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GUFFaw

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I thought this was going to be a short issue of *GUFFaw*, after all, I didn't really have much material planned for it. But Eva Hauser has generously let me reprint her GUFF trip report, which has not, I believe, been widely seen. And then the second chapter of my own trip report just grewed – gee, I do prattle on! And lo, another 20-odd pages.

The big news this time, of course, is that we have a race. And a very interesting and close race it promises to be, so make sure you take your opportunity to vote. There should be a ballot form enclosed with this issue of *GUFFaw*, but if it's missing or you need more please contact me.

And next time round we're promised articles by the candidates. It's not clear yet whether it's going to be one article from each pair, or one from each individual. Either way, it looks like the next issue is going to be fairly meaty again.

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GUFF News

Two for the price of one...

The GUFF race begins.

The race to bring a GUFF delegate from Australasia to Paragon, the 2001 Eastercon, has started. And rather than having two candidates, we've gone for the luxury of two pairs of candidates.

You'll find a ballot paper included with this issue of GUFFaw, but here are their platforms:

Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber

Secret masters of getting someone else to run a WorldCon after we've successfully bid for it, Eric Party Animal and Jean Project Manager want to visit UK and other European fans in their native habitats. Jean has never been to the UK, and Eric hasn't visited since 1972. Now retired from the paid workforce, we have lots of time to travel, party, and produce fanzines and websites, but little income to support our habits. You probably know our fanzines *Gegenschein* and *WeberWoman's Revenge*. Our sf websites are at <http://www.wrevenge.com.au/wrevenge/> and <http://www.wrevenge.com.au/psiphi/> and our Australian travel website is at <http://www.avalook.com.au>

Nominators: *Eve & John Harvey, Irwin Hirsh, Dave Langford, Perry Middlemiss and Lyn McConchie*

Damien Warman and Juliette Woods

We've been fans all our adult lives — even if that is only the last ten years. We've edited fmz, organized relaxacons, run Adelaide's discussion group 'Critical Mass' and have now started the OzMemoryHole. We are eager to expand our fanning interstate and inter-State, strengthening ties within Australia and to Europe. We know that GUFF isn't all real beer and skiffy. We're dead keen to admin — this is our real chance to make connections. Barring acts of gods, we'll be fun and frolicsome at Paragon and travel hard in search of fans in the UK and on the Continent.

Nominators: *Claire Brialey, John Foyster and Yvonne Rousseau, Roman Orszanski, Marc Ortlieb and Gregory Pickersgill*

Voting is open until midnight on Monday 13th November, 2000, which means I'll be able to collect votes at Novacon. In the next issue of *GUFFaw*, due later this summer, I hope to feature articles by our candidates.

GUFF trip reports ...

The GUFF coffers are suddenly richer by US\$2,000.

As you may know, Los Angeles fans have for some time offered a bonus of \$500 for every completed fan fund trip report. Recently, word went out that the rules for claiming this bonus were changing, reports would have to be completed within a certain period after finishing the trip.

This concentrated the mind, but fortunately we had newly finished trip reports from **Karen Pender-Gunn** and from **Eve Harvey**. Then, through some very good detective work, Irwin Hirsh discovered that **Eva Hauser** had published at least part of her trip report. I contacted her, and it turned out that it was, in fact, the entire report.

So, all at once we had three complete trip reports, and off they went to Bruce Pelz. And back came a cheque not for US\$1,500, as hoped, but for \$2,000. Because Bruce had also seen **John Foyster**'s completed trip report, and realised he hadn't paid the bonus on that.

Many thanks, therefore, to the four GUFF delegates who've made such a contribution to our funds. I wonder if other GUFF delegates might now be persuaded to complete their reports...

Anyway, \$1,000 of that bonus will be staying in European coffers, while the other \$1,000 will be winging its way to Karen. Meanwhile check out the back pages of this fanzine to find out how you can get hold of copies of Karen's and Eve's complete trip reports. John's should be, I believe, available from him. And, as a special bonus, I'm proud to reprint Eva's trip report in this issue of *GUFFaw*.

Thanks, Pat ...

Pat McMurray came up with a really neat idea after his trip to the Australian Worldcon.

He suggested that all that irritating loose change that one is inevitably left with after any foreign trip could be donated to the appropriate fan fund. Which means that the next fan fund winner will go ready-armed with much needed cash.

Pat was as good as his word, and we now have an envelope stuffed with a variety of Australian coins. So the next GUFF delegate from Europe to Australia will indeed have some necessary small change.

Now, anyone else care to follow suit?

Eva Hauser

Eva Hauser was the last European GUFF delegate before me, attending SynCon '92, the Sydney NatCon. Her report on that trip was published, in Czech I believe, in *Interkon* that year, and an English version came out in her perzine *Wild Shaarkah*. I am delighted to reproduce that English version here.

My Australian Diary:

SynCon '92

– and something more

1. An Italian Interlude

There is no direct connection between Prague and Sydney: I found out that the cheapest airline is Alitalia and it was necessary to go from Prague to Rome one day and from Rome to Sydney the next. Staying overnight in the transit hotel was really expensive (\$70 per person per night) and so I was very grateful that Roelof Goudriaan (an administrator of the GUFF fund) had asked Hazu Hiroaki, a Japanese SF fan living in Rome, to help me.

My conclusion was that Japanese hospitality is incredibly generous, but I am afraid I would not be able to do the same for any Japanese guest coming to Prague: at the airport, I found a secretary, a driver and a huge limousine awaiting me. Later, Hazu's wife prepared a lot of wonderful meals and set the table in such a beautiful way – but only for Hazu and me, not for herself and their three children, which made me to feel really uneasy. And somehow it happened that there were a lot of Czechoslovak books, souvenirs and music all around me: I think it's a sort of courtesy to a guest to display various artifacts from his own nation around him, but in my house in Prague, there isn't anything Japanese, I am afraid perhaps our Sanyo TV set, but that doesn't seem to be the right sort of thing. Hazu works as a correspondent of a Japanese newspaper called *Yomiuri Shibun* and in his office he has an exciting computer which uses the Japanese alphabet and is also able to convert Japanese signs into Chinese ones: not an easy thing, every time it offers several possibilities for the translation. It is really fascinating but I could never understand how it works.

Next day, my plane was due to leave at 2 pm, so I had some time for sightseeing in Rome. Hazu offered to accompany me, but in the end I decided to go by myself. I walked slowly around the Trinity church, Piazza del Poppolo and Di Trevi fountain, which is now so beautifully washed into a shining white colour. Hazu stressed that it is really very important to see the Colosseum, so I decided to go there even though it was already rather late. In the end I found out that I was not able to reach Hazu's office (and another limousine waiting to trans-

port me to the airport) in time. I started panicking, but finally (with the help of a taxi) I was only twenty minutes late, and I managed to get to the airport in time.

2. Fascinating Australia

For the first time in my life I travelled by a big Boeing. I think that it was 747. The flight to Sydney took nineteen hours, including a two hour break in Bangkok. So I had time enough (finally!) to read through an anthology of Australian SF and a guide which I got from Roelof and Lynne Ann (it is an exceptionally good, precise and witty guide from Lonely Planet). Both ways with Alitalia were very vivid, with noisy Italian people singing, standing talking in groups in the aisles, and collectively praying. My neighbour on the seat was Mrs Muirden, a retired teacher from Adelaide who breeds small cute dogs called Patrian Pugs - if you are interested in them, write to her address - she has a dozen of them at present.



