

This Were WorldCon II



The Drink Tank Issue 141

The second annual This Were WorldCon is here! This issue is lucky to feature some of the top fan writers in the world (Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer and John Purcell) and a little bit from me here and there.

This year, since I won't be at WorldCon, I've been thinking a lot about what WorldCon means to me and the biggest thing is always the people. I met so many great folks at WorldCon last year (and apparently I announced Linda there in The Match Game! and she also appeared in my Post-WorldCon Issue, which is kinda a weird coincidence) and now I'm excitedly waiting for Denver.

And then there's this year, which I hope Dave Clark, Kevin Standlee or SOMEBODY will write up for me. I'm missing out, I know, but there's no way I could ever afford it. These things happen. I'm still hoping that we can get WorldCon to Finland or South Africa even though there's nearly no chance of me ever affording to make that trip. It's not easy making just enough to live OK.

So, here's the rundown: We open with John Purcell, our man in Texas, telling us about IguanaCon, or Iggy for short. He was here last year too with his MidAmeriCon report (of Big Mac as it was known) and he does another great one. Claire gives us a little something about ConFiction. I'm pleased that Mark Plummer, one of those noble souls who saw fit to nominate me for TAFF this year, gives us AussieCon from 1999, a con I wish I could have gone to (and the one where Janice Gelb was the DUFF winner!)

And so I say to you...Enjoy the Zine!



A Boy in his Pup Tent: IguanaCon

August 30-September 4th, 1978
Phoenix Convention Centre & Symphony Hall
Harlan Ellison- Writer GoH
Bill Bowers- Fan GoH
FM Busby- Toastmaster
Tim Kyger- Chairman
Attendance- 4700

Trying to write a retrospective conreport about a WorldCon I attended nearly thirty years ago is akin to near-

madness. Fortunately, the Internet has a way of providing some information that helps to jog the old memory banks, so here goes.

IguanaCon, the 36th World Science Fiction Convention, was held from August 30th to September 4th in 1978 in Phoenix, Arizona. The primary hotel was the Hyatt Regency, although the Adams Hotel across the street held nearly as many programming items as the Hyatt and was also booked solid with fans; the larger events, such as the Hugo Awards, speechifying, and Masquerade, were held at the Convention Center and Symphony Hall a couple blocks away. It wasn't a bad walk, so long as you stayed hydrated and stuck to the shade. After all, this was Phoenix and it was Labor Day Weekend, so the daily temperatures ranged anywhere from 102° to 112° F every day. The good news was the humidity never rose above 8%, so it was the proverbial "dry" heat.

This is the main thing that I remember the most about Iggy: it was friggin' hot! Hands down, one of the hottest WorldCons ever held, if not the hottest. The NolaCons were hot too, I am sure, and they had humidity factored in as well. At any rate, the temperatures didn't have much of an effect on the fannish energy level throughout the con. Heck, *nothing* could ever dampen that kind of energy, as near as I can figure. This is what

makes a WorldCon so much fun.

Iggy was the first and only WorldCon where I had my own room (in the Adams). At MidAmeriCon two years earlier, Dennis Jarog from Chicago helped split the cost of a room, but this time I had a pretty decent paying job, so I decided to really live it up and treated myself so I could retreat to a quiet place as needed for naps and reading. My plan worked admirably, I might add, and I was glad that I had this option available.

The Professional Guest of Honor was Harlan Ellison, who refused to accept a room in either hotel, opting instead to spend the week in a Winnebago parked outside the Hyatt in protest of the Arizona state legislature's refusal to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. This was his way to protest their action – or lack of action, to be more politically opinionated here – and I believe, since I didn't attend the speeches, that his GoH speech fervently addressed this issue, among other topics. Harlan was also involved in one of the strangest things I've ever seen at a con, and that was when he spent the better part of three or four days inside a large, plastic tent set up in the Hyatt's atrium, writing a short story. This was an interesting publicity stunt that played off an alleged claim of Harlan's that he could write a story *anywhere*, damn the distractions. So the con committee set him up in this



clear plastic tent, vented it, stuck a large fan inside (the air-circulating kind, that is), a desk with a typewriter and a ream of paper, and thus Harlan sat there to write a story; all the while, fans trooped by the tent, stopped, stared at the shadowy figure hunched behind the typewriter, and listened to the rapid clickety-clack of the keys. As a page rolled off the platen, a committee aide (read: gopher) assigned to the tent would tape the sheet up on a nearby wall, and fans could read the story in progress. True to his word, Harlan finished it. I cannot remember which story it was, but I think the final

word count was over 5000, which is a decent length.

