



NOT PHILOSOPHICAL GAS

ANZAPA 93

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but something quite different, done exclusively for the June 1983 mailing of ANZAPA by John Bangsund, PO Box 80, Brunswick West, Victoria 3055

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31 May And Sally and I have just ended the career of the first redback (*Latrodectus hasseltii*) we've encountered in this house. The first, in fact, we've seen at any of the places we've lived in in Melbourne, except for one that Sally thought she saw in the boot of the car not long after we moved from Adelaide, that seething hotbed of vicious arachnids. I spotted one in the Gents at a Chinese restaurant in Fairfield, and wondered at the time whether I would prefer redbacks in the garage to the fearsome-looking things we had there; we still don't know whether they were wolf spiders or particularly robust common black house spiders. What concerns us somewhat is that the redback we've just despatched is the first we can recall seeing inside the house, anywhere. In Canberra and Adelaide we could always expect to find them in the garage and laundry, but if they came inside we never saw them. This one had settled down in a nice dark spot at the bottom of a bookcase, and I might have found it earlier if I'd had the urge to read the *Colloquies* of Erasmus or Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

It's not that we haven't been warned about Australia's dangerous wildlife. Recently we watched the first half-hour or thereabouts of an appallingly bad film called *Earthling*, in which an American schoolboy lost in the outback is menaced by mopokes and ravaged by crazed bandicoots. In the space of five minutes the boy is alternately bemused and scared silly by kangaroos, koalas, wombats, echidnas, a water snake, a tree snake and a medium-sized goanna. Kookaburras and countless other unseen strident birds yack and scream at him. Quite charming, actually. Jan Finder would love it. But no sign of redbacks. I'll take my chances in the bush with crazed bandicoots, but redbacks in the house is another matter altogether.

There was a goanna used to visit the vacant block next to a house I lived in at Upwey. The one in the film wasn't three feet long, but this one was twice that. I watched it a number of times. But the biggest goanna I ever saw was at least ten feet long and maybe three feet tall. I was driving along an unsealed section of the Great Ocean Road, somewhere to the west of the Otways, and I rounded a bend and saw this enormous lizard crossing the road some way ahead of me. It was whitish-grey, so it stood out against the dirt road, and from where I was it seemed to be as long as the road was wide — a trick of perspective perhaps, but it certainly was a big goanna. That was about twenty years ago. I don't know whether they make them like that any more.

'I didn't know they made them like that any more,' I said to Di Hawthorne last Saturday night (or something to that effect) when the belly-dancer came on. Sally had decided that her nephew Andrew, who is something of a connoisseur of exotic eateries, should experience the local Turkish restaurant while he was here for a day or two, and (what the hell?) introduce him and his father to some of our friends. Alderman Yeoland, Hobart City Council, opined fairly early that there was nothing quite like this at home; I think he meant the food, because he met Adelaide fandom a few years ago and knows roughly what to expect of our friends. Elaine Cochrane quietly passed a copy of *The Murders at Hanging Rock* to Yvonne Rousseau to sign; Damien Broderick, though warned that some aspects of his reviews in that morning's *Age* were not entirely to George Turner's liking, went and sat next to George, and neither seemed too distressed; John Foyster, as far as I could tell, was enjoying animated discussion with Damien, George and Russell and Jenny Blackford; and the courses came and went: this dip, that dip, this massive plate of lamb, that of beef, this we couldn't put a name to, but excellent, and another, and yet again, and — surely not more! — but yes, there was. For eight dollars here in the heart of Brunswick one is expected to get well and truly stuffed. And

within reason, that is exactly what we did. Bruce Gillespie put on two kilos before our very eyes. Some of it came from a bottle marked 'St Hubert's 1977 Shiraz'. There were quite a few bottles about, mostly empty, and suddenly the lights went down and there was this belly-dancer. Not much on. The real McCoyoglu. Pleasant face, I thought, nice eyes. Nice figure. Very athletic. You sort of get the point of Turkish music when the belly-dancer comes on.

She got up on the table opposite us, and I couldn't go on pretending not to notice her. I thought she was quite attractive in a way, just the kind of young lady you'd be pleased to have up there on the table next to you doing a Turkish belly-dance if that's what you'd come for, and I said to Di 'I think I'm going to have odd dreams tonight,' and she just looked at me with a liberated sort of look and I knew I shouldn't have let on I'd noticed anything. As it turned out, I'd drunk too much to dream about anything. Out like a light. Felt rotten on Sunday, what I saw of it.

*Plus ça change*, I hear you saying, but I've stopped drinking now. True. It's either stop or burst, the way I'm going. Besides, I have three deadlines to meet before ANZAPA's, and sobriety, though not essential to efficient and fast copy-editing, could be regarded as useful. Also, I have to be fairly coherent on Friday when I meet Professor Bernard Smith and show him what I've done to his manuscript. I have almost finished *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages, Volume One, The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771*, but not quite. There's a great swag of canoes and things to get through tonight, as depicted by various artists, and when the actual catalogue is done there's a nasty-looking bibliography to clean up. It's a great book; I look forward to it. The only way I'd ever be able to possess a book like this is to edit it and get a complimentary copy. Vol. I will have something over four hundred plates in it, quite a few of them in colour, and it'll be a big, handsome book.