Suddenly we noticed a red desert below the plane - Australia! Mrs Muirden let me sit by the window for a while and it was really a gorgeous impression: rocks, mountains, plains - all of them so deserted and vast, all the same reddish colour... a wonderful view.

After the short day (eight hours shorter than normally) it was dark and we were landing in Sydney. I was surprised by the very thorough and strict checking of all the luggage. It is absolutely forbidden to bring any sort of food into Australia, because they intend to protect themselves against various sorts of pests and diseases which hadn't yet reached their continent. I expected that the checking would be more casual - like in America - and I didn't declare one box of muesli which I brought for my breakfasts. The clerks looked really concerned with my muesli and posed a lot of questions - Do I know English? Have I declared that I am not bringing in any food? What else am I hiding in my luggage? Which drugs? - but in the end they let me go and keep my muesli.

The main organiser of Syncon, Gerald Smith, awaited me at the airport. He drove with me to the suburban house where he lives with his wife Womble and two cats. It was raining, the air was very humid and warm. At first glance the suburbs of Sydney reminded me of the suburbs of Los Angeles or another Californian city. Gerald and Womble seemed to me rather tired from the preparations for the convention. In their house I drank Australian wine for the first time, which is wonderful: aromatic, naturally sweet - perhaps the best wine I have ever tasted. During my visit I used every opportunity to drink this wonderful wine.

3. Friday - the First Day of the Convention

I woke at 2 a.m. and I was absolutely fresh. No wonder: my biological clock was telling me that it is afternoon now. So I read the programme book and prepared my contributions to the panels... but at 7 a.m., when Gerald and Womble got up, I was extremely sleepy and dull... so I drank several cups of coffee and went with my hosts to the Shore Motor Inn hotel to prepare the convention.

I tried to help a little with preparing the badges and then I went around to see what the place looks like. It was so beautiful: the restaurant with the glass walls, palms, shinningly blue swimming pool outside, a wonderful view to the sea coast, lots of flowers and exotic trees... and this humid, warm air bringing the smell of the ocean. It seemed to me like something al-

most unreal.

Before noon, more people came and I met Roger Weddall from Melbourne, an Australian fan who wrote me several letters before my visit and also commented on my personal fanzine with my trip report from America. Roger is an extremely friendly, helpful and entertaining person, and if I had been in a distress from the unknown environment and new people, he would certainly have helped me. But in fact, in Australia I never felt lonely or sad or in a bad mood, because everybody was so very friendly, warm and nice. People kept talking to me and asking questions such as: "Are people hungry in Czechoslovakia?" "No." "Do you have enough paper for publishing books and magazines?" "Yes, but publishing is expensive." "Will the Slovaks separate their country from the Czechs, and will you fight in a Yugoslavian way?" "Maybe they will separate, but we definitely will not fight. We Czechs are very peaceful, even apathetic people." "How do you feel about the downfall of the communist regimes?" "I am extremely happy. What a wonderful freedom! But some people can't cope with it. They are so used to be manipulated, to be told all the time what to do and what to think."

And so on.

Then we went out for lunch and I decided to try sandwiches with vegemite. The Australians looked doubtful about my ability to withstand this experience. I actually ate two sandwiches, but I decided that it was enough to try them just once. It's too salty and strong for my taste.

In the afternoon there was a very nice popular-science lecture, dealing mainly with the problem of cats falling from high buildings: when they fall from the seventh floor, they can kill themselves, but when they fall from higher floors, they survive it quite well! People were thrilled by this phenomenon and tried to find out what the cat thinks during the fall and how does it react.

The whole program of the convention was focused on art, so there were a lot of slide shows and a big art show of pictures by Michael Whelan and Nick Stathopoulos the Guests of Honour and by other local artists. I brought with me some works by Czechoslovak artists and some of them were quite successful especially Martin Zhouf who is the main co-worker of *Ikarie* magazine. I expect that every reader of this fanzine knows Michael Whelan, an American who does the covers of Anne McCaffrey's Dragon series, and many other books. Nick Stathopoulos is an Australian artist who made hundreds of book covers, some animated films, masquerade creations and many other fancy things. The dealer's room had many reproductions of Whelan's pictures available and also some ceramics by local artists. Both Michael and Nick were extremely busy during the convention: panels, talks, shows, and also guided tours around the art show, which I considered a very good idea.



▲ Nick Stathopoulos at one of the parties

My problem was that I was absolutely fresh at 2 or 3 a.m., so that I stayed at all the parties to their ends, which I can never manage when I am in Europe. On the contrary, the mornings were

awful! I couldn't get up though the Australian birds tried to wake me very energetically (they have very strange voices – like car horns or very loud cats). Before lunch I usually went jogging and it helped me a little, so from 1 p.m. I was able to listen to the programmes.

4. Saturday and the other days of Syncon

There were also two Australian writers present: Terry Dowling and Sean McMullen. A Book Launching Party was scheduled for one of the evenings, and I wondered what it would be like. There were some speeches, champagne, signing of books and photographs, and of course it was an opportunity for people to meet each other. I decided to imitate it later in Prague, because my first collection of stories was due to appear in May. And I really did it, with champagne and speeches and signings of my book, though it was not so serious, rather a sort of parody, because my editor Richard Podaný gave a gorgeously funny speech there! The other evening there was a cocktail party, which was very informal, with lots of funny quiz questions and good answers rewarded by candies.



▲► Some drawings from the masquerade.

There was also a masquerade and I had to act as one of the judges, which was not so easy because the theme was "my favourite book cover" and I didn't know the original covers. I admired how Nick Stathopoulos moderated the masquerade: he made ninety percent of the fun himself in a really professional way.

I also took part in a few panels, dealing with fanzines, with fandom in various countries and with vampires. Both fanzines and SF clubs used to be more serious and informative in our country than in the West because of the lack of information. What we had needed most of all was the information and the access to Western SF. But now this is going to be changed and I suppose that we shall produce fanzines and do conventions mainly for socialising and for fun. Sean McMullen sounded very competent about the vampires and their scientific background. I thought a little about them because I am translating *The Vampire Tapestry* by Suzy McKee Charnas, but I haven't read more books of the "vampire wave".

I saw also Justin Ackroyd's auction of fanzines, books and other stuff for the fan funds. He does it in a lively, humorous way, and it was very instructive to see it. Now I shall be an administrator of GUFF and so I should also organise some auctions.

During various conversations I found out that Australians are not very pleased if you tell them that they remind you of Americans. On the contrary, they seem to be very much pleased if you assure them that they are in some way very British. That sounds very flattering to them.

The last evening there was the awarding of prizes: the Ditmar is a fannish prize for the best book, story, artist and fannish writer; and the Hujo is a funny prize reminiscent of the American Hugo: it is a silver rocket made from white chocolate and tinfoil and its shape is curved. It is awarded for the best fannish gossip and other similar reasons.

On the Monday afternoon, there was a closing ceremony with more fun and throwing of candies – and then the con was over.



5. Sydney

I was very lucky as Sarah Murray, a Sydney fan who lives in the centre of the city, offered to let me to stay at her place. So I went with her and her friend Diana to the city. Finally I saw the famous Harbour Bridge! It was already dark and the bridge was beautifully lit by white and yellow lights. It is very huge and fascinating with a peculiar, constructivistic sort of beauty. And I saw, for a few seconds also, the Opera House, its beautiful white shells shining in the darkness.