I remember one afternoon when I was walking through the Hyatt Atrium with Jim Frenkel, enwrapped in conversation as we passed by Harlan's tent – *clickety-click-rattle-a-tat-tat-clackety-click* – and ignoring it, then stepped around the body of a young fan passed out on the Atrium floor, a concommittee member kneeling next to him, asking over her walkie-talkie for a medical crew to come on down. Jim and I didn't recognize the fan, but he commented that he had seen this before, since so many kids come to these things and try to do it *all*, run their bodies ragged, and then just collapse wherever they happen to be at the time their body gives out. We kept walking, knowing that there were people coming to help this kid, so I am sure that guy was eventually all right.

Overall, IguanaCon was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed myself. So much of it is a gray blur now, but I did take some pictures, mostly of the downtown architecture when I took a walk Friday morning to get away from the con for a bit. The southwestern style architecture of many of the buildings was beautiful, as was the landscaping (the palm trees and bright flowerbeds), and the circular fountain in front of the convention center was definitely cool. I stood there for a few minutes, enjoying the light spray of water drifting across



my face. That felt so good, even at 10:30 in the morning.

This was also the convention where at one of the autograph signings I got Phyllis Eisenstein to sign my first edition copy of *Born to Exile*. I wrote about this in my fanzine *In A Prior Lifetime* (issue #1 (Summer, 2003) and again in issue #14 (August, 2006)), so instead of retelling that story here, go to www.efanzines.com to read and enjoy; the complete run of *IAPL* is archived there.

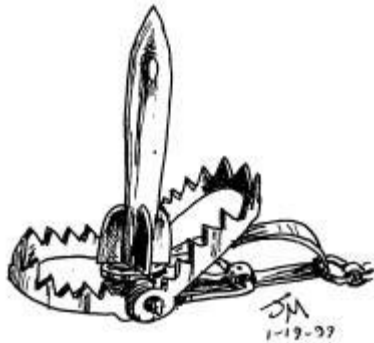
Sorry for that public service announcement, so here is some

relevant information about Iggy. It was actually listed as IguanaCon II because there had been an earlier hoax bid called IguanaCon. The first chairman of Iggy was Greg Brown, but for various reasons he stepped down and was replaced by the very able Tim Kyger, who did a wonderful job. Besides Harlan Ellison, other guests were Bill Bowers (Fan GoH), Josef Nesvadba (European, but he could not attend due to an inability to get travel papers), and F.M. Busby was the Toastmaster. Total attendance was approximately 4700, and it certainly felt like it. There were times when you simply could not move through a room for the crowds; the huckster room was always packed, as were also the Hyatt Atrium, the corridors around the meeting rooms, and the consuite. Well, this last one was to be expected, but there were a ton of great parties going on in both hotels each night, and I did my best to get to as many of those as I could.

I had a great time at IguanaCon. Even though I missed out on meeting a lot of people due to the large numbers, I was still able to meet some folks that I wanted to see, notably Orson Scott Card (the year before I had taught his story "Ender's Game" to an English class at my old high school; he thought that was interesting) and C.J. Cherryh, whom I have always thought looked so much like Minn-stf member, Kathy Marschall. One of the coolest things

about Iggy was running into Harlan at the Meet the Pros party poolside at the Adams Hotel (I think) and he remembered me from ByobCon V and MidAmeriCon. That was nice. Of course, I did the requisite smoothing with Bob Tucker, talked with Rusty Hevelin, George "Lan" Laskowski and others, swapped songs with Frank Gasperik since I had brought along my guitar, hung out with my Minn-stf buddies (I was active in the club at that time), and met a whole slew of fen from all over the world. It was a grand time, and someday I may have to sell one of my kids in order to afford attending another WorldCon again.





CONFICTION: A PERSONAL VIEW

This Worldcon is small – but that one is far away.

48th World Science Fiction Convention

23-27 August 1990

Netherlands Congress Centre, The Hague

Harry Harrison, Wolfgang Jeschke, Joe

Haldeman- Writer GoHs

Andrew Porter- Fan GoH

Toastmaster: Chelsea Quinn Yarbro

Chair: Kees van Toorn

It always seemed to me that the 1990 Worldcon in Holland had its roots firmly in the 1987 Worldcon in Brighton, which Mark Plummer described in the first instalment of this anthology. In practice, the Dutch fans and their international supporters must have been working on their bid for several years beforehand, but it was at Conspiracy '87 that the site of the 1990 Worldcon was selected and at Conspiracy – only my third convention

– that I first really took notice of the idea of a Dutch Worldcon, and thus at Conspiracy that I feel my path to The Hague began.

