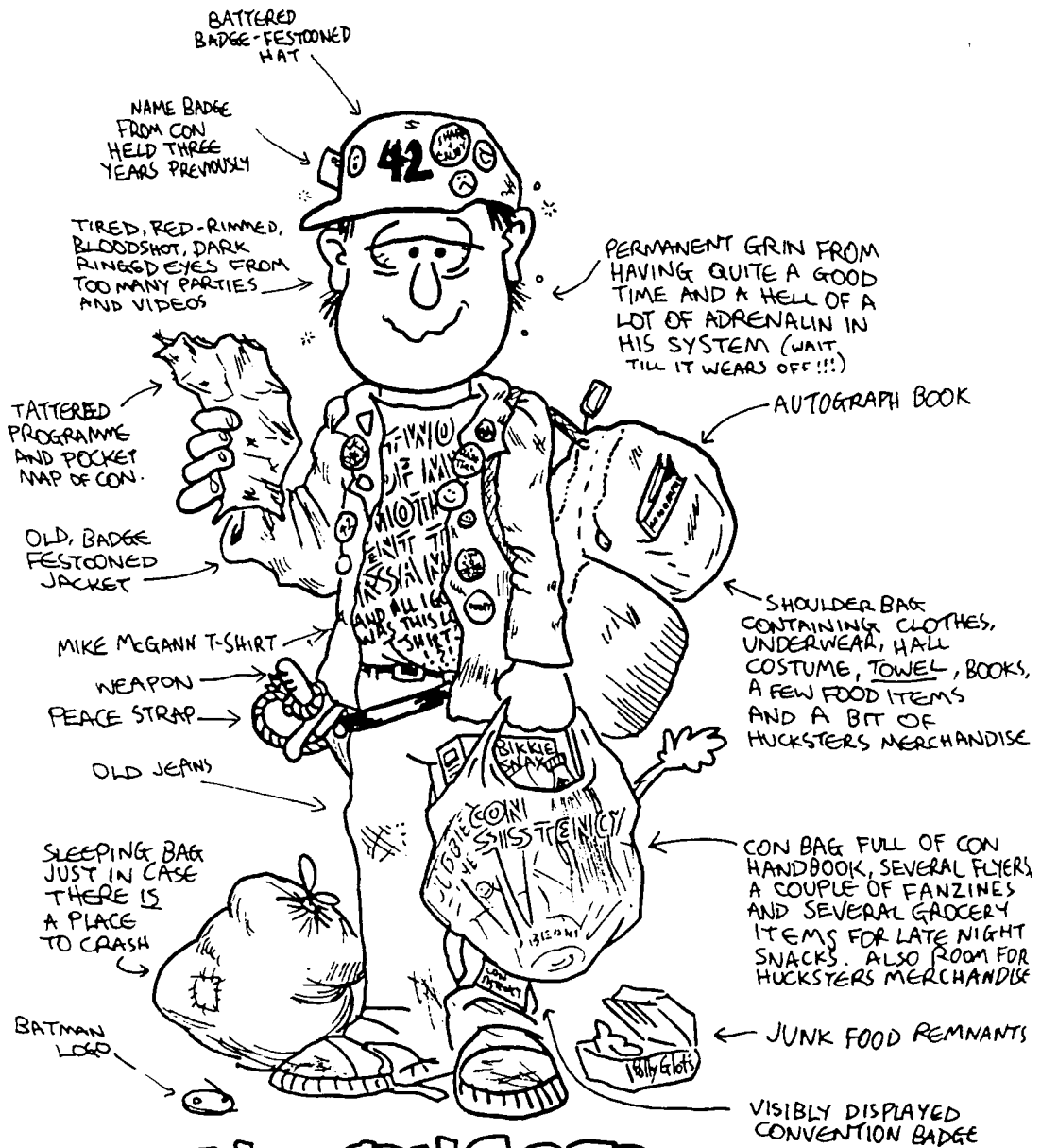


# GUFFAW

## 2



**THE CONGOER** BY *Jan Gunn*

# GUFFaw

## 2

is a newborn GUFF newsletter edited and published by

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The first issue of GUFFaw was a joint production by myself, Steve Davies and Julian Headlong, the three candidates in the 1999 Europe-Australia GUFF race. I decided to keep the title on for my GUFF newsletter, in part because I wanted to make the newsletter into a full-blown fanzine featuring both British and Australian writing.

And GUFF news, of course. Except that at the moment there isn't any (unless you count the fact that I won, but you all read that in Joseph's last newsletter, didn't you.) As I write this it is less than two weeks until I depart on my GUFF trip. The itinerary is fairly straightforward since I can only manage three weeks off work (and that is pushing it a bit). We leave Britain on the evening of August 24, and arrive in Adelaide on the morning of August 26 — I'm still not sure I can get my head around that sort of timescale. We will be in Adelaide, staying with Yvonne Rousseau and John Foyster, until September 1 (with lots of fannish activity planned along the way), then we fly to Melbourne for Aussiecon 3. After the convention, we're staying on in Melbourne with Lucy Sussex and Julian Warner until the afternoon of September 13 when, alas, we have to fly home (arriving on the morning of September 14 — ah the joys of time zones). I wish we had more time to see more of Australia on this trip, but it seemed best to concentrate on a couple of areas for a start. Maybe we'll get to see other places next time — and if Eve Harvey is to be believed, there will certainly be a next time.

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## Dave Langford

Dave Langford has never won GUFF. This may be something to do with the fact that he has never stood for GUFF. He has, however, been involved with GUFF since its inception, and was the UK administrator when the Fund was set up. He has also won more Hugo Awards than the mind can comfortably accommodate, the first of which came his way when the Worldcon last visited Australia. Against all the odds, he has recently won the Auld Lang Fund, which means he will at least be attending this Aussiecon.

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## Blowing the GUFF

### **HAD THE SUN GONE NOVA?**

*Astronomers had trained their mighty infra-red telescopes upward, night after night, to unravel the enigma. But then ... IT happened!*

*'God!' belched Amis. 'This could well be the ultimate disaster of all time. But don't quote me on that.'*

*As the shockwave tore rippingly through Earth's slender crust, releasing torrents of deep-down magma, scientists themselves collapsed into helplessness at the awesome threat.*

*'I just ... can't handle this,' screamed Rubinstein, as Holdstock exploded.*

*A terrible rift yawned in the naked face of reality itself, exposing vistas of horror beyond the authors' imaginations ...*

*'Don't tell me!' shrieked Priest. 'I don't want to know any more!'*

*But it was ... too late ...*

Which is merely one of the less embarrassing items that came to light when I looked through the files to remind myself of how GUFF began. Ten points to any reader who guessed that it's a wisely unused blurb for my and Paul Barnett's spoof disaster novel *Earthdoom*, which weaves in the remarks of authors and indeed one agent who (when this was initially proposed as a round-robin story) refused to touch the project with an eleven-foot pole. Among them we notice Chris Priest, whose fault GUFF is.

Chris has written elsewhere about how he came back from his 1977 Australian trip full of fannish goodwill, Fosters, and eagerness to forge new bonds with antipodean fandom — provided only that someone else did the work. Thus, one fine summer morning in 1978, I received his letter explaining that against titanic odds I had won the coveted position of First European GUFF Administrator. Resistance, Chris conveyed, was useless. Leigh Edmonds was already in charge of this new fan fund's Australian end. The juggernaut had begun to move.

July 1978: the twelfth issue of my then fanzine *Twill-Ddu* burst upon the world with an attached GUFF ballot, inviting voters to choose which of three notable Aussie fans should be brought to the 1979 British Worldcon if sufficient funds could be raised. Largely cribbed from

the traditional TAFF ballot text, this flyer insisted the fund was a one-off and egregiously neglected to mention what GUFF stood for. I always suspected that Chris had started with a fannish-sounding acronym and then fitted words to it — Get Up-and-over Fan Fund.

