



THE ULVERSTONE WAR MEMORIAL MYSTERY...

Was it left behind by
Ancient Astronauts?!

THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS NEWSLETTER

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Well, some say it was, some say it wasn't - but who really knows what evil lurks in the heart of Ulverstone? The Shadow? (That really dates you, friend.) Anyhow, as announced last issue, your editor is off for a week or so in sunny Tasmania, to investigate just such momentous questions of our times as these, and this issue has been done in a hurry. No typesetting this time, no justified margins, nothing fancy, just words. And my um impression of the Ulverstone War Memorial, which doesn't do the thing justice at all. The memorial is basically three massive pillars, plumb in the middle of the main street (quite a shock when you cross the railway line, on your way from Devonport to Burnie, and find yourself driving around it), and the pillars are linked by massive concrete chains, and there are those amazing clocks on top and the pointy bit that is directly in line with one of the moons of Jupiter every 14.93 years (no, I just made that up). A diminutive stone soldier with fixed bayonet defies your impulse to laugh at the thing. If the National Trust ever develops a sense of humour, it will classify this as Australia's most important example of well-intended monumental absurdity. (Apart from the IAC - but let's not get political.) In an odd sort of way that I

can't begin to explain, I think the monument is gorgeous. The rest of Ulverstone, and the country around it, is just beautiful. If there were any scope for a freelance book editor in Ulverstone, I would move there. If you don't see another Newsletter from me, there was, and I did.

Actually I won't be going anywhere near Ulverstone. I'll be spending a fair bit of time on the beach at Cremorne, on Frederick Henry Bay, probably under an umbrella, but never mind. I'll be idly looking through a bookshop or three in Hobart and having a chat, I hope, with Cedric Pearce (the Society's southernmost member) and some of his mates about the state of Tasmanian publishing, and inspecting some Glovers that I missed at last year's exhibitions in Adelaide and Melbourne. My fondest hope, though, is that I might get a chance to look at some of the works of Jorgen Jorgensen in the Tasmanian Archives.

I could almost believe that I am the only person in Australia who is interested in the life and writings of Jorgen Jorgensen. Certainly, publishers don't seem interested. And yet, Jorgensen was easily one of the most fascinating characters in Australia's early history. Look up Jim Dally's piece on him in the ADB and you'll see what I mean. I would suggest you read Clune and Stephensen's book about him, *The Viking of Van Diemen's Land*, but it's been out of print for years. Why? I don't know, I really don't. The thought that 'Ancient Astronauts' interest Australian publishers and readers more than fair-dinkum Ancient Australians dismays me no end. That's one of the reasons why I need a holiday. The publishing *trade* is getting to me. I love books and publishing, but as old Thoreau once remarked, 'though you trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business'.

I shall sit on the beach at Cremorne, reading Democritus Junior's celebrated treatise on black bile, and every now and then shall gaze out across the lustrous water to Slopen Island and ponder the meaning of it all.

A late flash from Hobart! Cedric Pearce writes: 'You certainly know how to pick your marks. My eldest son just happens to be the Deputy Archivist, so I'm sure he'll be able to help you with the Jorgensen material. I'll look forward to seeing you.' There, I'm feeling better already.

OUR MARCH MEETING

Unfortunately, the person responsible for reporting the March meeting failed to meet the deadline for this issue. Inexcusable, I call it. Mute, inglorious. Nothing worse than an editor who doesn't meet deadlines, dammit. But I did start on it. This is what I wrote: 'Using what is known as the Moomba method of crowd computation, we find that upwards of three hundred persons attended the March meeting of the Society of Editors and the Imprint Society, and it certainly felt like it. The small dining room at the John Curtin Hotel, which so often in the recent past has put at least one member in mind of Lytton's "hedgless plains of vast Mile-end", this night reminded him

THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS & THE IMPRINT SOCIETY

The third joint meeting of the two societies will be held on THURSDAY 26 APRIL at 6.30pm.

