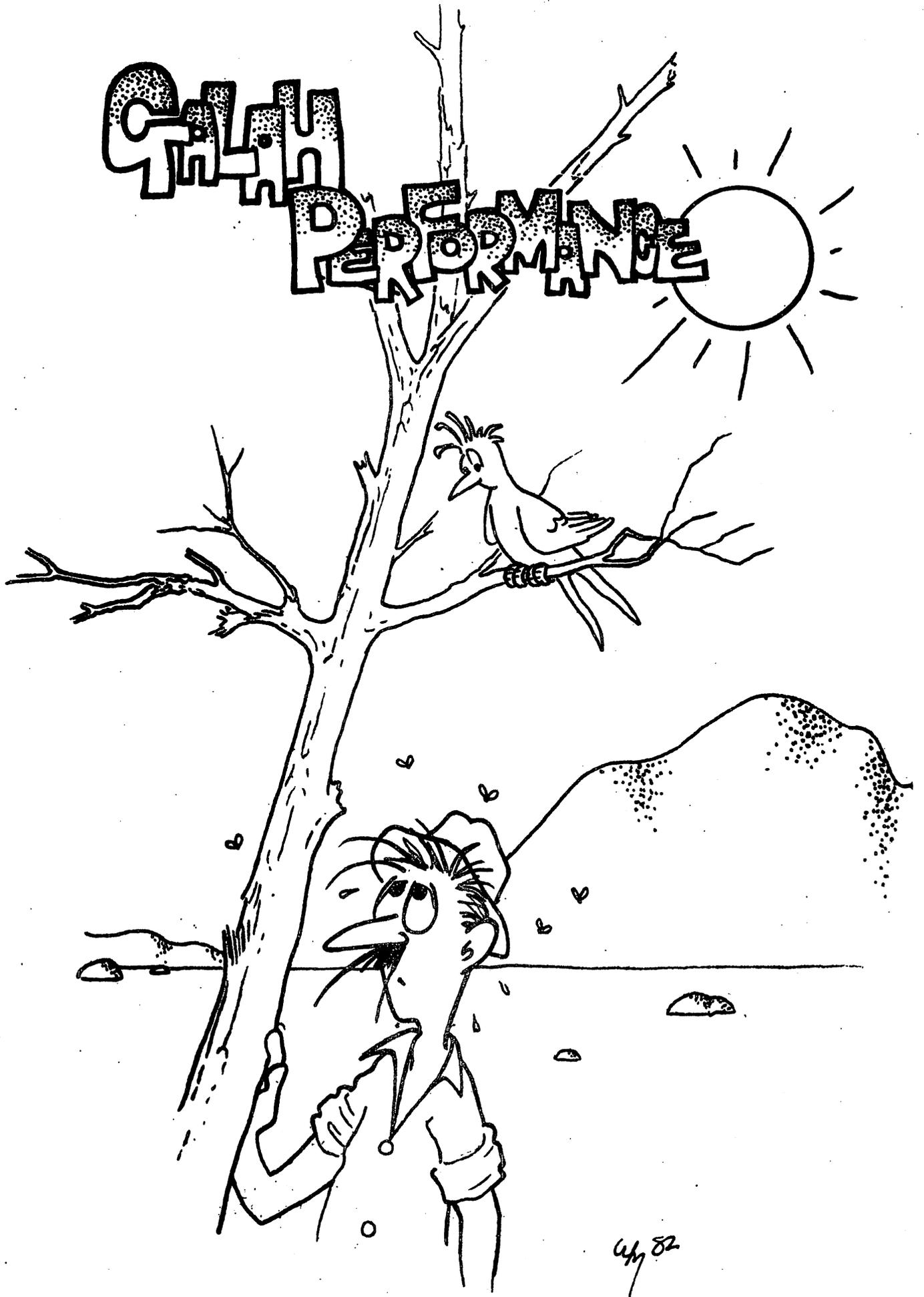
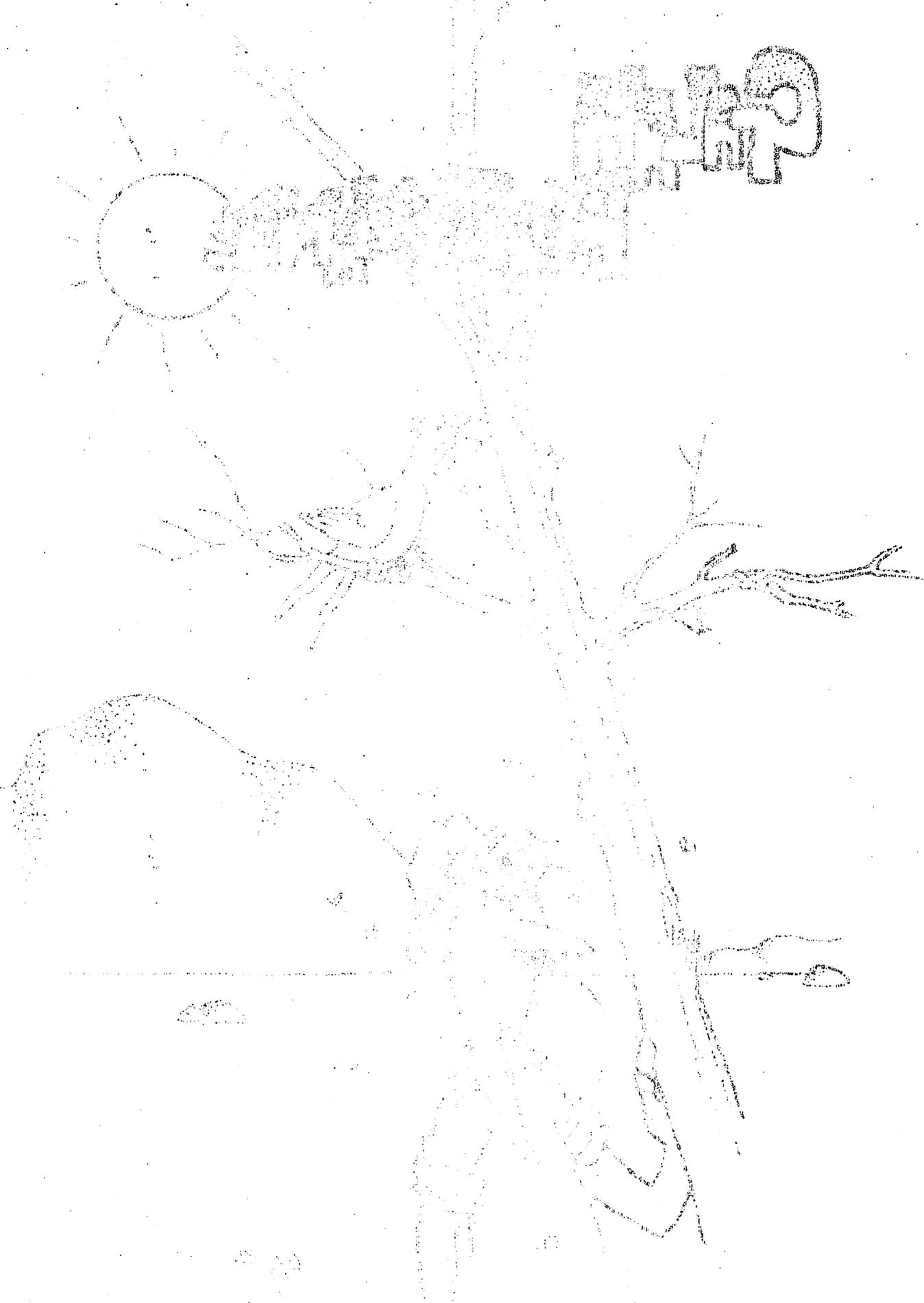