Sarah is a very nice woman and she is interested in a lot of topics – philosophy, belly dance, feminism... Her flat is a lovely place, in one of the oldest houses of Sydney, facing the backyard with lots of exotic trees. I have never saw a bigger cat than Sarah's tomcat – it weights eight kilograms and behaves like a very distinguished and self-respecting person.

Diana came to Syncon from Canberra and she offered to take me along with her for one day, so that I shall also see the capital of Australia. We planned that from Canberra I should go to Melbourne, because most Australian SF editors and fans live in Melbourne and some of them didn't come to Syncon.

Sarah and Diana assured me that after a couple of days I shall be just overfed by the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House, but on the contrary, I liked Sydney's harbour more and more. The next day we went sightseeing with a group of fans with another lady from Perth, which is a city with a very active SF fandom, with Rex Thompson from New Zealand, who also won a fannish fund, FANZZ, and with another guy from Sydney. Usually I prefer to go sightseeing alone, because I am more free and it is so thrilling to discover things by myself, but I saw that it is much more fun in a group, and the local people can show you the places which you would otherwise pass and not notice at all.

Sydney is extremely beautiful. I am fond of the sea, and in Sydney the sea runs out into the land in lots of narrow bays, and the harbour is so spectacular. We went by ferry to the beaches of Manly, and it was just incredibly beautiful. Clean water, yellow sandy beaches, surfers on the waves. Sarah told me that the beaches are overcrowded, but they were almost empty. I was absolutely fascinated by the view from the ferry, but Sarah sat inside the boat and read a book. This beautiful view was already boring for her!

We ate in several oriental restaurants and I tried to use chopsticks. I almost got a spasm in my fingers but I quite improved my skill in a few days. I also started to understand why the travel reports of western people deal so much with eating places and experiences. It can be really thrilling! Each restaurant is so different, with new cuisines and meals, which are so delicious! After my return from Australia I had to diet for a few days, as I ate too much there.

Gerald and Womble gave a party on the Monday evening. People spoke about Syncon and its positive and negative aspects there was quite a lot of fun, but fewer participants than the organisers had expected.

I also found out that people from Sydney are very proud of their Victorian shopping malls. They are beautiful but quite familiar to me. If you want to see some architecture in the Art Nouveau style, come to Prague and look at its building from the end of the last century!

On the Tuesday evening, an Adelaide fan Ian joined our group and we went around the harbour pubs. We started in a barbecue restaurant where you were allowed to make your steak yourselves. It was so delicious! Then we went around the pubs and each of them was different: there was a rock singer in one of them, people singing themselves in another, and we played eight balls in the last one. Diana wrote the names of the pubs down for me: Philips Foot, The Orient Hotel, The Fortune of War Hotel, The Harbour View Hotel, The Mercantile Hotel. At midnight we considered a visit to King's Cross, an area of night entertain-

ment places. Rex Thompson couldn't decide whether to visit King's Cross or not, so all of us went there, but only for a very short time. The street was really very lively and some places looked wonderfully suspicious. At the end we went to a respectable café for a cake and tea.

6. Canberra

On Wednesday we drove with Diana to Canberra, which took four hours. We made a short stop in a motorest called Big Merino – a concrete sheep covering a two storey building. The sheep had yellow shining eyes and looked very American. It was quite cold in Canberra and also the dry air and the vegetation reminded me Europe: the kinds of broadleaved trees which lose their leaves during the winter turned now in April (equivalent of October in Europe) yellow and red, which was quite beautiful but very European. On the yellowish meadows there were horses, cows and sheep grazing – a peaceful and nice country.

My guide explained that the white colonisers thought that 'canberra' means 'meeting place' in an Aboriginal language. Diana likes the Australian Parliament a lot and so we spent about two hours visiting it. It is full of symbols of Australian nature, artwork, and the architecture is really inventive. I was impressed by it as it looks rather modest from outside (it is even partially covered by grass) but inside there is a lot of light and it is so spacey. There is a beautiful view from the top all around to the mountains and the city itself. There are no skyscrapers in Canberra and the whole city was planned in a model way. The buildings and streets are all hidden in the trees, so that you can see mainly the trees from upstairs.

We went to the halls of both Houses, and I especially liked that they have not only a gallery for journalists but also a gallery for children, insulated by glass, so that children can observe the Parliament in work and don't disturb it. I told Diana how much I liked the Parliament and she seemed quite pleased. Then she asked me what our Parliament is like – well, it is just horrible, you should see it! I never really wanted to go inside: it is a plain concrete building cramped besides the highway, so that our MPs are suffocating from the smog.

In the evening we went to a bookstore to meet local SF fans and Terry Pratchett who was doing a tour around Australia. I spoke with him a little about the possibilities of publishing his books in Czechoslovakia. Then we went with a group of fans to the centre of the city to have a dinner in a Lebanese restaurant. Canberra is such a model city that people don't even go to the pubs in the evening – at least it seemed so to me, as the main street and the restaurants were almost empty.

We spoke a little about publishing SF in Australia: they don't have any big publishing house focused on SF. The only one is Aphelion which used to publish SF magazine *Aurealis* editor Dirk Strasser and now publishes books. Australian writers use to publish their books in various American and British publishing houses, which is both advantageous and disadvantageous – they have a bigger market but it is more difficult to succeed there, and the American and English books completely overflow the Australian market. It is very different from countries with their own languages

7. Melbourne

After one day in Canberra I flew to Melbourne. At the airport I met Roger and Donna and we went to lunch with some famous SF editors and writers which Roger had invited: I met George Turner who is probably the best Australian SF writer of the older generation and is a very nice, clever man with a British dry humour. As far as I've read his stories (only two of them) I liked them very much, they are intelligent and I should say prognostic. Then

there was Damien Broderick, whose texts are very artistic and that makes them a bit difficult for me to understand –but I have already found some more understandable stories by him. He told us that at present he earns his living by writing books about archaeology. And last came Bruce Gillespie, an extremely nice and friendly person who gave me several kilograms of books and magazines. He produces two fanzines which look great but appear only once or twice a year: *Metaphysical Review* and *SF Commentary*.

Then we went through Melbourne and it reminded me a little of London (the pseudo-gothic churches, the architecture of some buildings). Roger thought that was not very flattering, because he remembered from my travel report that I didn't like London very much, but in fact I quite liked London and I just thought that it is too busy and noisy and overcrowded in the centre, while Melbourne is not at all like that. It is a very calm city, with a lot of green parks, palm trees and beautiful old-fashioned trams. The Melbournians told me that I must go by tram, but in fact I go by tram almost every day in Prague. Generally I found that Melbourne is much more European (or normally looking for me) than Sydney: it is not situated in such a fancy way around the harbour, and so I am rather a Sydney fan, though I think that Melbourne is quite a pleasant place to live.

Roger is unemployed at present which perhaps accounts for his ability to write long letters and to be in touch with such a lot of people. He lives with Geoff, a painter earning his money by selling copies of Australian historical art before the gallery. Geoff is a very nice, rather quiet person, who says that to live with Roger is something like being a wife of a president – such a lot of new people, parties, socialising activities...

Later in the afternoon we went to a printhouse where I got for free a pile of *Aurealis* magazines, and then we went to a secondhand book store where one of the Melbourne SF fans, Danny, works as an assistant. In the evening we went to hear Terry Pratchett give a lecture in a congregation hall. So I met Terry for the second time there. His lecture was almost completely incomprehensible to me: a few days before I was pleased that I had started to understand spoken English quite well, but Terry again discouraged me. But after the lecture, people told me that half of them hadn't understood it either, although they laughed from time to time – something like when the interpreter says into the headphone: "Untranslatable joke, laugh, please!"