If I hadn't already experienced a British Worldcon, albeit from within the comfort blanket of a group of several dozen of my fan friends and acquaintances, I doubt I would have felt comfortable with the idea of travelling to Forn Parts to attend another. And Holland was probably the most comfortable non-British location I could have found: virtually all the population, especially in the cities, spoke English at least as well as I did; unlike Ireland (of which the same is true) it had no recent history of political differences with the UK or many inhabitants with a known desire to bomb or shoot British citizens; and it was only an hour away by plane.

Yet it was still, at the age of 20, the first time I had been outside my own country (and, for all that I consider myself British, in this case I mean merely England). I had to get a passport. I had to get a phrase book. I had to get brightly coloured foreign banknotes. And I had to contend with the joys of travelling with my boyfriend of the time, who was terrified of flying.

I didn't realise how scared he was, and therefore blithely carried on making plans to fly across the English Channel to Amsterdam. A number of our friends were making the same

trip and – since Noel preferred to grit his teeth and fly than suffer a long trip by ferry – either assumed that he wasn't really scared or felt it was fair game to try to make things worse. A combination of brandy and some prescription tranquilisers which had been prescribed for someone else got him onto the plane and enabled him not to create the sort of scene that would have had him promptly disembarked again. And then we were off. (Foolishly, I thought that having done it once – and having the incentive, the next time, of needing to get home – the return journey would be easier, but Noel to this day refuses to believe in either probability as a discipline or its essentially impersonal nature, and remains convinced that every flight he takes simply decreases the number of safe ones he has left before his plane crashes.)

But Noel probably wasn't the only one experiencing flight anxiety. British perceptions at the time were that, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait at the beginning of August, a lot of anticipated US Worldcon attendees had decided that flying across the Atlantic was too great a risk – although it was never clear to me whether this was meant to be due to a fear of mid-air hijack or bombing (the Lockerbie crash had also happened less than two years earlier) or just to a belief that Europe

was sufficiently close to the war zone to be fundamentally unsafe. In retrospect, I have little idea how many North Americans had ever intended to attend the Dutch Worldcon, and for what variety of geographic, economic, smoffish or other reasons; but it seems likely that numbers would have been low even without the political tensions expanding from the Gulf. (Since there are many different ways of counting the size of Worldcons, it seems safest not to begin to try. ConFiction and Conspiracy weren't too dissimilar in size in terms of their actual paid-up memberships, but both were smaller than the US-based Worldcons of the same period. And it seems that Conspiracy had two or three times the number of members from the US actually at the con than were in the Netherlands.)

However, as one of the contributors to the warm body count at ConFiction, it did seem to me that a lot of scheduled programme participants from the US were having to be hastily replaced on programme items. Often they were replaced by Brits and other Europeans, and for up-and-coming authors it probably represented a pretty good opportunity for some additional exposure. (A friend produced in his fanzine of the time a parody of one of the daily update sheets for the programme, with virtually every programme item on every strand

featuring Terry Pratchett.) And for me, still a novice at big conventions – I hadn't attended a British Eastercon in my 3½ years of con-going, for instance – the chance to see any authors on panels was pretty good in itself. For more seasoned Worldcon attendees, it may have been a slightly less high-profile but more than usually international experience.

All that said, I didn't see too much of the programme. I was spending a lot of time selling memberships and merchandise for ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the *Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* appreciation society, and engaging in friendly but increasingly convoluted rivalry and banter with the lads from Octarine, the SF and fantasy humour appreciation society. As in 1987, I found the sales table something of a bolt-hole from the enormity of choice and the comparative vastness of the site that any Worldcon, even a small one, represents. We weren't in the dealers' room proper this time: we were in an area of fan and con tables just outside it, which actually suited us very well since it helpfully distinguished us from proper businesslike sales operations who



needed to be concerned with import taxes and customs duties and the sort of paperwork that would have been disproportionate to our sort of endeavour. We missed out on some of the passing trade, I'm sure; the banter was to some extent a way to pass the time in the absence of any customers, as were our ongoing attempts to sell one another increasingly bizarre things for one Dutch guilder. (Jim de Liscard won, by selling Charing Cross station in London to his future partner Meike, who may still consider it at least morally hers.) I recall the programme items that I did see as being often quite intimate and potentially participative – although I was far too diffident even to raise my hand and ask a question, never mind engage in cheerful debate with the people actually on the panel – due again, I presume, to the spreading of a somewhat diminished audience across nearly as many programme strands as usual.