August 1978: realising that this thing needed the oxygen of publicity in copious gusts, I launched a fund newsletter called for no very good reason *The Northern GUFFblower*. The first issue's deathless prose richly deserves not to be reprinted, but does remind me of the bizarre fundraising goodies I'd come across in South Wales — a stack of copies of the privately published *Philosophy of God's Mathematics of the Atomic Energy* by Timothy O'Mahoney Esq ('A Member of the "Legio Mariae"; Ascribed Member of the Institute of Charity; K.B.S.; Mathematician of the Atom ...').

This 1948 treatise, which sold like fairly tepid cakes at British conventions, bears the same relationship to a trendy modern pop-science book as 'The Eye of Argon' to *The Lord of the Rings*. Grown fans pulled their own heads off rather than endure readings from the more creatively mathematical bits:

For example, if every two inches of the circumference of the matter of the world possessed  $1\frac{2}{3}$  drams of Radium, the total amount would be 2,737,152,000 drams; this would give us 8,811,456,000 scruples of Radium to every two inches of earth's energy. The radiant energy stored within the atom must ever mean motion, which would lift masses of matter to a height of 280,000 miles.

GUFF, luckily, had only to transport a mass of fannish matter across about 12,000 miles and back again. In May 1979 the fourth *Northern GUFFblower* was able to announce the precise nature of this agglomeration. It was John Foyster, who won the vote by a simple majority over rival candidates John Alderson and Eric Lindsay. For statistics fans: 127 ballots were cast, being 65 for Foyster, 44 for Alderson, and 18 for Lindsay — who'd taken the trouble to publish an issue of *Gegenschein* asking fans not to vote for him.

The Foyster platform brings it all back: 'Attended Australian conventions since 1958; chairman of 1966 and 1971 conventions. Published many fanzines since 1961 including *The Wild Colonial Boy*, *Satura/The Gryphon*, *Exploding Madonna/The Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology*. Co-edited (with Edmonds) *Norstrilian News* and *Boys' Own Fanzine*. Guest edited *Australian SF Review* and *SF Commentary*. Member of SAPS (1962-1972), FAPA (1969-1972, 1976-), OMPA (1969), ANZAPA (on and off since 1968). Won Ditmar for best fanzine (1970) and best Australian SF (1973). Initiated DUFF (1972). Twice founded the Nova Mob. When backed into a corner about his SF criticism pleads guilty but insane. Dislikes motor cars.'

In the same *GUFFblower*, I speculated that 'perhaps GUFF will be running the other way, to Australia in '83.' This was a bum prediction in that the next Aussie worldcon turned out to be in 1985; nor was the next GUFF race in 1983. Otherwise, history gave my speculation a grudging thumbs-up.

History would do well to forget the fact that *GUFFblower 4* incorporated a lengthy report on the 1978-1979 *Twll-Ddu* fan poll, fashioned to look exactly like Peter Roberts's *Checkpoint* poll but with voting categories for the worst rather than the best in British fandom. Many of those honoured have drifted away from fannish involvement, but one legendary figure is still with us: #1 Worst Fanwriter, #3 Worst Fanzine, two separate titles tying for #2 Worst Single Issue ... yes, it's Mr *Fanzine Fanatique* himself, Keith Walker!

Then suddenly it was August 1979 and time for Seacon, the first and best Brighton Worldcon. John Foyster walked among us and proved to be every bit as genial and witty (not to say sarky) a chap as indicated in Chris Priest's GUFF-boosting article for *The Northern GUFFblower 5*. Here Chris forcefully urged that GUFF should continue its exchange programme into then indefinite future, just like TAFF and DUFF. That issue, published for the Worldcon, was of

epoch-making historical importance to me personally since it came bound with *Ansible 1*, a scrappy and evidently doomed fan newsletter that had taken over from *Checkpoint* as the weary Roberts prepared to retire at issue 100.

It gets still more personal. I wasn't sure that I'd ever been a terribly good GUFF administrator. In particular, I just couldn't handle the traditional auctions owing to notorious deafness — others like Peter Roberts and Rog Peyton helped here — but tried to make up for it with relentless mail-order promotions of kitsch and overpriced special publications, like the round-robin barbarian epic *Gonad Comes Again* and a special limited edition of Bob Shaw's serious astrological talk 'Up the Conjunction'. Nevertheless the realisation dawned that I'd spent well over a year administering an ongoing fan fund. (Quick on the uptake, that's me.) There's nothing like having been an administrator-by-fiat to help one think the formerly unthinkable and wonder about attaining a similar position through fannish votes. When TAFF nominations closed at the end of 1979, the slate consisted of me and Jim Barker.

Fast-forward to April 1980 and my bemused announcement of TAFF victory in *Ansible 9*. The sixth and last Langford-edited *Northern GUFFblower* followed in June. Because I'd somehow convinced myself that raising money for two fan funds at once could mean a conflict of interest, this issue announced the takeover of UK GUFF administration by the excellent Rob Jackson. (Who didn't even enjoy the glory of launching a new fan fund, but self-effacingly did solid work for a year.) Candidates were already mooted — Malcolm Edwards and Joseph Nicholas — for what we now realised must necessarily be reinvented as the Going Under Fan Fund. Everyone was too excited to wait for another Aussie Worldcon, and in due course *Ansible 19* (July 1981) carried a wildly enthusiastic report of a trip to Advention in Adelaide by GUFF's first southbound delegate, Joseph Nicholas.

And so it went. *The Northern GUFFblower* title was carried on by other hands for a while, just as I'd lazily continued Peter Roberts's TAFF newsletter title *TAFF Talk*. Rob Jackson took it to issue 8 and Joseph to issue 12, announcing the second southbound winner, Eve Harvey. Breaking with the fuddy-duddy tradition of a hidebound past, Eve called her own newsletter *GUFFstuff*.

Time passed. I eventually published my report on that 1980 TAFF excursion to Noreascon II in Boston (*The Transatlantic Hearing Aid*, 1985), and John Foyster — quick as a flash — wrote up his 1979 GUFF trip for the first full report published in the history of this fund to date, in 1996. We await the next with keen interest.

Meanwhile, I was stunned and gobsmacked when in mid-1997, nineteen years after that fateful letter from Chris Priest, Marc Ortlieb wrote to tell me that resistance was useless. He (along with Carey Handfield, Eve & John Harvey and GUFF's second northbound delegate Justin Ackroyd) had decided it was necessary that I should be brought to Aussiecon 3 by a new one-off mysteriously called the Auld Lang Fund. Gosh wow! It's as though, two decades after counting the votes as GUFF's first European administrator and subjecting its first winner to the discomforts of our spare bed, I'm being rewarded by a pseudo-GUFF trip of my very own. Huge thanks to all concerned.

If my 1999 Worldcon appearance should prove disastrous — if I spill beer all over the committee and hideously insult revered Australian icons like Peter Nicholls — you now know whom to blame. That's right: Chris Priest.

## Chris Priest

So it was all his fault... Since Chris was responsible for getting GUFF off the ground in the first place, it seems only appropriate that he should feature here. In fact this is the article with which he greeted the very first GUFF winner, John Foyster, reprinted from *The Northern GUFFblower*: 5, August 1979.

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## A Message from our Founder

Once upon a time I was met at an airport by a rabbi, and the rabbi was wearing a track-suit, and the track-suit had paint stains all over it. This was the earliest impression I had of our great former colony south-east of India, namely, Australia.

During the summer of 1977 I got a distinct impression that people were avoiding me. Why, I wondered, did people yawn when I talked about Australia; why did doors slam in my face when they saw my bush-hat and boomerang? Was I *really* going on about it as much as my friends (who had obviously seen too many Lifebuoy adverts) were claiming? In the end, I found I was boring even myself ... so perhaps there was some truth in it all.