We stayed in the hall after the lecture for a coffee, and I met Lucy Sussex, who is one of the best authors of the younger generation. She comes from New Zealand and seemed to me very British.

Next morning, Geoff went to sell his art and Roger still slept. I was quite hungry so I decided to find something to eat in their kitchen. I found a box of cereals, but there were not flakes inside: it was a sort of biscuit. So I decided to spread something on them. I searched for some marmalade and I was very pleased when I found out a jar of chutney – it was made from peaches and mango and it wasn't too sweet or spicy, just very tasteful. So I spread the chutney on the cereal biscuit. I couldn't find any plate so I ate it above a bowl – the biscuit disintegrated while I ate it. And at this moment Roger came to the kitchen and he couldn't stop laughing: this funny person eats cereals with chutney, and moreover in such a funny way, bending over the bowl like a prisoner!

Then Geoff returned from his work and we started to make plans for the day. They asked me what I would like to see in Melbourne, and I kept repeating childishly: "I MUST see a live koala and platypus and echidna and kangaroos..."

So we decided to go to Healesville Sanctuary, which was an absolutely optimal choice. It is about one hour drive from Melbourne, situated in a typical Australian landscape, so that you can see the animals in their natural environments. You can go inside to the kangaroo

pens and into the aviaries with parrots or flying foxes. I could stroke a small wallaby which was so very cute!

Koalas are usually very passive animals but I was lucky – one koala was performing quite a lot. She ran on the ground, then crawled on a tree and fed herself. Very cute!

Most of all I was fascinated by platypus – when I saw it in some films or books I had never realised how very strange this animal actually is.

Everywhere there were a lot of black and white ibises who waited for people to start eating then asked them for food rather aggressively. So we found a remote, ibis-free place for picnicking. As soon as we started to eat our chicken, a wasp approached us. It seemed very normal to me but my Australian friends seemed to be appalled: “A EUROPEAN WASP!” said Roger and looked at me accusingly. They explained that the wasp is a newcomer to Australia and is still not very common there. We placed a tiny piece of meat on the distant end of the table and the wasp fed itself and stopped endangering us.

Back in Melbourne we went straight into a café where there are regular Thursday meetings of SF fans. It is located in a big shopping mall, the waitresses seem to know everybody, people come and leave, sip some juice or coffee and talk. It is similar to the SF meetings in pubs in England, but the Melbourne meeting is scheduled for an earlier hour (6 or 7 p.m.) and going there doesn't mean spending the whole evening in the pub.

In this café I finally met Roman Orszanski, who wasn't present at Syncon as he took part in some important environmentalist meeting. He is a nice person, speaking about things rather in jokes than in a 'seriously constructive' way, which is good, and he looks like a typical nature protectionist you know these people in torn jeans and green anoraks.

Then we went to a Thai restaurant for a banquet. There were many interesting people, Lucy Sussex, Bruce Gillespie and also Rosaleen Love. I hadn't known her stories before, but she gave me a collection of them. (All the writers were so very kind and gave me their books, which I absolutely hadn't expected.)

At midnight we went to Bruce's and his wife Elaine's house. They have got seven cats, ten or fifteen thousand books (not only SF but also philosophy, theory of literature and others), computers which they use in their publishing... a real paradise of every publisher or writer!

8. Anzac day

Next day at noon I had to fly back from Melbourne to Sydney. I planned to visit the Melbourne gallery in the morning and Geoff drove with me there. But we found out that the gallery is closed for Anzac day morning! Everywhere in the streets there were people dressed up in their uniforms or costumes, wearing medals, in a solemn mood. Soldiers, guards and scouts exercised themselves. I observed the airplanes, historical cars, the premier of the State of Victoria walking with the generals along the main street... everybody looked to enjoy it so sincerely: it was quite uncommon to me as nobody had enjoyed such parades under the communists in our country, and at present we don't have anything like that.

I walked for one or two hours around the city centre: the shops were closed, the air was cold and fresh, everybody seemed to watch the parade. The city was clean and quiet, without any traffic but the nice old trams going along the streets.

And then it was time to go to the airport and to fly back to Sydney.

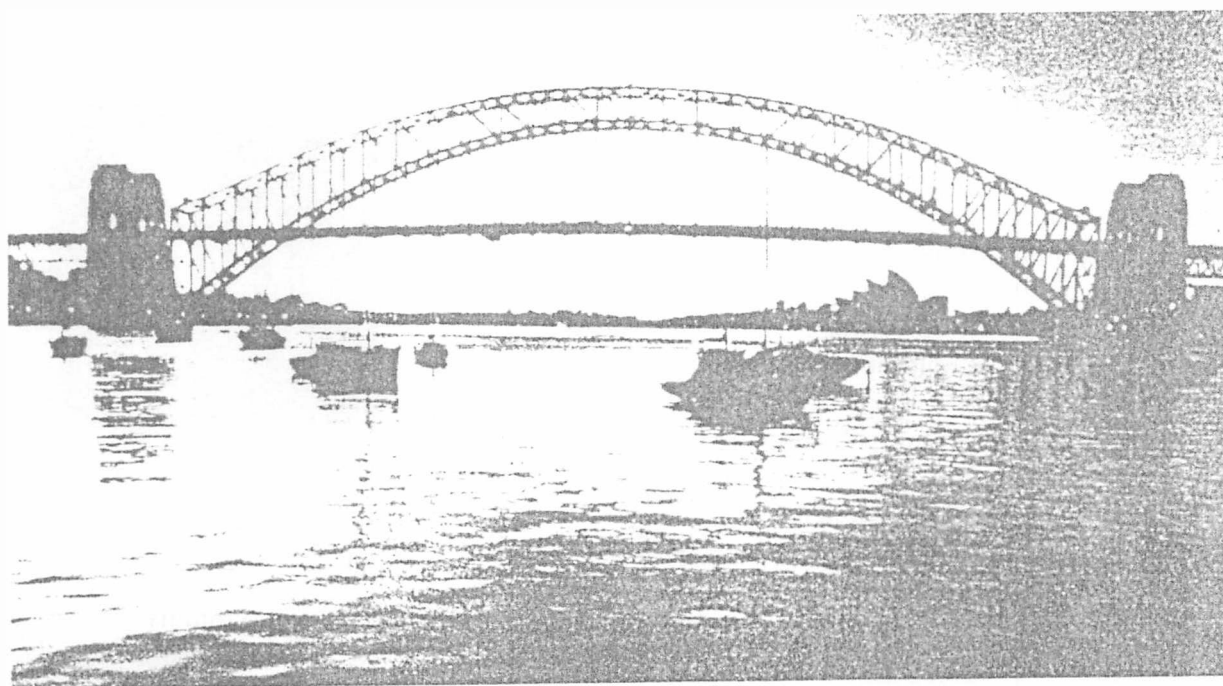
It was much warmer in Sydney; the streets were crowded by exhilarated people who drank beer in front of the pubs. I told Sarah (who was waiting for me at the airport and went with me to the city) that it is amazing how people do identify themselves with this feast, and she told me that they just use every opportunity for drinking beer.

We went to Paddington Market and enjoyed all these beautiful things, hats, small pieces of artwork etc. Then we went for a supper and were discussing feminist issues, like whether women can save this planet and how they could create an alternative society...