I also distinctly recall – in fact I think I shall never be able to forget

– the ConFiction masquerade. I don't, these days, go to masquerades, and this is a good part of the reason. But back in 1990 I had both taken part in light-hearted masquerade entries at the small conventions I attended and had been nursing for three years a gentle regret that I had missed the masquerade at Conspiracy, which by all accounts (and borne out by the [photos](#) available) was spectacular. I wasn't going to let this second chance pass me by.

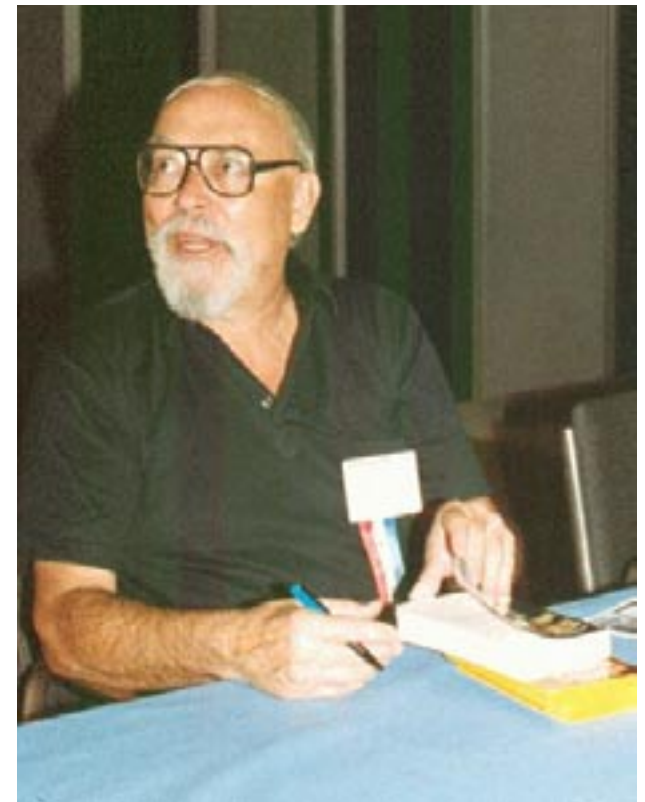
I should have cut my losses and left when I discovered that the children's masquerade was to precede the main event. I am not fond of children and if anything I've mellowed over the years; although the ghastly spectacle did at least have the side benefit of reminding me powerfully to take my contraceptive pill. The crowd of fan friends I hung out with tended to consider masquerades at other cons as being a good opportunity for a bit of fun (even Mark, already at this stage assuming the role of the only Real Fan in the village, had some history here), but precisely because of this had presumed that Worldcon masquerades were in another league entirely, in which our brand of chaos costuming – quite hastily improvised costumes to support a quick and silly joke – would be wholly out of place. So no one we knew had entered. Time may have been unkind to those entrants who

had devoted much time and effort to their costume and its presentation, but I gather that there were relatively few advance entries and what sticks in my mind are the low points: a series of entrants in what seemed to be hastily improvised costumes delivering a slow, ponderous and partly inaudible script with a much delayed and unfunny punchline. Further cruelties of memory stereotypes these hapless souls as earnest continental Europeans.

Masquerades often seem to overrun, especially at Worldcons, and no matter how slick the presentation and processing of the entries may be, the judging retains the capacity to slow it all down. I don't know how long it took at ConFiction; my memory of the entertainment during the judging interval indicates that it should be measured in geological time, but I suspect in practice it was a matter of mere months. The performance struck me at the time as being very slowed down and rather cleaned up soft porn; and subsequent enquiry has confirmed that this was a pretty accurate assessment. I get occasional flashbacks of PVC and rubber – and tubes? Surely not – and what I now know to be interpretative dance; but after a little lie down and the application of a few really sercon fanzines I can usually face the idea of an overseas Worldcon again.