The fact is I had a terrific time in Australia, and I'm proud to be one of the small but growing band of Yanks and Pommies in the sf world who have made the long journey south. Bob Tucker, William Rotsler, Ursula Le Guin, Terry Carr, Bob Silverberg, Vonda McIntyre, Brian Aldiss are a few of the others. As far as I know, we all retain much the same sort of happy impression of the place ... I had what I think of as the best time of my life down under. It's hard to say why, exactly ... because it's true that Australia can offer little more than is readily available in Britain or the States, except perhaps the novelty of a different accent, and awe-inspiring scenery.

I think that one of the strongest feelings I had out there was one of reassurance. When you fly from London, you pass through most of southern Asia, with the countries you visit briefly becoming progressively more alien and confusing: in the case of the flight I was on, Iran, India and Malaysia. Then, when you are least expecting it, you land in a place that looks like a cross between Torquay and Oxford Street, where the natives speak English (OK, a garbled form of English, I know, I know), and where they play cricket and watch *Star Trek* and drive on the left and collect old runs of *Astounding* and generally act in more-or-less comprehensible ways.

There was also reassurance in the feeling that Australia is a *long way* from everywhere else, that if nuclear war broke out no one would get around to bombing the place until you'd had time to dig a nice safe hole. And reassurance in the fact that it is so culturally old-fashioned: Melbourne in 1977 felt to me like London used to feel in 1967, a sense of things beginning to open up, and general health and prosperity ... and girls wearing *mini-skirts* (which alone brought a few nostalgic tears to the eyes of this particular sexist pig).

And why should the science fiction world be interested in Australia? They've got nothing there we can't supply for ourselves. They've a few sf writers, and they've run a Worldcon, and they've got fandom, and they have feuds and alliances and monthly meetings, just like us. I must confess (and indeed, have hitherto made no secret of it) that before I made the trip I shared this feeling in some measure. Australia, considered in prospect, felt as if it was going to be a cultural and social suburb, one where the only possible difference would be that strangers in pubs would call you a Pommy bastard. I was wrong, and I grovel in abject apology for ever letting the notion occur to me. Not only did no one ever call me a Pommy bastard (and they didn't call me 'cobber', either), but the whole time I was there I experienced a quite indescribable and intangible sense of *difference*, one which was all the more confusing for being overlaid with apparent similarities.

Whatever the cause, I felt energised and inspired by the visit in ways I hadn't felt since I first encountered fandom in 1962. Because they *are* just like us, in the sense that they read *New Worlds* and *Astounding* and *Hyphen* and *Vector*, and they have cons where boring people drone on about boring things on boring panels, and they have the other sort of cons where interesting people drink too much and become indiscreet and highly entertaining. OK, they haven't got the Astral Leauge, but they've got a Magic Pudding Club (or at least they had one while I was there), and they've got the Paul Stevens Show and the Golden Caterpillar Awards ... and what amounts to a sort of parallel fannish tradition, where the differences became apparent because I was no part of them, but where the similarities also were apparent, because it was all unmistakably fannish.

(And in case anyone's interested, the art of sf writing has the same quality of difference/similarity. There is a certain amount of Australian sf which is derivative of Anglo-American writing ... but there is also a new kind of Australian sf, practised most by the newer writers, naturally enough, where there is a new inwardness, a new sense of response to their own cultural/literary environment.)

Anyway, if you look back at those names I listed of visitors to Australia, you'll see that most of them are of writers, not fans. (Though some of the writers do have fannish links.) During the first weekend I was in Australia there was a con, and during this I was struck by one of my occasional IDEAS. We've had TAFF for years, in which, as everyone in fandom knows, a fannish visit from or to Britain or America is paid for by fannish charity ... and more recently DUFF has been in existence, in which fannish visits between America and Australia are arranged. It suddenly occurred to me that it was time the third side of the triangle was closed, and after a few minutes of non-sober reflection in the bar, GUFF was created by unanimous consent.

The Get Up and over Fan Fund was created with the specific intention of bringing an Australian fan to Britain for Seacon '79. After a few early hiccups, GUFF came into formal being, and, mostly because of the hard work and dedication of the two Administrators, Dave Langford in Britain and Leigh Edmonds in Australia, not only was sufficient money raised, but a clear winner was found. That winner was John Foyster, who is here at Seacon. Foyster was my own nomination for GUFF (based on the entirely unprejudiced fact that I have met neither of the other two candidates, Eric Lindsay and John Alderson), which gives me special pleasure in the fact of his win.

Which brings me back to the rabbi in the paint-smearred track-suit, for it was none other than he.

I'm at a loss to describe John objectively, because my knowledge of him before my Australian visit was minimal. I knew his writing through his work in *Australian Science Fiction Review*, where he went in for intelligent if idiosyncratic criticism of sf. Later, I read *JOE (The Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology)*, which was a sort of round-letter discussion fanzine about sf. I

had heard he edited something called *BOF* (*Boys' Own Fanzine*), in collaboration with Leigh Edmonds. And I knew he had been on the committees of various cons in Australia. What I didn't know was he looked like a rabbi.

Later, I heard him in action at the con ... he goes in for a sort of sly fannish troublemaking, with a style and wittiness that gladdens the heart; he is an excellent extempore speaker. After the con, while I was drifting around on the fringes of fandom, I began to get to know him a little better. There are three things about him, events really, that I remember.

Firstly, he had the pleasant habit of taking me to bookshops; not the glossy, obvious bookshops, but the sort of hidden-away secondhand shops I wouldn't have been able to find without either a much longer stay in Melbourne or a native to show the way. Secondly, he introduced me to friends of his outside the fannish world; although this perhaps sounds like an anti-fannish sentiment, it was actually something I appreciated a lot at the time. Thirdly, he showed me the true essence of Australia. We were waiting for a tram one hot evening in Swanston Street, a long straight road that runs through the centre of Melbourne on a roughly north-south line. Suddenly, John looked solemn. 'This street,' he said, 'contains the very essence of All That Is Australia.' I glanced around at the numerous Chinese restaurants (one of which we had just left), and said something smart, cynical, and unoriginal. 'Listen you Pommy bastard,' he said, contradicting what I said earlier, 'I'm being serious. This street is symbolic of The Essence of Australia. There we have the Symbol of Australia's Past' ... and he pointed towards the south, where on a small hill stands the Shrine of Remembrance, all Corinthian pillars and steadfast architecture. Duly sobered, I nodded with appropriate solemnity. 'And there,' said John, pointing towards the north, 'we have the Symbol of Australia's Future.' I looked, and at the other end of Swanston Street, almost as impressive in its own way, was Foster's brewery ...

GUFF doesn't, or shouldn't, end with John Foyster's visit to Seacon. I'd like to think that his is the inaugural fannish trip between Australia and Britain, and that many more will follow in years to come. Don't let us allow it to wither away in indifference! It strikes me that the next opportunity for a GUFF trip could be in 1983, when Australia is bidding for the Worldcon. Then it will be our turn to send a British fan on a visit which, I can promise sincerely, will be highly enjoyable and eternally memorable. Here's what we have to do:

- Support GUFF with cash. Treat it as a fannish charity on a par with TAFF and DUFF. Give freely ... or donate auction-material whenever possible.
- Support the **Australia in '83** campaign.
- Join the Worldcon of 1981. and vote for Australia in '83.
- When the GUFF campaign begins, lobby for the chosen candidates, vote for your choice ... and give freely.

And if Australia doesn't win the '83 bid, support GUFF anyway ... because after all, a Worldcon is just a slightly better excuse for a trip, and there are numerous regional and national Australian cons which will do almost as well.