But long before I see that book I have to edit Vol. II, and do a fair amount of work on four volumes of *The Heritage of Australia*, and edit the official 150th anniversary *History of Victoria* in three volumes with many figs in the text. You'll be pleased to know that I have only one issue of the *Society of Editors Newsletter* left to do; I certainly am.

Would you like a sneak preview of Professor Smith's book? Yes, I thought you would.

SYDNEY PARKINSON

1.142 New Zeland War Canoe [c. Apr 1770]

pen and wash, 11½ x 19 : 292 x 482. w/m. GR. fleur-de-lis. shield with bend.

The title as above in ink on folio below drawing.  
A finished drawing developed from field studies, probably completed in April 1770.

ver: For a study of the canoe, see the central canoe in 1.116(b). The drawing was used by J. J. Barralet in his preparatory drawing 1.142A for the engraving in Hawkesworth (1773) II, pl. 16 (fp 463).

ref: Banks, *Journal* II, pl. 2; Smith (1960) pl. 11;  
Murray-Oliver (1969) pl. 28; Cobbe (1979) pl. 70.

British Library, London. Add. MS 23920, f.46.

Isn't that exciting! Maybe not, but it's a living. See yez.

*JhB.*

Let's see if I can get it into the August mailing. The cover art is by William Hodges — *The Resolution in the Marquesas (c.10 April 1774)*, National Maritime Museum, London, 2.104 in Professor Smith's catalogue.

19 July We didn't get to the convention in Sydney in June, but it came to us.

Jerry Kaufman stood in this very room and admired the art of William Hodges, then braved the garage and took away a swag of PGs and things. But the first traveller to pass this way was Art Widner. We met him at Spencer Street Station; as the few people on the airport bus stood up I asked John and Jenny which one was Art, and they indicated the bloke with the beard, and Sally and I knew we were going to like him. Later, at the Rice Bowl, he asked would we mind if he smoked, and I knew we would be friends. We brought him back to West Brunswick, and Dylan was sick with excitement. That's some welcome, said Art. I think this is only the second time that two FAPA Egoboo Poll winners have sat in the same room in Australia; the first was when Terry Carr was here in 1979. If only Marc Ortlieb would try harder we could do it more often.

At a party in Shakespeare Grove, St Kilda, on 18 June I almost met Harlan Ellison. Someone told me he was in the front room. I walked in and he left. Later I spoke to him in the dining-room, and he asked me who I was, but by then I'd forgotten.

Musically, if not financially, it has been a good month or so. On 10 June I drove to Pearcevale to buy 'over 200 classical records' (it said in the ad) for \$200; there were 201 exactly, and I wouldn't exactly describe some of them as classical, like the boxed sets of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and 'South Sea Island Magic', but there was enough good stuff there to justify the trip and the expense. John and Jenny relieved me of about eighty of them. More recently I bought forty-odd open-reel tapes from someone at Eltham, and thirty records from someone else at Mornington. An expensive hobby, but it gets me out of the house.

I can now report that our record collection numbers exactly 855, of which 723 are classical, 86 non-classical and 46 undecided. The composers represented by ten or more records are Mozart (82), Beethoven (69), Haydn (57), Bach (39), Schubert (26), Liszt (23), Handel (19), Debussy (18), Chopin (18), Mahler (16), Vaughan Williams (15) and Shostakovich (15). But before you go deciding that list reflects my preferences I should mention that there are 470 cassettes and 270 open-reel tapes. Estimated playing time of all the classical music in the house is now about 86 days. If I could only give up FM and devote just 5 hours 40 minutes a day to listening to the stuff I've got, I'd get through the lot in a year. The danger in accumulating music at this rate is that you become a kind of stamp-collector, taking as much pleasure in cataloguing it and filling in the gaps as listening to it.

But I do have other things to occupy my time. I finished volume 2 of Bernard Smith's *Cook* on 7 July, and have since done some proofreading for VISE and got stuck into *The Heritage of South Australia* and *The Heritage of Western Australia* for Macmillan. Oxford threatens to lumber me soon with a massive study of the American invasion of Australia during World War 2, and there are a few other things in the pipeline. I managed to get out of doing the Society of Editors Newsletter at that body's annual general meeting, but somehow found myself elected secretary, and already I'm beginning to think there's more work in that job.

Over the years we've got used to the fact that Dylan is the sort of cat who, um, has difficulty keeping his food down sometimes. The vet at Kew said it was because he ate too much too quickly. Lately he seemed to be doing it rather more often than usual, and seemed more discontented and fidgety than usual, so Sally took him off to the vet at Pascoe Vale, and it turns out that the poor little bugger has feline leukaemia. This used to be a fatal disease, when detected, because it was thought humans could contract it, so cats with it were put down. But it seems it is contagious only to other cats, and it can be treated. Dylan is responding well to treatment. Unfortunately he picked up feline influenza at the vet's, so he and Donovan had to go back last week; and they're due for another visit tonight. We're getting to know quite a lot of animals at Pascoe Vale, but let's not get talking about that. Or anything, since the page ends here and I can't afford more just now.