After all of that was over I really

needed to go to a party. Worldcon parties were something else on which I'd rather missed out in 1987; being really quite shy of fandom en masse and very nervous of being stranded at the convention centre miles away from the cheap student accommodation in which several of us were staying, I had tended to stick to room parties with the friends affluent enough to have rented – albeit having then multiply subtlety – accommodation in the centre of town. Travellers' tales had floated back, though, of whole floors awash with bonhomie, as well as helium balloons (fun-loving Americans,



probably bidding for Hawaii), very strong rum (ConFiction itself), and milk and cookies (possibly apocryphal Americans, nonetheless encouraging fear and loathing – and not a little scorn – on the part of we young British fans who associated fun in no small measure with free drink).

In 1990 the Hawaii bid was having too much fun to stop having parties – possibly with a view to becoming a latter-day Minneapolis in '73 – and San Francisco, who eventually won the right to hold the 1993 Worldcon, were putting on a strong showing too. I'm sure there were other US bid parties, but my lack of memory on this point suggests that maybe free drink has its downsides after all. There was also a bid from Zagreb (as confirmed in a *Drink Tank* letters column many issues ago), arousing suspicions that this was mostly a ruse for Yugoslavian fans to be allowed a visa to come to Worldcon; and when in 1993 we watched tv news coverage of the latest round of Balkanisation, it was hard not to get glimpses of the alternate world in which there was a Worldcon taking place instead of a war. Back in 1990, ignoring for a little while the military escalation in the Persian Gulf, we went to parties and stood about or sat on the floor in hot crowded rooms – quite what the parties would have been like with a full complement of attendees

doesn't bear exploration – and talked to one another and to other fans we partly recognised, and tried to work out which site, if any, we might vote for since the idea of attending an *American* Worldcon was clearly several steps beyond the impossible. Personally, I just doubted I'd ever get Noel on the flight (although after we were long past being a couple and it was thus not my problem he did attend the subsequent Bay Area Worldcon, in 2002).

And then we all went home, and watched the fireworks. Once again, we weren't staying on site, although it was some consolation that no one was. Every evening, after the extravaganzas and the parties, we decamped by tram or incredibly rickety rented bicycle to Scheveningen, a charming beach resort several miles away from the Congressgebouw which, like that venue, I still can't successfully pronounce. Scheveningen was helpfully hosting a firework competition for most of the week of our stay, and so fans flocked to the beach and nearby bars to explore the near-infinite variety of the size of drinking receptacle that might emerge when next they ordered a glass of beer, and the universe exploded later for our pleasure.

In my case, it mostly kept me awake; being excessively conscientious at my young age, I felt the need to responsibly take the ZZ9 cash box back to the safe keeping of our hotel

every evening. And to responsibly get up sufficiently early the next morning to take the cash box back to the sales table and open for business. Which meant, most of the time, no beach for me. On the last night of the Worldcon, though, we had our own dead dog party, although that wasn't the animal we actually saw. Having been assured it was OK to take our own alcohol to drink on the beach, we loaded up at a local supermarket and headed for the seaside – only to be stopped by some



uniformed officers of the law. Sparing not a glance for our trolley full of booze, they enquired whether we had seen a six foot tall white rabbit; resisting the urge to reply that we hadn't drunk the stuff yet, we replied politely that we hadn't. When we eventually got to the beach we did see what we deduced to be a stag party – although for all we knew it could have been furry fandom partying in their own way – throwing a man dressed as a rabbit into the sea, in a way that seemed very well-planned and surprisingly sober. The police nonetheless seemed to consider this reprehensible behaviour, possibly on the grounds of being untidy, and removed them. Our bonfire, drinking, and hatching of all sorts of fannish plots and conrunning heresies went untroubled, however, until about 2 AM when we had to clear the beach because the sand-sweeping machines needed to tidy it up again. Back and forth they curved across the beach, as we swayed in time and hummed 'The Blue Danube'. I went back to Scheveningen on a work trip some seven years later; as ever, empty of fans it seemed nice enough but not nearly as surreal as I remembered.

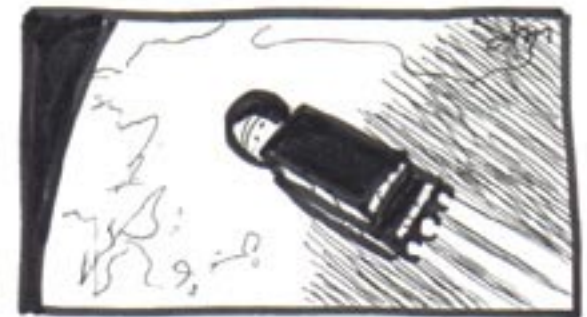
It seemed at the time as though there wasn't very much about the Dutch Worldcon that was really Dutch. I think there was some non-English language programming – and who could forget the Perry Rhodan day?