Meanwhile, make the effort to seek out John Foyster and make him feel at home. If he calls you a Pommy bastard, what you have to do is call *him* a drongo (Australians don't like this), or alternatively, if you're the peace-loving type, buy him a drink (and we'll send out a gunboat later). Incidentally, if he doesn't look like a rabbi these days, don't blame me.



**Karen Pender-Gunn**

Ian Gunn and Karen Pender-Gunn were the most recent Australian GUFF delegates to visit Britain. Ian was one of our finest fan artists — he is shortlisted for the Fan Artist Hugo again this year — until he died after a long and moving battle with cancer in 1998. But let us not forget that Karen has talents of her own, as she demonstrates with this article that grew out of their GUFF trip.

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**The Six Degrees of Freedom  
for the Crystal Palace,****or, Now I will have to  
write that book**

**I**n 1995 Ian and I travelled to the home country (Ian was born in Nottingham) to partake of the culture and kindness of fans for about 5 weeks. As well as attending Intersection, the Worldcon in Glasgow, we had a number of places we wanted to visit to pursue our various interests.

People who know me realise I have a couple of obsessions. Harmless ones really, but they do tend to take me over at certain times and I can bore for my country on some subjects. One of these obsessions is the Crystal Palace — the Great Exhibition of 1851 and its continued existence at Sydenham until its destruction by fire in 1936.

We travelled out to Crystal Palace (the renamed Sydenham) by a British Rail train from London. (I don't really know why we bothered to buy a ticket as no one checked them at any point.) We walked around the park and finally ended up standing at the bottom of a set of cracked marble stairs. It was like heaven to me. This was where the building I had such a great interest in had stood. I could see it in my mind's eye stretching out to either side and upwards beyond my line of sight. All that remains of this magnificent structure is a few sets of marble stairs, some broken off statues, some stone railings and two sphinxes down on the right side, which once stood inside the building itself.

I had done some research before our visit. I was working in a library at that time and had spent considerable time reading *The London Times* and the other papers of the day about the activities that went on at the Palace.

Skim forward in time. It's now 1999. Ian passed away in November 1998 after a two-year battle with cancer. It was one of his wishes that the GUFF report be launched at Aussiecon III. So I started off doing this. This is where the coincidences start.

I wanted to name the report after a favourite line from a favourite band of mine. The line is 'Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love' by the Art of Noise (mainly as this does reflect how things were). I hunted through my CDs and found the reference (buy the GUFF report to see where it comes from). While doing this I came across the liner notes for 'How Rapid' from the album 'In No Sense? Nonsense!' (1987). This recording was engineered by Ted Hatton at Ely Cathedral. Bells started ringing in my memory so back I went to my notes. I had been doing some research on the various collections at the Palace and a large number of copies of statuary came from Wells Cathedral and Ely Cathedral. A friend emailed me from America just about this time and told me about a friend of her's who was visiting and she lived in Ely and worked for the cathedral.

Some after this I was sitting in a bookshop owned by a friend of mine, Penny Syber. My eye was drawn to a large book behind me. It was a beautiful reproduction volume full of the most glorious coloured plates and called *The Grammar of Ornament*. I bought the volume and brought it home. Still I had this mental tickling in my memory for some reason, and then I noticed who had written it — Owen Jones — and it all fell into place. Owen Jones was the superintendent of works of the Great Exhibition of 1851. He wrote the handbooks for the Egyptian Court, and Alhambra Court. His companion at the Palace, Digby Wyatt, wrote the handbooks for the Byzantine Court and the Italian Court as well as a chapter in Mr Jones's *Grammar of Ornament*.

I found a photo of the sphinxes on the Internet. I rediscovered the Crystal Palace Campaign site.

So, I have gone back to my research and will endeavour to finish my book. I have collected all my notes together and sorted out which issued of *The Times* I need to look at. This seems to be what was fated for me and I expect you all to buy a copy when it's published.

I only wish Ian was here to write his own little piece for Paul.

**Judith Hanna**

Judith Hanna is an Australian who ended up staying in Britain. She lives with Joseph Nicholas, who travelled the other way with GUFF. Which makes her peculiarly well placed to view each country from the perspective of the other.

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**Fandom in a cold climate**

**M**y first encounter with Pommie fandom gave me the impression that it took its frivolity with intense seriousness: GUFF winner Joseph Nicholas recounted a whole mythology of Ratfandom, Silicons, Jacqueline Lichtenberg Appreciation Society broadsheets, Astral League initiation rites. It clearly took even more dedication to get that mad than Melbourne fandom devoted to being intimidatingly literary. Sydney fandom, where I hung out, seemed to wear its party-animal hedonism much more casually.

I put it down to climatic differences — clearly, the colder the climate, the more intellectually intense the culture; the warmer the weather, the more we just let life wash over us.

That was back in the early 1980s. Sydney fandom had flung at least one party every single weekend for about two years, which left little energy over for those fanzine things that Jack Herman sometimes waved around. Fanzines were produced by people in Melbourne and its western suburb, Adelaide, or in colder countries overseas. Perth, further north and warmer, was an outpost of the Syn-city hedonistic mode. And Joseph Nicholas, the sinisterly smoking GUFF ambassador, stalked through Advention letting fly KTF denunciations of crap skiffy and hellfire tales of Pickersgills and Pratts — and Pommy-land was well-known to be even chillier than Melbourne. QED.

For some reason, I found myself translocated to London, and haven't managed to escape since (except fleeting family visits back Down Under). During that time, has Pommy fandom loosened up — perhaps as a symptom of global warming? Or could it be that my long-held Climatic Theory of Fandom is undertheorised?

Thinking it over, I'd now suggest that a Grand Unified Theory of Fandom would need to deal also with two rival Theories of Fandom — the Swimming Pool and Spatial Costs theories — what I am making up as I write. Like all the best scientific theories, both will be bleeding obvious once pointed out.

The Learning to Swim theory goes like this: quiet, shy bookworm/computer nerd encounters fan group. Any normal person will not hang around. Proto-fans are those who fit in, feeling these might be their kind of people, get shown fanzines, go along to a con or two, join in local social gatherings — with accelerating enthusiasm — plunge into producing own zine or two, get into con-running, filking, costuming, etc., make waves, survive being called a 'neo' by people who have just grown out of neo-hood, start calling newcomers 'neos' as you

find you know (and are recognised by) most of the people around you at cons and in letter-columns. Feel like a BNF, aspire to being a SMOF.

Then you surface and look around the pool. At this point, some people decide it's time to climb out, towel themselves down, and get back to real life. For others, swimming in fandom becomes part of the normal tenor of life — regular laps of con-going, zine-ing, local skiffy gatherings. Most of us don't spend our lives immersed in fandom, but a quick dip, more or less frequently, becomes part of our mental exercise routine and social life, when the opportunity offers.

The swimming pool metaphor, then, is an attempt to make a standard 'lifecycle of the fan' story, equally applicable wherever you live, a bit more interesting: you discover fandom as part of discovering life, then you settle down. If you evolve into a fan, fandom becomes part of your routine. Or you drop out, aren't reading this zine, and are irrelevant to our thesis.

What about the 'Spatial Costs' theory — currently in search of a catchy metaphor to popularise it? This one will attempt to deal with why Aussie fans seem so uninterested in fanzines. And it ought to make some predictions about the effects of e-mail and the World Wide Waste-of-time on non-face-to-face fan activity. Its starting points are:

- From any Australian city, everywhere else seems a very long way away, possibly imaginary or mythical, and therefore not really relevant.
- It also costs a lot to get anywhere else, takes a long time, and is therefore too much trouble. Postage is also expensive.
- So as far as you're concerned it may as well not exist. And there's no point sending fanzines to somewhere that doesn't exist in the reality you live in.