The last day in Sydney we spent with Sarah and Ian going around the galleries (I was especially interested in seeing of some Aboriginal artefacts). In the evening we went for the last time through the harbour and I nostalgically enjoyed the fabulous view for the last time. How much I wished to return here once more!

In the evening we went to the airport – and I was told by Alitalia clerks that I can't fly because I haven't confirmed the reservation of my ticket! It was quite a bad shock for me, but after I made a hysterical scene I managed to be accepted and fly. I really don't know if this duty to confirm the reservation is worldwide – I have never heard of it before!! Of course at Rome airport I immediately rushed to the Alitalia office and confirmed my reservation for the next morning to Prague!

This Australian trip was very pleasant for me – and it is difficult to say why. There are actually many reasons why it was so agreeable: lot of fun, nice, incredibly friendly people, understandable English (at least sometimes...), enough money from the fannish fund, wonderful weather, fabulous sights, delicious food... but I think that I shall remember all these helpful, entertaining, charming SF fans most of all. And I hope that they will come to Europe soon!



Paul Kincaid

Photo: Maureen Kincaid Speller



In the last issue of *GUFFaw* I published the first chapter of my trip report. Now we boldly advance to Chapter Two, which covers our first two days in Australia ...

◀ Kangaroo Kincaid

The Coriolis Effect**2: Kangaroo Kincaid**

John Foyster is big and shaggy and dishevelled and in constant motion. He barely has time to say 'Hello. Welcome to Australia.' before he's off, marching determinedly across the arrivals lounge with a bemused Dave Langford trailing in his wake. We turn to examine Damien Warman and Juliette Woods, and I suspect one of us is on the point of saying something to the other when John hoves into sight once more. 'No luck!' he proclaims, then mutters something abusive but otherwise incomprehensible about the Australian telephone system. Dave puffs up behind him and manages to explain that he wanted to phone Hazel to let her know he'd arrived safely and so he was looking for a phone that took credit cards. 'Ah ha!' John declares at this point – honestly, if you were going to feature him in a film he would have to be played by someone larger than life like Robert Newton – and heads off boldly in another direction. Dave winces slightly and follows more slowly.

We consider Damien and Juliette once more. 'Hello,' one of us says to the other. 'Hello,' the other says back. They seem somehow insubstantial in comparison, but I suppose it's a relief to know that not every Australian is like John. Damien has the look of a startled rabbit about him, but that's only to be expected. In the run-up to this trip he came up with the wonderful idea of holding a Relaxacon in Adelaide for the foreign visitors to the Worldcon. Then he found he had to organise the thing. Now he is contemplating the actual, honest-to-god Brits he's supposed to entertain. It must be a shock to the system.

John returns. Still no luck. When he finally catches up, Dave shrugs. 'Oh well...'

All of a sudden we realise we're standing around an airport with mountains of baggage spilling around our feet, and it's time to move on. Smoothly, we split into two groups. Da-



Photo: Paul Kincaid

▲ Juliette and Damien, as the convention begins to take its toll.

mien and Juliette will be taking Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer to their hotel, while John escorts Dave and Maureen and I home. We lumber our bags outside and find a taxi. We were spoiled by our visit to America, clearly not all foreign cars are that big. One thing is obvious, our excess of luggage is not going to fit into this minuscule saloon, not and allow room for the four of us plus the driver. The driver is unfazed, he produces as if by magic a tangled web of bungee straps, crams the bags into the boot with supreme insouciance, then swiftly weaves the straps so that somehow they manage to hold the bags in place and keep the lid of the boot almost closed. As Dave and Maureen and I squeeze into the back seat I wonder if he has more bungee straps to keep us in place.

John climbs into the front and proceeds to give detailed directions. Thereupon the driver gets out the Adelaide equivalent of the A-Z. It turns out that this is standard operating procedure for every Australian taxi driver we are to encounter, but right now it is a little disturbing. At length he starts the engine, and as he drives away John leans back, spreads an arm expansively across the back of the seat, and proceeds to regale us with his patented tourist spiel. I think I learn more about what is wrong with Australia, how Adelaide is falling to bits in comparison to the rest of South Australia, how South Australia is falling to bits in comparison to the rest of Australia, in the half-hour or so of that taxi journey than in all of what remains of my GUFF trip. Meanwhile, through slightly bleary eyes, I stare out of the window and try to get some impression of this place I've come to. Not so many minutes ago we had been in a plane turning around the city, peering down on a grid of streets that seemed to have been tucked into every nook and cranny between a ring of brown hills. It looks like America, had been our first thought. Now, on the ground, it's not so clear cut. There are features that look almost like America, but not quite; features that look almost like Europe, but not quite. It's this 'not quite' that is disconcerting. I'm tired, I'm not taking it all in. What was John saying about the concrete telephone posts with the iron frames? Something to do with the way drivers kept smashing into them? And there – an airily imprecise wave of the arm – was the synagogue they found for Janice Gelb while she was staying with them. Looks more like a rather dubious bar to me, or am I looking in the wrong direction?

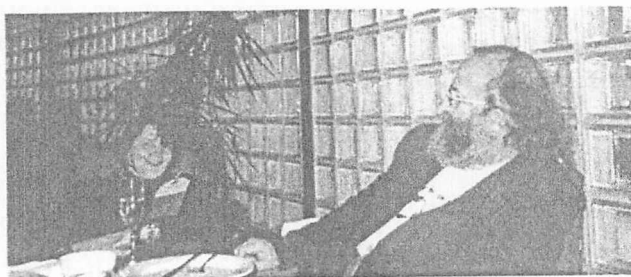
At last we are turning into a side street, then another, then we're pulling up beside a tangled, unkempt hedge that bears a curious resemblance to John's beard. And there is Yvonne, with an incredibly big, wide grin. And the bungee straps have miraculously worked. And our bags are now somehow on the pavement. And we're manoeuvring them across the uneven stepping stones that are placed in the unfeasibly red earth. And we're inside. And the journey is over.

Now every private house in Australia is long and narrow and all on one floor (except for Perry Middlemiss's, which is longer and narrow and not all on one floor, but that comes later) but that doesn't necessarily mean they have a straightforward floor plan. Not a bit of it. I suspect the architect of Yvonne and John's house got his plans twisted at some point, because the place seems to fold in ways that don't quite make sense. Two seconds after entering I think I am lost. Let's see, the corridor goes straight for a pace or two with the lounge on the left, then it turns sharp right and runs into a dead end except that's where our rooms are – Yvonne has pinned labels on the doors, 'Auld Lang Fund' on one, 'GUFF and TAFF' on the other – only before you actually gets to the dead end it shoots off at another right angle, and down there's the bathroom and the kitchen, and through the kitchen you come back to the lounge, but somehow there's another couple of rooms tucked away in there. Well, there'll be time to get it all sorted out later, I confidently predict, and we trundle our bags into 'GUFF and TAFF' and contemplate unpacking. We decide against it. Instead we make our way – more by luck than good judgement – to the kitchen, where Dave hands over the fruits of his

smuggling operation, and Yvonne prepares tea. Endless cups of tea, which at last have the effect of restoring some semblance of humanity.

At which point I decide it's time to fall over. Maureen has her own theories about jet-lag which basically consist of ignoring it. It's all in the mind, she'll declare; behave as if your body's always existed in this time zone, and the jet-lag just won't happen. I can see the intellectual attraction of this stance, but I have yet to convince the rest of me. I put down a half-finished cup of tea and announce that I can't stay awake any longer. Somehow I do, but only long enough to get back to the room.