– but mostly it was catering for those of us who were relentlessly monolingual and trusting clever Dutch fans to keep up. In all the public areas of the con, though, I saw British fans I recognised or even people I knew, helping out. It may well be that I was failing to understand the need for plentiful, and international, assistance on the day at something the size of a Worldcon; but ConFiction seems more generally to have confirmed an Anglocentric suspicion that other nations can't run a Worldcon all by themselves. Similar notions provoke outrage amongst whole cohorts of British, Australian and Canadian fandom when suspected of them by Americans, but this was a prejudice that many British attendees applied to the Dutch Worldcon almost by default. Brits actually involved at a higher level of ConFiction's organisation have assured me since that it was all much more complex than that, and very much a real Dutch enterprise. But the Brits-save-the-day view still persists at a populist level – perhaps all the more because it enables us to bash the cowardly Americans, too scared to fly, with the equally populist return stroke. I'd be interested to know whether Heicon in 1970, the first Worldcon in a country where English was not the dominant language, suffered any similar perception problems or real organisational challenges. And, of

course, it's particularly pertinent right now to see how the Japanese Worldcon is viewed from the fannish West – before, after, and during the event.

My first foreign Worldcon was significant for me personally in all sorts of ways: my first trip abroad; my burgeoning sense of fannish responsibility (despite being younger and ostensibly less mature than my friends); my consequent reputation for not really liking fun, which dogged me for years and always struck me as a double unfairness; my forging of new friendships and fannish alliances which led on, directly or otherwise, to nearly all of my own conrunning career; and the dawning sense that Worldcons might just be a thing that we could go to rather than having to wait for them to come back to us. If there's ever another Worldcon in Holland I'm going to make sure I get to the programme. And this time, for all that I like smaller Worldcons, I'd really encourage more North American fans to come and join us.

—Claire Brialey



Waltzing John Foyster: Aussiecon Three (1999)

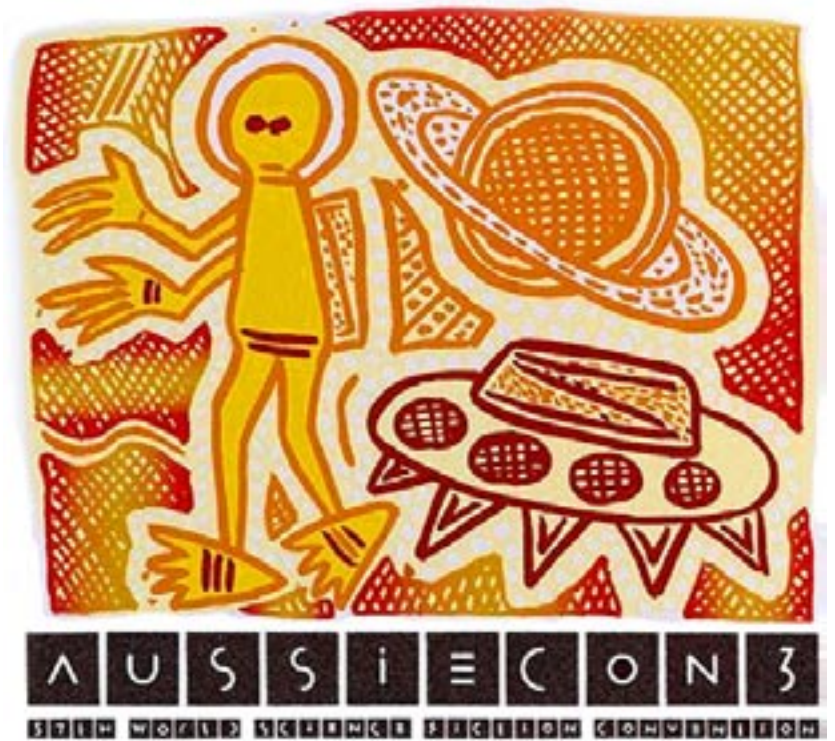
Claire and I intersected in the hall the other day and I took the opportunity to concede my fear that I'd made a terrible mistake in offering to write about the 1999 Worldcon, Aussiecon Three, for *The Drink Tank*. The problem wasn't that the convention lacked personal significance but rather that we'd written about it before, at length, in *Banana Wings* #15 seven years ago. Nearly 50,000 words of it. Granted it wasn't all me, and technically it wasn't all Worldcon either as it encompassed the whole of our three week trip to Adelaide, Melbourne, the Red Centre, and Sydney. The Worldcon was only, what, 12,000 words, about the same as Chris's typical fanzine output between the start of lunch and... well, probably about half-way through lunch. But do I, in short, have any more to say about Aussiecon Three?