On the other hand:

- Visiting strangers are an interesting novelty, so make the most of them. The fewer you get, the more attention you can pay them — and the wilder the stories you can spin about them afterwards.
- If you achieve escape velocity and get to visit the other worlds of Europe, the US etc, this provides some sort of evidence that the rest of the world really exists. Or it was a really vivid trip that produced some convincingly faked photos. But postage is still bloody expensive.
- Why bother sending stuff at vast expense to people you'll probably never see again?
- But e-mail and Web-surfing overcome the expense barrier, so that foreigners are as easy and cheap to reach as the people who turn up at your local parties. Could be worth exploring further.

Err, that's as far as I've got.

So the mission for Pommie and US fans visiting Aussiecon is to convince all those laid-back hedonistic Aussies that you are real people, samples of a worldwide Anglophone skiffy fandom that really exists and is kinda inneresting, and that sending the occasional paper zine out might be worth a try. And in between paper zines, surfing the ethersphere provides an economical way of wasting time, straining your eyes, keeping out of the sun, and keeping in touch with people more or less like yourselves.

**Eve Harvey**

Eve Harvey is, so far as I am aware, the first Europe-to-Australia GUFF winner to complete her trip report, and to prove it I'm proud to include the final chapter here.

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**The Brighton Belle  
Meets Skippy  
(For The Last Time)**

*This, at long last, is the final page in my diary. I had hoped to get it finished for the tenth anniversary of my trip, but that passed me by. The next Worldcon was a milestone that I just couldn't ignore, plus the fact that Paul wouldn't let me. Since it's now 14 years since I first set foot on Aussie soil, the old format of a present tense diary seems a little out of place — the world has turned many times (5,113 times, to be exact) and my memories are tainted by subsequent events. In this concluding episode, therefore, I've added some present day thoughts to my original text.*

*So what's the story so far Professor? Well, we've been to the convention, driven to Canberra and Sydney, and have just left the Sydney group meeting at Galaxy books for an overnight coach ride back to Melbourne.....*

**Thursday/Friday, 5/6 September 1985**

Australia, I've decided, is a particularly perverse place. Not just the people, the place itself. It seems to take great pleasure in taking my preconceptions and throwing them straight back at me. For instance, it's such an enormous place that I thought communications would be paramount. No way. Not only is flying internally horrendously expensive, but the roads! Abysmal is a totally inadequate adjective... No wonder the 440 mile coach ride from Sydney to Melbourne took all night.

What can you say about an overnight coach trip. Not much really. Unfortunately I'm not one of those travellers that can just nod off whenever the occasion presents itself. Unfortunately John is! OK, I thought, I'll watch the movie. Being on the back seat has its advantages, but not when you're only 5ft 4in and everyone in front of you not only can't sleep, but is either 6ft, or sitting on a very large cushion to protect their delicate parts.

*(It says in my notes that I was very ratty because I hadn't been able to sleep comfortably. With hindsight I think that would be an understatement — the incredible hulk has nothing on me when I feel hard done by and the jealousy of sitting next to John who was sleeping like a baby would have been unbearable. If I am suffering, then everyone around me, especially my loved ones, should be suffering as well. Isn't that what they mean my togetherness? Didn't*

*John promise to share everything when we got married? Well, he damned well wasn't sharing my discomfort!*

A good jolt of caffeine at the mid-journey stop worked wonders, however, and so did the improved road surface — let's hear it for the Victorian road maintenance crews — so I was human again by the time we arrived in Melbourne (about 7 a.m., so that made it an almost 12-hour ride).

Unfortunately Minotaur Books didn't open until 9 where we had an assignation with Justin, his house keys and hopefully a shower (the shower's at his house, not the bookstore, you idiot), so we whiled away the time in a pizza place with their bottomless cup of coffee.

Feeling clean and with a bit of privacy for a little while, it dawned on me that it's not just the living out of a suitcase that gets me down on a long trip like this, but it's also living in other people's houses. I want to get home to my own little nest. I couldn't travel round the world doing this. Hotels are OK but in moderation.

*(It's really weird reading this now, and listening to the tape, I sound so mournful and lost. At this time I had done very little travelling, but in 1989 I started on my present career, which entails numerous foreign trips each year. I worked it out the other day and I've been 'lucky' enough to travel to almost 30 countries in the last ten years. So I do now exactly what back in 1985 I didn't think I could do, although I'm very rarely away for more than three weeks at a time. I still miss my home every time I'm away, though. The benefit now is that I am in a hotel, and my comment that hotels are OK was absolutely right. In a hotel you can make your own little nest that acts as a surrogate home. I spend seven hours a day standing up and talking with foreigners (for those of you who don't know, I train international bankers, specialising in the emerging markets) and having to concentrate on every word I and they say. So to get back to my little nest is the next best thing to going home at night. I can slouch around, I can put the TV on and listen to English and not have to concentrate. The amazing thing is that I don't like the silence of being alone in the room. You would think that after so long constantly talking and listening I'd crave the quiet, but I don't. I suppose it reinforces my aloneness. The same reason I very rarely phone John whilst I'm away. It reminds me that I'm not with him, and if I only get the answerphone I find my loneliness almost unbearable. So I arrange my nest so it's comfortable, and spend the whole evening talking out loud to myself, or to imaginary participants, or to John, or to friends. Weird or what? But don't get me wrong, I adore my job, I just wish I could fold the world so places weren't so far away, or I could fit John into my suitcase.)*

The rest of the day we spent doing the tourist thing, making the most of the trams. What is it about trams, they seem to add a certain *je ne sais quoi* to a city. When we're on a 'wander day' we tend to pick names on the map which look interesting and just head for them. Sometimes you hit gold, sometimes iron pyrites. Our first destination proved to be the latter. I needed to get another fix of the sea — having been brought up in Brighton but now living surrounded by land, I have an almost addictive need for the sight, sound and smell of the sea. South Melbourne Beach had the sea, but little else — tacky is the only way to describe it, even worse than Brighton Beach at the height of the holiday season, although the Beach did have sand.

We made a tactical withdrawal to Albert Park, saw another tram heading for St Kilda Beach which our trusty tourist guide pronounced 'a good place', so we changed directions mid-stream, so to speak. The book did not let us down. Not as spectacular as Sydney Harbour, obviously, and not very foreign (if you defocussed your gaze a little you could have been anywhere in the UK), but pleasant. It was very windy, though sunny, and an enjoyable afternoon was had by the Harveys getting their feet wet, walking around the outside of the

Lunar Park funfair (we weren't going to pay good money for that!) and generally taking in the sea air.

We made our way back to town in time for the Melbourne group meeting at the Tavern Coffee Bar — next to a pub! What is it with these Australians? I mean, the Sydney people meet in a bookshop and the Melbourne in a coffee shop! Again, all my preconceptions are being thrown back in my face. Aussies are hard drinkers. So what do I find? Beer is dispensed by the thimble full, and fan groups never meet in a place where alcohol can be purchased! (Mind you, given the quality of much of the beer, and the atmosphere of many of the drinking emporiums, there could be an understandable rationale here.) Although everyone else had meals John and I weren't hungry at that stage — our digestive systems still hadn't been brought forward to Australian time. Everything here seems to happen about 3 hours early, so dinner for us is still around 8 p.m., not 5.

Having said that Aussie group meetings appear to shun alcohol, the same cannot be said for Australian parties. We finished the evening at Phil Ware and Mandy Herriot's house for a memorable party. Most of us were standing outside enjoying one of those superbly rambling conversations that started with the obligatory raking over the coals of the convention and what was wrong with it; my health; operations I have known; children — no, we started with children and then went on to operations. It's always difficult to describe parties — you had to be there. A kaleidoscope of images is all I have now; an enormous boxer dog; the smokers standing outside as usual; Justin playing on an Apple Computer. Jim Gilpatrick and Charlotte Procter were there. Jim's coming with us to some zoo or other tomorrow. There'll be a whole crowd and then we'll be going to Marc & Cath Ortlieb's in the evening.