Photo: Paul Kincaid



▲ Yvonne and John

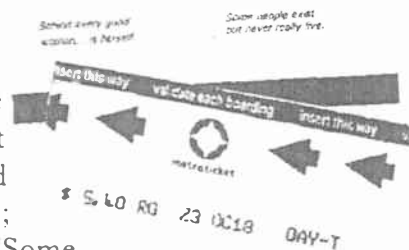
A moment later, Maureen wakes me. Do I want to come out for lunch?

By brute force I manage to open my eyes while I try to make sense of this question. I have been asleep, it appears, for a couple of hours – but it's still only morning. Damned tricky things, these time zones. Now someone has suggested going out for lunch. Intellectually, this seems like a good idea, so I nod. I still haven't quite managed to get my eyes open, but I'm sure that will come in due course.

I have a shower, or rather, I attempt a shower. I am blasted fully awake by a jet of ice-cold water before I work out how to get warm water (turn the controls, stupid!), but at least it has served its purpose. At some point I remember to check the water going down the plug-hole, but I don't honestly notice any difference. I'm awake now, at least, and changing into clean clothes after all that time on the plane makes me feel better. I join Maureen, Yvonne and John in the kitchen where I discover that by staying awake Maureen has managed to get completely up to date with every imaginable scrap of Australian gossip, and since no-one is about to repeat it all just for me, I'll just have to try to pick it up as we go along. Dave, meanwhile, has decided that he too must sleep (he did, after all, spend the flight reading Peter Hamilton's *The Naked God*, not the most lightweight choice for a journey) so it's just the four of us who set out.

There's a line on the most recent album by New Zealand group The Mutton Birds: 'The trees are all tangled up, and they're the wrong shade of green'. Now, as we stand at the bus stop and look out across the parkland that weaves away towards the city, we realise that the trees really are the wrong shade of green. And the magpies are still black and white, but the proportions of black to white are all wrong. Their size isn't quite the same, either. It is this, far more than water going the wrong way down the plug, that really brings it home that we're on the other side of the world.

Yvonne solemnly hands us our bus tickets. These come in handy little paper wallets and have curious slogans or quotations printed on the back, like a sort of travelling fortune cookie. Mine tells me: 'Speech is the gift of all, but the thought of few', 'Those who talk much, say nothing' and 'Responsibility walks hand in hand with capacity and power'; Maureen gets: 'Behind every good woman ... is herself' and 'Some people exist but never really live'. We wonder what the Adelaide public transport system is trying to tell us. The bus route seems to skirt the edge of Adelaide, so we don't actually get to see the city, but we become yet more aware of differences. The propensity for



brush fences, for instance, which look impressive and rural until you notice how many of them are sagging, revealing the concrete behind. At the same time, the fact that everything is on the one level, including shops and manufactories, gives the streets a vaguely American air, as if we are caught midway between two cultures.

At our stop I wake Maureen, who has fallen asleep on my shoulder. We are in the heart of what was once, probably, a little township in its own right before it was swallowed by the city: a busy main road with a mixture of domestic and commercial streets leading off it. John, typically, ignores the traffic and walks straight across the road. We realise he has spotted a little rack of books outside one of the shops and is even now examining them while Maureen and I, a bit more nervous, dither interminably on the wrong side of the road. When we finally make it across, John has dismissed the books and we start down one of the side streets. A zig-zag route brings us to a bijou little shopping mall full of clothing boutiques, up-market food shops and a café that advertises 'doorstops'. These turn out to be open sandwiches in which a variety of fillings are piled upon slices of bread at least one inch thick. Is this a typical introduction to Australian culture – or even an introduction to typical Australian culture? Who knows, but it certainly sets us up for the next item on the agenda: the inevitable second-hand bookshop.

This, we are told, one of John and Yvonne's favourite places, and I can understand why. It is a long room with shelves running floor to ceiling down either side, and a clutter of free-standing shelves and tables along the middle of the room all piled with books. The visit goes as all such visits invariably do, lots of exclamations and 'You must read this' and 'Christ, is this a Thomas McMahon novel we've never heard of? Oh, damn, no, it's just a retitling of his first book' and 'Hey, look what they've got' and 'What have you found?' and 'You're not getting all those, are you?' and 'How exactly are we supposed to get this lot home?' and we probably miss loads of bargains, but that's the way of things and the bulging bag with which we emerge from the shop is eminently satisfactory. Then it's back on the bus, and Maureen falls asleep again, and back at John and Yvonne's we give in to the inevitable and snooze away the afternoon.

That evening we get into the centre of Adelaide, though it's hard to get our bearings after dark and the thing we really notice is how empty the city feels. John forges ahead as usual. Dave and Maureen and I struggle to keep up and trust that either John or Yvonne or both of them actually knows where we're going. This turns out to be slightly over-confident, they have a rough idea where the restaurant is, but no more. And since we seem to be passing roughly half the world's entire collection of restaurants, some of which appear to be offering cuisines I've never even heard of, it's not surprising that it's hard to remember the precise location of just one of them. I'm starting to get hungry, and having slept so much I'm a little fuzzy about exactly what is supposed to be happening, so I'm gazing in at warmly lit windows and tempting menus and wondering why we can't just stop here, or here, or here, when Yvonne says, 'There it is,' as if she's known all along. We pass under a sign proclaiming 'Volga', up some stairs, and into a large dark room that seems at first to be entirely deserted. Then, clustering forlornly at one end of a long table in the middle of the room, we spot Mark, Claire, and Eileen Costello, who would appear to be staying in the same guest house as them. The waiters greet John like a long-lost friend and we settle down to the serious business of drooling over the menu. Damien and Juliette turn up fashionably late, and to judge from the comments and Damien's sheepish grin I gather that his time-keeping is legendary. A little later still, former GUFF winner Roman Orszanski arrives; small, sharp-featured with a manic grin that rarely seems to fade, I keep feeling that I should know him, but rack my memory as I might I can't recall ever running into him on his GUFF trip.

Photo: Yvonne Rousseau



▲ Sampling the Volga delicacies. John Foyster, Dave Langford, PK, Maureen Kincaid Speller

The Volga is a Russian restaurant, which is a first for me, and I wouldn't attempt to name, spell or pronounce any of the dishes we sampled that night. I remember spicy kebab-thingies, and lovely pastry whatsits, and a delicious pancake dessert, oh and rather a lot of excellent Australian wine and such good conversation. I laugh a lot and drink a silent toast of welcome to Australia, and at some point we start talking about tomorrow's visit to the botanical gardens. 'It's easy to find your way around Adelaide,' Damien explains without the trace of a smile.

'Everything's in a big square bounded by four streets: North Terrace, East Terrace, South Terrace ... and King William Street.' By this time of the evening, even this peculiarity of Adelaide's geography is hilarious.

Maureen falls asleep on the bus back home.

I again fail to spot the water going the wrong way down the plughole, but at least this time I get the temperature of my shower right.

In the kitchen, John is splendidly accoutred in an apron and wielding a particularly vicious-looking frying pan. 'I can do you an egg with crisp white flecked with black bits and a raw yolk.' 'Can I have a leathery yolk with uncooked white,' I specify. John obliges. I master the kettle and the toaster, and there is an orange fresh from the tree in their garden. This is supposed to be winter, I have to remind myself, looking out at the cloudless blue sky. Hmm, I suppose I could force myself to get used to this life, if I had to.