There's the factual stuff. Aussiecon Three was the 57th World Science Fiction Convention, and the third to be held in Australia (the clue is in the name). It took place between 2 and 6 September 1999 in the World Congress Center and Centra Hotel in Melbourne. The guests of honour were George Turner (who died in 1997, after being named a guest), Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie, and J

Michael Straczynski. Some 1,500 people attended from a total membership of about 2,800. Previous Australian Worldcons were in 1975 and 1985 and drew 500 and 1,600 people respectively although there's some doubt about whether that's attendees or members.

Of less consequence to anybody other than me, Aussiecon Three was my first Worldcon outside Europe, and indeed my first trip to anywhere further than Paris or Amsterdam, either of which is about one hour by plane from London. A flight from the UK to Melbourne takes approximately 22 hours. It was also the first convention I attended where I expected to meet non-European fans, Australians and Americans, that I already knew by reputation and who might have grounds to know me. I'd been to Worldcons before, in the UK in 1987 and 1995 and in Holland in 1990, but whilst I knew of several prominent foreign fan figures at these events I had no reason to assume that they would know who I was. So Aussiecon Three was going to be different in so many ways.

Recently I read Susan Wood's



fine description of 1975's Aussiecon One in 'The Clubhouse' column of *Amazing* (June 1976). I've heard this theory that 1973's Torcon II was the last of the truly great *fannish* Worldcons but it seems to me that Aussiecon One had some of that same spirit and only fails to qualify for greatness because of the tyranny of distance that kept so many well-known North American fans away. But I liked this line from Susan—actually it's quoting John D Berry—which is one of several answers to the question 'Why are you here [in Australia]?' 'Because John Bangsund has a bottle of Kaiser Stuhl Bin J426 in his wine cellar for me.' Susan's own answer to

the question, nearly the final line of the piece: 'Purpose of visit? To have dinner with my friends.'

I couldn't claim to have had a bottle of anything waiting for me when I arrived in Australia 24 years after Susan's visit, and I didn't have any firm dinner plans lined up. but we did have a couple of people waiting to collect us at the airport. Claire and I had travelled out with Paul Kincaid (GUFF delegate) and his wife Maureen Speller, and with Dave Langford who was himself borne south on the wings of The Auld Lang Fund, so it was peculiarly gratifying to find that Damien Warman and Juliette Woods had come to collect *us* and our luggage when we arrived in Adelaide a week before the convention, and we really couldn't be at all unhappy that their small car was only really big enough for one or the other.

We had a week of stunningly hospitable acclimatisation in Adelaide before we transferred to Melbourne a few days before the convention itself, so there was already a mounting sense of occasion. Melbourne's not a small city; it's the state capital of Victoria and it's home to over three-and-a-half million people. But in those few days it seemed to be full of fans, and you'd bump into somebody everywhere you went, even if you hadn't arranged to meet them there in the first place. In the end, the translation from prelude-

to-convention to convention-proper was seamless.

As you can see from the numbers quoted earlier, the Australian Worldcons have all been relatively small for their time, mainly I assume because Australia is so far away from anywhere else. Indeed Melbourne's quite a long way

away from several parts of Australia. To British eyes, the numbers attending Aussiecon Three were more akin to a large Eastercon -- the annual British national convention -- and the place was full of people who looked like British fans, even if only some of them actually were; but it still *felt* like a Worldcon with quasi-mythical Australian fan figures like Bruce Gillespie, Leigh Edmonds, Eric Lindsay, Yvonne Rousseau and John Foyster roaming the corridors alongside equally legendary Americans and a few wholly imaginary Brits.

Aussiecon Three was the



convention where I first *got* the whole party thing. Convention parties in the UK always seem largely unsatisfactory affairs, with too many people crammed into too small a space such that it's difficult to resist the siren lure of the (hopefully) far more spacious bar. Aussiecon's secret weapon was The All Seasons Grand Hotel, adjacent to the main hotel and conference centre site and easily reached by a short walk which unfortunately also took in the slowest pedestrian crossing in the world. The All Seasons Grand Too Many Names had these large split level rooms with kitchenettes which were

perfect for large if perhaps not fully open parties, and we were drawn back there again and again, to culminate in a particularly epic gathering to celebrate UK fan Caroline Mullan's 'fannish' twentieth birthday party (she doesn't look a day over nineteen) which can best be summarised with the words 'scotch' and 'singing' and which explains why Bev Hope still looks at me funny whenever our paths cross.