## ***Saturday***

We were woken up early by the cats. Nearly every place we have stayed on this trip has been non-smoking (I smoke) and has cats (John's allergic to cats). Clive and Lyn must be at the top of the pile, though. Not just one cat but millions (possibly just a couple, but they move about a lot!). No one warned us that our bed was under their nightly flight path: through the window at the back of the outhouse, across our bed and through the window into the house. All night. John's nose was streaming and his eyes already closing up by the time we'd had breakfast so we beat a hasty retreat.

It's Healsville Wildlife Sanctuary today, a barbecue and the chance to see some kangaroos. There's another preconception that has proved woefully wrong, kangaroos are not jumping all over the place. I haven't seen a single one yet, unless you count the dead one by the side of the road, but that could have been an enormous mouse (no, that would be in Texas). The ride was uneventful until Clive decided we needed some excitement, and being the perfect host provided it by running into the back of the car in front. Only half-heartedly, though, since no damage was done.

Healsville was a blast. The difference in lifestyles was obvious here — in warm climates people expect to do things out in the open air. We didn't head for the animals, but for a picnic area. Not just little wooden tables with those awful bench seats attached — which were definitely designed by men who wanted to see up the women's skirts! I have never found a delicate way of sitting at one of those unless it's sideways at the end — but also barbecues! Enormous, fixed barbies for anyone to use, with wood provided! Now that's something you don't see in England. (*Actually you do now, although I'm not too sure about the wood. It just shows how international we've got over the last decade and a half. Today no Brit would be as astounded at the provision of*

*barbecues as I was back then. It's not fair, I don't feel old enough to have lived through cultural changes, that's for grandmothers — oh shit, I could be a grandmother! I am old!*)

Mandy had been to the market that morning and stocked up with meat (Australia is hell for vegetarians), the rest of us brought the booze, the weather was fine, the company superb, God was in his heaven and it looked like I was going to join him. Whilst the food was being set up we tourists did our touristy thing and went off with Mark Linneman to see the animals. I still don't believe the Platypus is real, or else Mother Nature has a very perverted sense of humour. Mark described to me at length how you can tell the difference between a kangaroo and a wallaby (about as understandable as Australian football, or the offside rule, but clearer than cricket). Back at the barbie John has recorded he had lamb chops and sausages — you can tell what's important to him about this trip! There were about 20 of us, and the afternoon passed in a haze of good food, good booze and good company (apart from the birds — in the UK we'd have trouble with pigeons, not here because we're in foreign parts it had to be Ibises — until Mark Linneman decided to act as sentry, armed with a big stick and an enormous shadow).

At 5 the park closed so we decanted to Marc and Cath Ortlieb's to continue the evening sans alcohol! (I told you these Aussies are a little strange). Once again, we smokers were outside with visiting dignitaries from the non-smoking camp. I was given an Astronomy lesson to help me identify the southern cross, but I still can't see it. I thought it was BIG, like the plough, not a teeny weeny little constellation that you'd miss if you blinked. Obviously there was yet more post-convention analysis, Jim Gilpatrick explained worldcon politics and I longed for some alcohol to dull the edges, but the Devil's food cake was produced just as I was about to gnaw off a part of my or his anatomy (I hadn't quite decided which). God, I'm going to have to diet when I get home.

## **Sunday**

Started the day with a trip to Mooney Ponds of Edna Everage fame, (a nondescript lower middle class sort of suburb). Having ogled at Everage street (all of 100 yards long tacked on to the end of a small shopping arcade) we had brunch (hotdogs and rolls) and left to arrange transport (*good ol' Thrifty Car Hire has seen us proud on all of our trips since then*). Yet another sightseeing expedition gave us a tapestry of images and emotions:

**Disillusionment** at Captain Cook's cottage. It is only when you are faced with what the Australians think of as 'ancient monuments' in this country that you realise how young it is (white occupation, that is, no-one talks about Aboriginal Australia much). Captain Cook is ancient history here, but you could see cottages older than this in many British villages. I suppose it's not surprising really, since it was his Yorkshire home, which was dismantled, transported over here and rebuilt. The only outstanding feature was its size — small even for a single man.

**Disgust** at the model Tudor village, which was absolute crap; donated by the people of Lambeth who ought to be shot for what they did. By contrast, the Faery Tree — an intricately engraved tree trunk — was beautifully executed.

**Disappointment** that the Shrine of Remembrance was shut 'but the views were marvellous and John just had to take an arty-farty photo at the eternal flame.

**Pathos** — maybe it was the weariness of so many sights and experiences in so short a time, maybe it was just me being exceptionally receptive, maybe it was... who knows... but



the statue of Simpson and his donkey for some unknown reason got to me and I started crying.

**Amazement** — sitting on the hill watching the kids roller-skating in Myers Music Bowl a police car appears out of nowhere, driving across the grassy slope hills in front of us. Maybe they do this sort of thing here in Melbourne? No, everyone else stopped to look, so it couldn't be a quaint local custom.

## Monday

No matter how good the company, there are times in any holiday when you need to get away on your own. Monday was this day for us. With our trusty hire car we had intended to go to Port Welshpool — a deep-sea port — to investigate the fishing industry round there, if they had any ice-plants, how did they offload the ships. Well, isn't that what you do on holiday? If you were married to John, who is trying to set up a business in this area, you'd be finding these interesting places as well. To be honest, it is quite fun — not the smelly fish bit, but having a motive which is slightly different from the ordinary gets you to places you wouldn't normally see, and gives you something to look at rather than just the view. Adds another dimension to the whole experience. Unfortunately time was not on our side and so we decided to stop off at Philip Island instead before going out for a farewell meal on this, our last night in Melbourne.

On the way we stopped at a little town called Lan-Lan which proudly presented itself as having a population of 620. There are advantages and disadvantages to being a tourist off the beaten track. Walking into the 'hotel' at Lan-Lan for lunch, we didn't stop the conversation, because there was no-one there to be talking. The accent is obviously a dead give-away, and starts up many a conversation. Unfortunately the local tv had just finished running a series on Whingeing Poms, so we had a lot of bridge-building to do to assure the landlady that not all Brits can be tarred with the same brush. *(Since that time, there has been a series here looking at the same scenario but from the Brit perspective. If that was true, then many of the £10 tourists had a right to be just slightly put out. They were sold a dummy from this end — today the advertising standards board would most probably have the Australian High Commissioner in jail for misrepresentation — and when they got there they were treated like refugees and slave labour! But that said, many did seem to make the most of it and take the opportunity to make a new life on the frontier, just as they did in the US. I suppose that whenever there appears to be an opportunity to improve your lot for free, there will always be those people who forget that nothing in this world is free. There is always a price to pay, and if the price is too high, then you shouldn't buy. The price in this case appears to have been about 18 months of hell for most people, but those who were actually looking for opportunity rather than a soft ride seem to have reaped the benefits they anticipated.)*

Philip Island — pah. The koalas in the koala sanctuary were all practising their invisible man impressions. Picture this, the place is a woodland, obviously since koalas live in trees. A queue of cars are slowly driving down dirt tracks with heads sticking out of the windows, all looking towards heaven. No, not a religious festival. As cars pass each other, each passenger recites the mantra, 'Any luck', which is responded to with 'NO'. Eventually the news filtered through that ONE had been seen, so there is a squeeling of tires as cars execute handbrake turns (maybe I exaggerate *un peu*) and drive off down the dirt track until the allotted place is found. It's easy to recognise, follow the people wandering around with faces turned to the heavens, bumping into trees. At last, nirvana. 'There it is', that little black blob about 50ft up in the tree, clinging on for dear life in the high winds. So we took the obligatory pictures and drove round the coast a bit more to find the Fairy Penguins.