John has to stay home today, but Yvonne comes with us to the botanical gardens. This time we travel by the O-bahn, an odd hybrid which uses the streets just like any other bus in the city centre, but out here travels at high speed along narrow concrete strips like rails. The city centre is a very different experience from last night, brighter, brasher, busier. There is excitement when we encounter the light-controlled pedestrian crossings for the first time. With the light on red there is a slow, patient, 'bop ... bop ... bop ...', but as the light changes it becomes frenetic: 'Weeeahhh,' it cries, then, 'dakadakadaka', like Noel Collyer imitating a warplane on a straffing run. But you are barely half way across the carriageway when the spitfire climbs away into the sun and you get that worrying 'bop ... bop ... bop ...' Adelaide's pedestrian crossings, it seems, are not designed for pedestrians.

The approach to the gardens along North Terrace takes us past a succession of impressive stately buildings, the Royal Society of Arts, Library, Museum, Art Gallery, University – 'Damien's stamping ground,' Yvonne informs us – and hospital. Just as we arrive at the black, wrought iron gates of the gardens we see Claire, Eileen and Mark coming from across the road. Damien is supposed to meet us here. We mill around telling each other all the things that have happened since we saw each other last night. That doesn't take long. We admire the hotel across the road, one of those archetypally Australian buildings with a roofed terrace running around the first floor, decorated with elaborately curved iron railings and posts. Still no sign of Damien. Yvonne takes our photograph, then, for good measure, takes it again. The entrance to the botanical gardens is at the point where North Terrace turns into Botanic Road, with East Terrace directly opposite. We take turns gazing off in each of the

three possible directions in the hope that we might thus conjure Damien into existence. Still no sign. At length, Dave waves his hands in the air and lo a pad of post-it notes appears from nowhere. 'Damien,' he writes, 'driven mad by boredom from waiting we have wandered away into the gardens. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to seek us out one by one.' Somehow we manage to get the post-it note to stick to the plaque that gives the garden opening times, then we enter. For a short distance the path leads straight between lush, high,



Photo: Yvonne Roussseau

▲ Waiting for Damien. Mark Plummer, PK, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Claire Brialey, Eileen Costello, Dave Langford.

sub-tropical trees, then it reaches a little circle where three roads come together. At this point Damien puffs up one of the other roads. We wonder, briefly, who is going to find Dave's note, and Damien hares off towards the main gate to retrieve his Dave Langford original.

This is winter. Remember that as we sling jackets over shoulders and wander among lush sub-tropical plants, though perhaps the planting is somewhat sparser than it might otherwise be. It's still pretty impressive – and then we come to the conservatory. This proudly claims to be the 'largest and most spectacular glasshouse in the southern hemisphere', which seems to undersell it rather. From the outside it is an immense glass fan, but like the tardis it is bigger on the inside with a raised boardwalk swooping in elegant curves through steamy air and deep green leaves the size of houses. The place is still quite new, but already vines as thick as my wrist have curled themselves inextricably around the supports of the boardwalk. There is a constant noise of squawks and chirps and mysterious rustlings, though only rarely do you catch a glimpse of one of the birds living here, usually as it flutters high into the spine of the fan. There's a tropical pool, and vividly coloured flowers, and a sense of being closed in by the foliage even when up on the boardwalk and above most of it. We keep disappearing along the different walkways then coming together unexpectedly, like explorers happening upon each other in limitless jungles – 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?' – and we spend a lot longer in there than I think any of us expected. The next part of the garden reminds us that it really is winter, beds of turned earth and plants cut hard back to their woody spines, but suddenly there is a harsh cry and something brightly-coloured flickers above my head. It takes me a moment to realise it was a parrot. It takes me another moment to realise that I'm seeing a parrot in the wild. It takes yet another moment for it to sink in that this is really very strange. Then I look up and see that the trees are full of vividly coloured green and yellow birds all squawking away happily to themselves. We're not in Kansas any more, Toto.

Yvonne suggests that we have lunch just along the street at the Art Gallery. Claire, who has clearly spent far too long at the Department of the Environment, has obviously decided that the hole in the ozone layer has settled directly overhead as a deliberate and malicious attack upon her personally. She clings to every scrap of shade, like a soldier scurrying from shelter to shelter under enemy fire, and looks askance when I insist on walking out in the open and enjoying the light and warmth. I think she is secretly disappointed when I do not suffer any immediate and obvious sign of heaven's displeasure. The gallery is light and airy and I think we're all a little sorry that we don't have time to explore it, but head down into its

Photo: Paul Kincaid



Photo: Paul Kincaid



Photo: Paul Kincaid



Photo: Maureen Kincaid Speller



Photo: Paul Kincaid



▲ The deep-pile carpet, with Maureen, Dave, Mark & Claire, and PK.

she is even more reluctant than Dave. 'Kangaroos can kick,' she protests, though the ones stretched out on the grass seem too indolent to even blink. Her approach is remarkable for its

bowels to discover the café. This turns out to be a sterile little domain of glass and metal with a would-be impressive menu, though my sugar steamed chicken with herbs and mango turns out to consist mostly of carrot.

We scour the gallery's shop for a while, then it's into a taxi. Cleland Wildlife Park is in the hills to the south-east of Adelaide, on the slopes of Mount Lofty. This is to be our introduction to the delights of Australia's native wildlife, and it couldn't have been better chosen. The park is dedicated to allowing the visitor to touch and feed the animals – Dave buys a large bag of kangaroo food at the entrance. Just inside the entrance is a pen labelled 'wombats', but there are none to be seen so the first thing we do is queue up to take each other's photographs stroking a koala – 'it's like stroking a deep pile carpet,' Claire says, which is about the best description I know – which stoically chews on its eucalyptus leaves and turns its head away from the camera. After that, we seem to miss the goannas and the dingoes, but as we arrive at the lake a black swan finds us. 'Thus I refute Aristotle!' I proclaim as I take a photograph of it examining Dave's shoes, then I have to spend ages explaining that when I studied philosophy the classic example of an Aristotelian syllogism always began: 'all swans are white'. The 18th century discovery of Australia and its weird animals certainly threw a spanner into the workings of traditional philosophy.

Then we meet the kangaroos. Since Dave is the one with the kangaroo food, he is the first one dispatched to make friends. He doesn't seem too pleased at the prospect, holding a small palmful of kangaroo food as far away from the rest of him as it is possible to get, he edges warily across the grass. The big grey kangaroo sunning itself watches the approach without any great show of interest. When Dave gets close enough it deigns to lift its muzzle to Dave's palm, without otherwise bestirring itself. Dave seems quite relieved to retreat. Maureen is sent next, though if anything



Photo: Paul Kincaid

▲ Thus I refute Aristotle.

circuitousness and its hesitation, though she does eventually get to where she can just about reach out her arm to an outstretched kangaroo, which slowly turns to look at her, look at the food in her hand, then goes back to its sunbathing. It's my turn next. I walk straight up to the kangaroo so it can watch me all the way, which seems like the most sensible option to me. The kangaroo half rises so it can nibble at the food in my hand, its soft lips brushing against my palm is a wonderful sensation. But it doesn't eat much. One particularly large grey heaves itself to its feet and hops slowly away to avoid being fed any more. It's already late afternoon, the shadows are long across the field, and we reckon a day's worth of visitors have already fed them more than enough and they can't face another morsel.