There was also a fine fannish programme stream. Bruce Gillespie, whose fan publishing career makes Chris look like a dilettante, was an excellent choice for fan guest of honour as illustrated by his keynote item in which he explained all the reasons why somebody *else* should have been standing on that stage. He was backed up by a fanhistoricon programme arranged by John Foyster and Joyce Scrivner, an often truly joyous celebration of fandom with a particularly Australian slant. One highlight, which I've frequently tried to explain without ever capturing the true sense of it, was a panel discussion on Melbourne fandom featuring Bill Wright, Dick Jenssen, Bruce Gillespie, Leigh Edmonds, Merv Binns and Mervyn Barrett all deftly orchestrated by the indefatigable John Foyster who tried to get them to address the burning question of that and indeed every moment: when did the Melbourne Science Fiction Group move to its

clubhouse in Somerset Place? The debate twisted, turned, forked, looped and doubled-back on itself (rather like a James Bacon article) while John somehow steered proceedings towards the consensus that *everybody* was wrong, leading you to doubt the existence of Uncoordinated Eric, the legendary hydraulic lift, the clubhouse, Somerset Place, and indeed the whole of Melbourne. It's really no help at all to tell you about this now; unhelpfully, all I can say is that you had to be there. John started the item by saying that it was important to have the discussion *now* before somebody died; sadly, a few years later that somebody was him.

Other attendees were, to me inexplicably, off doing other Worldcon-type things while all this was going on. There was a wider programme, of course, probably too much of it for the numbers that were there, and it quickly plunged into total disarray and had to be rescued to a great extent through the efforts of DUFF delegate Janice Gelb who clearly had such a good time that she ended up marrying an Australian and moving to Melbourne permanently a few years later. We did not participate in any of the conrunning activity, but cheered on the volunteers from the safety of the Centra bar where we drank Coopers beer and watched Spike eating caesar salads with increasingly inventive

ingredients while we all tried to establish the name of the convention song. And we talked to Bev Hope and Dave Arblaster, and to Roman Orszanski and Yvonne Rousseau, and booksellers like Justin Ackroyd and, over from New Zealand, British



expat Richard Lewis. And Irwin Hirsh and Cath and Marc Ortlieb and Perry Middlemiss and Julian Warner and... There were plenty of things going on, yet somehow it was all containable; you could say that you'd see somebody later and mean it. And on the last afternoon, Damien Warman and Andrew Butler stuck their badges on their foreheads as jets of flame burst from the casino on the banks of the Yarra and we all knew that here was the academic hope of two continents. And that Aussiecon Three had been a *good* convention.

And so when there's another Australian Worldcon -- whether or not it's called Aussiecon Four and whether or not it's in 2010 -- we will return. And if the people at immigration ask us why we're visiting Australia we will say, 'Because Damien Warman and Juliette Woods have a bottle of Nepenthe 2005 Riesling in their wine cellar for us. And we want to have dinner with our friends.'

--Mark Plummer



OK, This is the statue from the 2007 Hugo Awards. This was the one that I was up for two of. I could have won two of these things. Well, there was no way in Hell I was gonna win one fo these things, but if there had been some terrible mistake with the other four candidates in each category, I could have...

Now, I was bummed that I couldn't go to the WorldCon to begin with. It would have been between 3 and 4 months pay for me to afford to go, so it wasn't going to happen (even though I pre-supported them). I was nominated and then thought that I wanted to go so badly because I could go to the Hugo Losers party and hang out with good folks and the ceremony itself would have been fun.

And then George Takei was announced to be a co-host of the Hugos and I wanted to go even worse.

And then I saw this statue. This is the coolest Hugo statue ever! I would have tried harder if I knew the Statue was gonna be this awesome!

Art this issue is from Bill Rotsler, Dina Cyts, Joe Mayhew, the good people at TheHugoAwards.com, Rosso (aka The Donut Truck on DeviantArt.com who was kind enough to let me use his WorldCon piece as the cover) and a couple of folks whose names I can't find (the AussieCon stuff)

Photos were from the MidAmerican Photo Archive. Good folks, those!