Fairy Penguins — pah. They don't perform until 6.30 p.m., too late for us. So we continued our drive round the island. Let's see if we can watch the seals 'playing in the seas just off the coast at Nobbies' according to the guide book. Seals — pah, they'd obviously gone off to nibble some of Nobbies' Nuts.

Let's see the blowhole, that's supposed to be spectacular. Nope, the tide was out.

The scenery was awesome, though. I love the sea, especially in its rough moods, and here were waves crashing across the rocks with the sound of thunder — no, not thunder, more like a long, slow rumble from an underground explosion. I needed to get closer, to touch nature. Unfortunately nature touched me. As we were going down the path to the rocks I slipped and fell. I only turned my ankle over but it hurt like nothing I'd experience before, and I was almost sick right there and then. This just can't happen to me on my holiday. I won't allow it. But god, it hurts. I'm afraid I might have done more than just twist my ankle.

Having missed all the interesting sights on Philip Island, there was nothing more to do than sit in the car park with a soft drink and a packet of crisps. Now admittedly the window was very slightly open in the car and this might have been significant, but I just opened my packet of crisps and looked up to see four seagulls sitting on the railing in front of the car. Then two more came and landed on the bonnet. Then I noticed about six of them on the ground beside the car. And they were all staring fixedly in at me as if they knew we had food. As an experiment, I gingerly dropped a single crisp out of the window. Whoosh, it was like *The Birds* — hundreds and thousands of them piling onto this one crisp. Driving off, a couple were trailing us — we could see their shadows above us. Eerie.

The return journey was relatively uneventful, apart from getting lost — well, I was navigating and only once is a record for me. After a great Japanese meal opposite the Southern Cross, we ended our last evening in truly Melbournian style, good chat, good food and good booze. I think that aptly encapsulates my first experience of this city that I have decided I love. (*And with subsequent visits that conclusion has been reinforced. I love Melbourne and I love the people. Much better than Sydney in my view.*)

I don't know if it was the ice pack on my ankle, which had succeeded in its impersonation of a black balloon, or if it was the booze, but I could hardly feel any pain. I spent the rest of the evening taking ice both externally and internally, in my Southern Comfort, with great success.

## **Tuesday**

Unfortunately my patent cure was only of limited duration. I can hardly walk. I'm afraid I've done something serious but it's not worth going to hospital because we're leaving Victoria this afternoon and there is no way I'm going to put off going to Perth.

I eventually found that by walking just on the toe of that foot and holding John as a counterbalance I could hobble for a short distance at least. So we started our round of goodbyes to both people and places. I wonder when/if we'll ever see them again?

We'd scheduled lunch with Justin, but as usual he wasn't ready. When I told him about my foot he was not very sympathetic; just related the tale of when he tore all the ligaments in his leg and had bruises all over his knee. What about some sympathy Justin? I feel sorry for myself and everyone in the world should feel the same. Outside of Minotaur Books we caught a guy sitting on a bench to take a picture of all three of us outside the shop. (*Unfortunately we lost one film when we used a postal developing service and it was this one. There goes a piece of fannish history.*)

It had been a bright sunny morning although they had been forecasting thunderstorms later on. When we went in to a bar for lunch it was hot and there wasn't a cloud in the sky, when we came out it was hailing — and pretty big hailstones. So we quickly said goodbye to Justin and walked round the corner to catch a taxi at the invisible taxi queue. We kept on hailing taxis and they kept on going past to pick up people just down the road — some things are universal. As per usual the taxi driver didn't know where we were going and John 'the visitor' had to direct him to Brunswick.

Clive took us to the airport, and since we were early we sat around in the bar just for a change. Here I had a solid reality check. The news was featuring riots in Birmingham, England. What! We've only been away a couple of weeks and law and order collapses.

The four-hour journey to Perth is best forgotten. Narrow seats and an aching foot are not conducive to a 'jolly' time. And, being a domestic flight, there wasn't a video or film to pass the time away. To make things worse, someone had obviously reported us as members of alcoholics anonymous. As the meal was being dished up ('served' is too generous a description) everybody else was being asked if they wanted a drink, but they just sort of missed us. But anyway we managed to attract attention eventually and get some alcohol.

Hey, we're in Perth! Change the watches again, we're now on Western time. We were met by Sally Beasley and Dave Lockett and given a short tour of the area en route to their house, featuring prominently the local brothel — a rather nondescript building apart from its bright mauve colour. No red light outside, but then again it would have been lost with that mauve background.

At long last, reality met my expectations. I had thought that in a land as large as Australia, everyone would have lots of space. I had been very disappointed to see that in both Melbourne and Sydney the planners had used this totally blank sheet to design little square boxes in straight lines. Perth was also divided into boringly square plots, but at least they were bigger. Sally and Dave's was just what I had expected an Australian house to be — large and rambling, with two showers! The only one that has so far. We sat around and talked for a while and were given our itinerary for our stay in Perth.

### ***Wednesday***

Foot alert — still swollen and painful for any long distances.

Sally had organised our itinerary and today was King's Park day. Here in the centre of the city is a haven of completely untouched brushland. No wonder everyone is so proud of it. From one aspect you can look out over the bay of the Swan River which is so wide at this point it could be mistaken for the coast. Perth looks a very relaxed city — well landscaped and dissected by freeways, but even these have a statuesque beauty. You can see the amount of building work being done for the Americas cup. I hope they don't lose it because all these new hotels will be surplus to requirements — might be good for science fiction conventions, though. I'm glad we've come now because an occasion like the Americas Cup could ruin the atmosphere of Perth, so at least we will have had a chance to see the before, although I'm not sure if Sally's itinerary allows much time for wandering around Perth itself.

We had a very British snack of scones, jam, cream and coffee in the restaurant in the Park overlooking the bays which though pleasant, was exorbitantly priced — the first time we've thought that throughout our trip. The Pioneer Women's Fountain, though not one of the most spectacular, was fascinating inasmuch as it had a variety of different fountains that went through a choreographed sequence to represent their story.

It's spring here in Western Australia, so the wildflowers in the brush were spectacular although Sally explained this was early spring, so not all of them are out yet. (A word of warning for other trip winners, take a thesaurus with you, there are only so many times you can say spectacular, great, beautiful...) During the summer things must look very barren, though.

If the restaurant in the Park was exorbitant, the smorgasbord at the Merlin hotel was a give-away. It typified the difference in the cost of food over here. There were giant prawns, caviar, oysters... as shellfish lovers we thought we'd died and gone to heaven. And all for A\$15.50 (£7-ish) which is expensive for a lunch, but not for that lunch.

To walk this off we went round to the Aboriginal art gallery, the first time we'd encountered aborigines being viewed in any light other than a tourist attraction. Admittedly, we most probably hadn't recognised any of the others since they didn't meet our stereotyped images. Good stuff there except there weren't any aborigines. The gallery was supposed to be run on their behalf and was manned by the same type of middle-class ladies you meet in the Oxfam shop. It felt a little condescending. Why can't the aborigines run their own gallery? Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but I could almost hear the comments: they're good artists, they've done really well, considering... they're sweet little boys and they have natural talent, but they can't really administer the business side of it. John's going to be busy when we get back finding wall space for everything we bought. I agonised over the painted emu egg but had to leave it behind. What would be the first thing to get crushed in the baggage? Oh, but it was to die for! By that time my foot was *absolutely killing me* so we returned to Sally's to rest before going out for yet more food. (Diet, diet, here I come...)