Our rather haphazard route now takes us back to visit a small aviary of exotic (and often invisible) birds, peer through a fence at emus, and spot some other kangaroos, then someone says there are Tasmanian devils in a small pen on a low rise. By now my bad knee is getting tired and I can't move so readily over uneven ground, and by the time I lean over the stone wall there's nothing to be seen. Everyone else, of course, swears they've seen one. We're starting to get tired by now, but on a whim decide to follow one last trail. This turns out to lead into one of the less visited corners of the park, because all of a sudden we are mugged by Kangaroo Island kangaroos. I seem to be the focus of their attention, one terminally cute little creature hooking both its paws over my hand to pull it down to a level where it can more comfortably dine on



Photo: Yvonne Roussseau

▲ Making friends.



Photo: Paul Kincaid

▲ Common or hairy-nosed? Mark meets a wombat.

what I hold. When it has finished what I have to offer, I grab another handful and it does the same trick over again. Mark takes to calling me 'Kangaroo Kincaid'.

Back at the entrance, the wombats have emerged. I have a picture of Mark not quite daring to push his fingers through the wire where one of the little tanks on legs is nuzzling. Somehow, 'Wombat Plummer' doesn't seem to have the same ring to it; besides, I have it on good authority that wombats are no longer deemed funny animals.

Yvonne calls for a ten-seater taxi, and we disport ourselves gracelessly over a mound of stones in the woodland just outside the entrance to the park. It is still light, but the afternoon is wearing on and it is starting to get chilly. After a while a similarly large group of German tourists appears, and from their conversation we realise they are also waiting for a ten-seater taxi. It seems a long time before the taxi does appear, chugging slowly up the steep mountain roads. We climb aboard and set off for a spectacular late after-

noon drive along narrow roads through dark mountain forests. Talking to the driver, we discover there is only this one ten-seater taxi, so it seems the Germans we left behind are going to have a very long wait indeed.



Our final destination for the day is Warrawong Sanctuary, which occupies another exposed mountain slope in what are euphemistically called the Adelaide Hills. This is one of a number of sanctuaries operated by an outfit called the Earth Sanctuaries Project which has a way of financing their work that instinctively feels wrong – as if it were a commercial venture, including stock market flotation – but which nevertheless seems to be working. They are devoted to preserving native Australian wildlife, and use methods that have been controversial, including a complex of fencing that completely encloses the project not to keep any animals in but to keep non-native species out. They have pursued this policy so vigorously that one of the proud displays on the wall of their visitors centre is an animal skin which turns out to be a domestic cat shot by the founder when it tried to get into Warrawong. Such activities, coupled with doubts about their funding methods, left me with doubts about the whole Earth Sanctuaries venture which resurfaced some time after our return from Australia when we saw a television documentary about them. Yet at the time, there on the ground, when you see all they are trying to do and, more to the point, all they are achieving, it is easy to be won over to the positive side of what they are doing. Certainly, having been there, I recognise that I am far more pro the Project than I might have been had I only heard about it.

For now, we are here for a sunset tour followed by dinner, so we have a little while to wait until the sun actually goes down. Time to contemplate the skin of the cat, wander round the wood-panelled restaurant-cum-visitors centre [I assume that this highly polished yellowish wood that forms the floor and walls is a native, but it looks like pine to me], and enjoy the menu. If the actual food is only half as good as the thoughts this menu inspires, dinner is going to be delicious. As shadows gather into the short Australian dusk we drift out onto the deck. The restaurant is built at the highest point of the sanctuary, and from the deck there are stupendous views across woodlands to the misty lines of hills beyond. Here I start to realise I have made a great mistake. It is already cold and going to get colder, and the light jacket I'm wearing is doing nothing to keep me warm. Somewhere back in Adelaide there is a jumper that would have been nothing but an inconvenience during the day, but right now I need it. All right, I know, we came out from the British summer into the Australian winter, so what did we expect? But this is the most May-like winter I've ever known, and anyway our luggage was already so overstuffed that I didn't have room for anything heavier. None of which alters the fact that I am cold. No, let me get this right. I am freezing, I can feel every last bit of warmth being leached out of me. I pull my jacket as close around me as it will go, I thrust my hands deep into my pockets, I hunch my shoulders, and it makes not one scrap of difference.

At least the tour distracts me from how Arctic it has become. We begin just below the deck in the last remaining shreds of light as our guide feeds the kangaroos. I see Mark and Claire looking at me strangely at this point, but I stoutly resist the temptation to go and help the guide, stroke the kangaroos, and find out how easy it would be to slip one into the pocket of my jacket. On second thoughts, a kangaroo stuffed under my shirt might help keep me warm. But no, I don't give in, and moments later we are heading down to the lake. By now the last of the light has fled the day, and as we stand around the water in pitch black we wonder how much colder it could possibly get. We're here quite some time as the guide plays his powerful flashlight across the dark and secretive waters, all the while insisting there is a platy-

pus in there somewhere and we'll probably see it. Eventually, a dark square shape moves across the dark water, and he insists that is it. Claire suggests that we should get Dave to leave a note for it: 'Driven mad by cold we have wandered away into the grounds. Your mission, should you choose to accept it...' And we do wander away into the grounds, where the rest of the tour is much more successful. The onset of dark is when most of Australia's small and improbably named creatures emerge, and as we roam up slope and down, in and out of the woodland, the guide's darting light will suddenly arrest whole secretive clusters of possum and potoroo, bandicoot and bettong and bilbee. Each group seems larger than the last, and as the light hits them they freeze for a moment then realise it is only another bunch of tourists and go on with what they are doing. They are astonishing creatures, like kangaroos that have been abruptly shrunk to the size of rats or rabbits or squirrels. At last our convoluted route debouches us back at the restaurant, and we hurry inside to defrost and have dinner.

There's a big open fire, and a long table where a bunch of other Adelaide fans whose names I never do catch have appeared, and the food is every bit as good as the menu promised, and the wine is even better, and the evening draws to its lingering end in a wonderfully convivial glow. My own choice of main course is something fairly conventional like lamb, but Maureen has been daring and has chosen kangaroo. I have a chance to try some and it is delicious, a rich and gamey meat rather like venison. I ponder for a moment the ethics of eating the animals I'd so enjoyed meeting and feeding during the course of the day. Then I have another bite.

Later, much later, we pile into a taxi which negotiates the dark precipitous roads back down to the city, while Maureen lays her head on my shoulder and falls asleep.

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GUFFaw

Back issues of the GUFF newsletter are available for a small contribution plus postage.

GUFFaw

A showcase for the three candidates in the last Europe to Australia race. Contains articles by Steve Davies, Julian Headlong and Paul Kincaid.

GUFFaw 2

Published for my GUFF trip and distributed at Aussiecon 3. Includes a cover by Ian Gunn and articles by Dave Langford, Chris Priest, Karen Pender-Gunn, Judith Hanna plus the final part of Eve Harvey's trip report.

GUFFaw 3

Published November 1999. Contains a chapter of Irwin Hirsh's on-going trip report, Bruce Gillespie's Fan GoH speech from Aussiecon, and the first chapter of my own trip report.

Suggested donation: £1/A\$2.50/US\$2 (including postage) for one issue, £2.50/A\$6/US\$4 (including postage) for all three.

Trip Reports

Two completed trip reports are currently available, I hope others will become available later.

A Brighton Belle Meets Skippy by Eve Harvey (1985 GUFF delegate)

£3 + 52p first class postage (40p second class)

A\$7.50 + A\$3 surface postage (A\$6 airmail)

US\$5 + US\$2 surface postage (US\$3.50 airmail)

Oh To Be In England, In The Summertime, With My Loves by Ian Gunn & Karen Pender-Gunn (1995 GUFF delegates)

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