As we who produce the books don't know nearly enough about the people who buy and read them, we've asked a panel of three booksellers to enlighten us on such aspects as what books are selling and predictions for the future, the qualities that are important in making books attractive to buyers, the book-buying patterns of particular neighbourhoods, and the general problems of the game.

Our speakers have a range of bookselling experience:

DAMIEN HONOR is assistant manager of Angus and Robertson Bookshop in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne;

PHILIP ROBINSON has his own bookshop in Frankston and writes the well-known 'Bookseller's Diary' column in the *Australian Bookseller & Publisher*;

ROBIN WHITE runs the Angus and Robertson Bookshop at Camberwell and is the new proprietor of Hall's, Prahran.

The May meeting will be held on Thursday 31 May.

Meetings are held at the John Curtin Hotel, 29 Lygon Street, Carlton. Dinner (about \$4.00) is served from 6.30.

Ann Lahey

of nothing so much as Cowley's "crowd and buzz and murmurings of this great hive, the city". That sort of thing can quickly become very tiresome, so I'm glad I got no further with the first draft.

In fact we had about sixty-five people at the meeting, and it was a bit warm and sticky and crowded and great fun. Our speakers were Nick Hudson, from Heinemann, Lloyd O'Neil, from Lloyd O'Neil, and John Pitson, recently retired from AGPS.

I was looking forward to meeting Nick and Lloyd, and to seeing John again. I was hoping someone would say 'You've met John Pitson, have you?' - to which I would answer 'Met him? We once climbed a mountain together!' Almost true. After dinner one night in Townsville, John insisted we walk up Castle Hill. We got about half way. It's one of my more pleasant memories, that night.

Ann Lahey and John were standing outside the pub when I arrived. Ann didn't know about the line I'd prepared for her, so my prepared repartee was wasted. John and I went in to the bar and talked about

old times. I have a lot of time for John Pitson, and make no secret of my admiration for his ability and his achievement. Even in the Public Service you don't get an MBE for survival. John earned his, and deserved rather more. His contribution to Australian publishing and design is incalculable. It was good talking to him again.

Nick, Lloyd and John were supposed to address us on the subject of 'training for creative publishing'. An odd thing happened. Each of them more or less said it couldn't be done - and we enjoyed them so much that we didn't really argue with them. I'm not sure what this means, but I do think that somewhere along the line we must clarify our thinking about what sort of training we want for editors. We're all in favour of it, but what is it? Even Nick Hudson hasn't enough training to commission a book about gnomes. He said so himself.

The floor (well, the letter column), dear reader, is yours. Your comments should be typewritten, not too long, and (for the next issue) in my hands by 11 May.

I hope to have my transcript of the meeting finished by then, too. These three speakers deserve verbatim reporting, and even at Hansard (here comes my excuse) we didn't always get things into print overnight.

John Bangsund

EDITORS SLUGGED AT MARKBY'S

(In the absence of a specific collective noun one is able to improvise. 'Group of editors' is boring, 'clutch of editors' is better, and... and inspiration strikes!)

A compact gabble of editors, about twelve individuals, visited the Markby Group in South Melbourne on Wednesday 4 April to have a look at the methods of typesetting in use there.

Markby's was a perfect choice for an educational tour, since the Group operates Monotype, Linotype and Ludlow hot-metal machines, together with Monophoto and Vidikey/VIP photosetting equipment, the latter under computer control. All the systems were in operation during the trip, and this afforded a rare opportunity to assess the relative merits of each method of setting at first hand.

From the number of questions asked of the very helpful staff it seemed that everyone learnt something. I still can't quite believe that such an unlikely-looking machine as a Monotype caster produces such beautifully delicate characters. I'm sure that actually being able to watch the machines working helped to dispel some of the mystique associated with typesetting, as well as providing an insight into the trade's attitude towards editors. And these together should facilitate better co-operation between the user and the producer.

Thanks to Markby's for making the visit possible, and for providing the Linotype slugs with our names neatly centred.

A successful visit.

Paul Stapleton