I changed into a skirt (no, not literally, you idiot) and was ribbed about 'changing for dinner' but the rationale was more pragmatic than that — after that enormous lunch I knew I was going to be bloated and the skirt was a damned sight looser than trousers! We went to Acapulco Annie's (guess the nationality) because of their happy hour. Being in a different country, you would expect things to be different, and this happy hour was. We just have drinks at half price and you can choose whether to have twice as much. Not here, here you get two drinks for the price of one, or two pitchers of Margeuritas for the price of one, in John's case. So, it's not our fault we drank so much, local custom made us, honest. We were the first ones there, followed by John McDowell, then Ian Nicholls and then the two M's — Mark & Michelle. The food was very much like Cafe Pacifico or any other TexMex type place. Since it was Ian's birthday yesterday, we had an impromptu party back at Sally's place, which developed a splinter group at the dining table talking gaming, whilst Mark, Michelle and Sally were discussing gossip in the lounge — who was sleeping with whom, who wasn't sleeping with whom and who should be sleeping with whom, or who shouldn't be sleeping with whom!

The cabaret at the party featured Sally's cat and a variety of inflated condoms. The rainbow coloured ones didn't pass the quality test, bursting at the first pat, but the textured ones were a definite success. Why, you may ask, were condoms being sacrificed in this way? Well, to be honest I can't remember. If memory serves me well, we were discussing 'the big outside' and I was ruing the fact that we hadn't really experienced it, except from the plane. Boring... was the rejoinder from those of the company who weren't killing trolls or something. Sally and Dave had decided to drive across to the convention, which entailed several days in the Nullabor. You want outback, you get it for mile after mile after mile after mile out there. Apparently the highlight of the trip is to see who can be the first to spy the next patch of scrub, and to guess how long it will take to get there. Here in this desolate place, there are the occasional staging posts for those en route to somewhere else, and it was in one of these

islands that Sally had cause to visit the toilet, to discover a machine. A treasure trove machine of condoms — amazing that this out-of-the-way hotel should be progressive enough to put a condom dispenser in the ladies' toilet, mind-blowing to see the variety — coloured, textured, flavoured... different sizes... starting with normal and getting larger (what man would ever admit to 'small?'). Why they were blown up and left to the tender ministrations of the cat, I have no idea.

### **Thursday**

Foot alert! Still swollen but now a work of art — all the colours of the rainbow. I'd picked up a cold somewhere so my nose was a bit stuffy and I had a sore throat, and where I'd been bitten by an ant or something yesterday, my arm was all puffy and hot — what a right, sorry specimen of the human race. This is my holiday; I won't let this happen; I will NOT be ill. John... I don't feel well... why me?

Dave came out with us today to show us one of the vineyards in the Swan valley. It wasn't actually in production so we couldn't go round and see them working on it, although they did have the tasting room open where Dave & Sally bought some wines. What a great idea. Here are all these little wineries and each one actually encourages visitors. You can try the wines with no real pressure (other than your own self-imposed moral pressure) to buy. *(Little did we know that this was the birth of a tradition. Each time we've been back to Australia since we've been to some vineyards, and thanks to Perry Middlemiss we've developed quite a cellar out there. Each time we go we buy wines to drink now, to lay down for 5 years and to lay down for 10 years. That way each trip there are more wines ready for drinking. At last count there're over 60 bottles waiting for us!)*

Our next destination was the old town of York (1850 and the second settlement in Western Australia). Once again, I was stunned by the youth of things that the Australians think of as old. At least here the architecture was different so the town could not have been anywhere back home. The buildings were all wood, and the archetypal wide verandas running round all four sides place you firmly in Australia. We had tea in the Settler's House whilst Dave went to the pub for alcohol and cheaper food. *(I just can't believe that comment. We had tea whilst there was alcohol around! I must have been ill, or else I was being a very polite guest and keeping Sally company.)* I enjoy wandering around old towns like this, although I don't think Sally and Dave found it as fascinating as we did. The printing museum was also a working print shop, and although the museum wasn't open, our British accents worked in our favour again and the owners gave us a private guided tour of all the equipment. I love old machinery. I think I would have liked to be an Industrial Archaeologist if only there was a living to be made in that line. I always found the Agricultural and Industrial Revolution here in the UK fascinating. The swing bridge (a rope across the river), the courthouse and the prison cells. Sally's interest in social history added an extra dimension here. Looking at the graffiti on the cell walls, she could identify from the names that most prisoners were aborigines. I find myself alternately drawn to investigate the aboriginal situation more, and repelled by the pompous self-righteousness of the white immigrants. *(I have experienced this same feeling many times since then, as I travel to ex-colonial countries, and see the aftermath of the colonial empires. I sometimes feel like starting my courses with an apology for what my ancestors did, and a promise to try my best to redress the balance now, and I suppose in a way I am, since I'm teaching them the modern methodologies used by developed countries, so they won't be so dependent on the British and American bankers.)*

## ***Friday***

This was Fremantle market and party day. The drive from Perth out to the coast at Fremantle follows the Swan River, past the expensive real estate, the expensive boats and the immigrant reception. Today is 'shopping' day, and Western Australia is opal country, so I spent an enjoyable hour or so looking at jewellery, eventually buying the most beautiful ring and earrings to match. Lunch was at the famous Sail & Anchor which brews its own beer at wine strength. Can you imagine drinking wine by the pint! The US fleet was in town, and in the bar. I was fascinated by the uniforms. Just like the Gene Kelly film, they were all in white, flared trousers and black shoes that you could see your face in. The trousers were creased horizontally, as if they'd been folded in a suitcase, but I'm sure they'd been ironed that way. How bizarre.

We were joined by Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna but didn't stay for lunch since one of Sally's clients was in the pub. We didn't ask. The market at Fremantle was a fascinating mixture of tourist crap and everyday items. I can get lost in a market for hours on end. I love walking round food stalls, identifying the differences, watching the 'locals' live their lives, comparing prices, identifying unusual fruits. This is where you really know you're in a different country. We purchased our obligatory souvenirs (teacloths, always got to buy a souvenir teacloth, towels and, of course, a hat with corks (made in Taiwan!)) and headed for the harbour. The US aircraft carrier was anchored just outside the harbour, which elicited a rant from Joseph on American imperialism, which got quieter as a US officer came up to look out over the harbour with us, and increased in volume again as he left.

This was our last night in Australia, so a party was laid on and a good night was had by all. An evening truly representative of our stay. Good food, lots of booze and excellent company. Details are a little fuzzy now, but I definitely remember Joseph falling asleep standing up. I also remember Ian Nichols outstaying his welcome but no-one wanting to upset him by asking him to leave. 'I'm leaving tomorrow and I might never see him again, so I'll do it for you'... and I did. I wonder if I will ever see him again!

## ***Saturday***

Today we leave, and my voice has already left. We met up at the airport with Joe & Judith who were taking the same flight back to Singapore, but the conversation was somewhat stilted, with her hearing problems and my lack of voice. Thanks to 'The Purple Rose of Cairo', the pain from my foot was forgotten on the flight back, aided by the free drinks of course. What a great film! So similar and yet so dissimilar to the other Woody Allen works I've seen.

What can you say about a journey home? Not much, there's no excitement, only tiredness and memories. Via Singapore and Bahrain, we arrived back at Heathrow far too many hours later, to be met by Ian and Janice Maule, and transported back to reality and the doctors. Yes, my foot. Only twice normal size, and dirty dishwater coloured, it was the object of much poking and twisting. 'You've walked on this' came the pronouncement. Yes, of course I have. Apparently I'd cracked the ankle bone, but because I subsequently used the appendage since then, there's nothing they can do to help. Don't bandage it up because that'll only keep it weak. Don't twist it again or it'll crack again (as if I'd do that on purpose). Don't walk on it (so how am I going to get home?). Pah. The Brighton Belle is home, and just like the namesake, I feel like I'm being retired to the sidings. Reality is hell. I want to go back.