and articles. Ah, what noble dreams. . .

Crozier's Top Secret magazine finally appeared, and the threat of pseudo-professionalism reached full flower. Apparently the original idea was to produce a magazine devoted to local fiction, and with the devastating advertising gimmick of having no title on the cover - only a whopping big ?

Instead, when the magazine finally appeared, as well as the questionmark there was a runner along top and bottom announcing that this was issue 1, that it cost such and such and etc. I wonder how many copies were sold, and what sort of reception this effort received?

From the second issue, Questionmark consisted mainly of reprints from

Rhodomagnetic Digest, but I guess Ian felt good being able to use names like Poul Anderson on his covers. There were also things like a series of Dianetics articles by a local auditor, which originally had been appearing in Etherline but which were moved over to Big Brother.

Kevin Wheelahan was listed as editor - for the first issue - but Crozier actually did the work. It folded after four or five issues.

I wound up with 30 extra copies of Perhaps 3 which were inadvertently burned a few years later. The response had again been minimal - in contrast with the mail I had received on Wastebasket. I was almost ready to call it a day - except for one last plunge.

And that was Tomorrow. The culmination of The Australian Dream: a semi-pro magazine of quality like Inside or Fantastic Worlds. I had stationery printed and circulars circulated. I wrote stacks of letters to authors. Ted Tubb said that 10/- a thousand wasn't much, but I was perfectly welcome to reprint any of his yarns. Ken Bulmer said Gee I'll send you along something and see what I can dig up from the locals. Bob Bloch sent a very long poem which was very funny, and just as things were ready to get under way, gafia struck

LEE HARDING

Lee doesn't tell the whole story - for example, there's no mention of Antipodes, which was published after Perhaps. Since 1970, the AFPA Ronco 500 has been in my possession. (John Foyster)