

5 Albert Street,
Middle Brighton
Vic. 3186
9 Jan 1989

Dr John McLaren,
F.I.O.T.,
Footscray. Vic.

Dear John,

Preliminary all the greatest in health and fortune
during 1988.

Thanks for the commemorative issue of OVERLAND. I have
browsed but not completely read it as yet. Am always behind in my reading,
never seem to catch up.

Inside the issue was a printed sheet stating 'With the
Compliments of J.D.McLaren'.

Thanks for the gesture but it was not necessary. I was not
after a gratis copy, never have been, never will be!

When I posted a cheque for \$50 for the Stephen memorial fund
I added an extra \$5 for the commemorative issue of OVERLAND to make
certain I received a copy when it appeared. I have never subscribed and
have always asked for issues in shops, although I used to periodically
make small donations. As I said to Stepeh Stephen some 30 odd years ago
the mag. wanted to have 20-40 odd determined purchasers asking in well-
known city distributors for copies about the time they were due to be
published. If this happened each 3 months these shops would seek copies
for sale which many of them were not doing at the time of conversation.
And if for sale they would be displayed attracting attention. As I think
I conveyed, when the converted subscribers pass on who takes their place?
not the general public which would not be aware the magazine existed.

Anyhow, I did not buy many copies after about the 80s
onwards, I had so much other literature always seeking attention plus
the odd bits of writing; during the earlier issues I would hound and
annoy until I got the latest issue from shops such as Margueritta Webbers,
International McGills etc.

But during the later period the mag gradually lost its fire
and positive provocative down-to-earth stimulating opinions and criticisms,
or so it seemed to me and there have been others who expressed the same
reaction. The outraged fires were increasingly being reduced to flickering
flames. You could say I was/am wrong, you could be right, but what I
have written I think reflects my developing reactions.

I thought the centenary issues Nos 100 and 101 were very
good and exciting, overall positively reflecting with proud aims for the
future. I am certain I wrote to Stephen expressing my thanks.

I was finding much of the poetry during the later issues
boring and not worth fathoming. We evolve from mother earth, dust to
dust be our destiny, and the shades of all our emotions during our

transitory voyage can ^{be} ~~sub~~ superbly expressed in the most simple terms in the English language without wobbling about in obtuse depths of flowery jargon, as witness Shakespeare, Keats, Arnold, Nielsen, Wright, most of Browning, Shelley and etc. and of course Burns. Lawson is attacked by some of the purists whose ramblings frequently prove them to be pie-in³-the-sky pedantists, if such be a word.

I am not and was not against modern poetry as such if such. One of the books received by the FIOT is a volume of Poetry by T.S.Eliot whom I was trying to fathom when I was in my early 20s. I bought the Collected Verse of T.S.Eliot when it was published in the mid 1930s. It is quite rare these day especially in the near mint condition of mine (yours). Some ~~ex~~ years back a certain bookman just about implored me to sell him my copy but was not interested.

Another poet I could have mentioned was the late John Manifold. The FIOT received my copy of his NIGHTMARES & SUNHORSES volume of verses which is quite rare these days. I loaned this volume to a certain well-known then theatrical person who has since passed on who wanted it so much I had to chase and persist to get it back.

When the brilliant pianist from Scotland, Ronald Stevenson, came out here in 1980 to give the annual Percy Grainger Concert in the Melba Hall, I was introduced to him by George D. and we had then and again later two for me delightful and informative conversations. Stevenson was an ardent admirer of both the man and the works of Manifold, was not aware that M. had just previously died, and I was able to supply him (S) with some much-welcomed data just before he left. Stevenson told me he intended when he arrived back home to put some of Manifold's poetry to music. A vital exciting alert dindividual with a wicket sense of humour, a superb pianist with a pertinent erudite commentary when thought necessary such as at his additional concert in the M. University Library, it doe~~s~~ not seem like 8 years since Stevenson was here. He stands out in any memories!

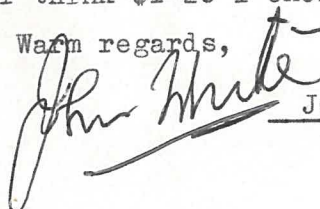
Sorry so wordy, John!

My wife, Betty, has a sister in a nursing home in Kew where she unfortunately will end her days. During her active life, Joyce the sister, took hundreds of slides during the 50s, 60s, 70s, not only around Melbourne but also country and interstate and the nearer overseas. All or most are boxed with dates and notes generally typed and fill a suitcase. Bet does not want them, we have not seen most of them. After we have had a brief look at those of choice, would the FIOT be interested in receiving them as a gift? No doubt some of the places have changed since Joyce took the slides so they are in the process of becoming historic documents! Let me know what you think.

I guess you received the copy of my monograph for FIOT.

Back to starters; please obtain the \$5 for OVERLAND from the memorial treasurer and as the postage was i think \$1-20 I enclose 3 stamps to cover this cost.

Warm regards,


John White

*Am late so posting
without reading.*