GETTING PERFORMANCE





GALAH PERFORMANCE

A Trip Report by John Berry
119 Garsdend Ave. Hatfield, Herts. UK AL10 8LH

Art by ATom and Taral

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*Galah Performance is sold for \$2 plus postage
(50¢ or \$1 UK). Proceeds will be given to TAFF
after costs are paid, or after the 30th copy is
sold. No copies are available for trade, though
a few have been and will continue to be given away
for publicity. Please review.*

This copy was first ELST WEINSTEIN's

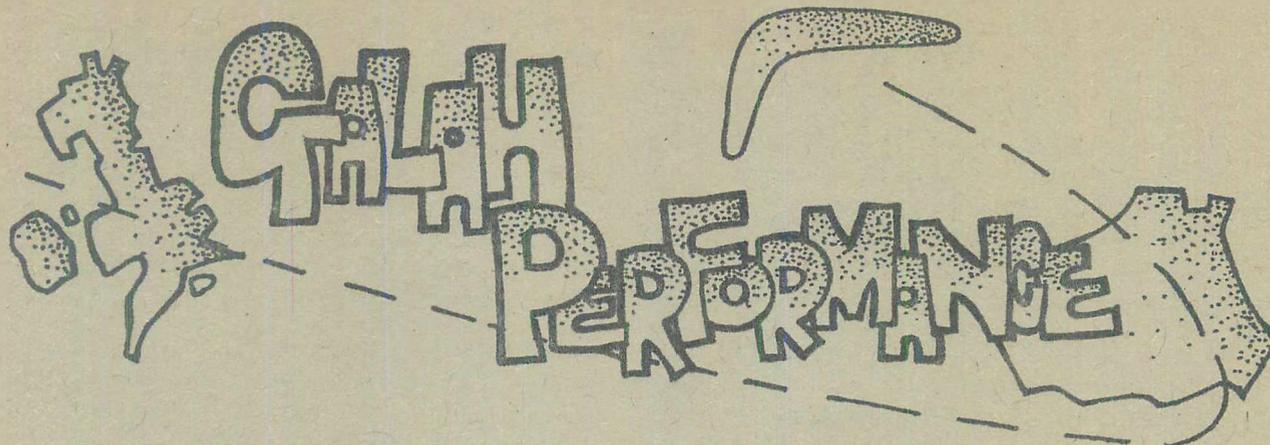
It's later owners were

Remember to vote for
Avedon Carol for TAFF in '83
Grant Canfield for TAFF in '83
Taral Wayne for TAFF in '83

Number 83 of 150

"If you look up the definition of the galah bird in a volume of Australian birds, you will probably find why I chose it for the title... it's supposed to be a fairly dumb bird, and flies into brick walls and things. Thought you'd like to know... it might suit as a little prelude."

John



GILLY PERFORMANCES

When arranging air transport from London to Melbourne for our proposed month's holiday in Dandenong, Australia with our son and his wife, being of a thoughtful disposition I naturally wished to utilise the services of an excellent organisation. My nationalistic pride firmly suggested *British Airways*, and my previous flights with them had always been efficiently conducted, but I was unduly concerned with the strike figures... it was not unusual for labour to be suddenly withdrawn, and flights cancelled, irrespective of the discomfort caused to innocent passengers. A quick check of the aeronautics section of the local reference library at Welwyn Garden City revealed that the national Australian airline *Quantas (Queensland and Northern Territories Air Service)* had an excellent strike-free record... so there it was... decisions... decisions... and against my wife's advice I booked our return flights (£553.00) with *Quantas*. Want to know a secret?

Within three weeks prior to our departure on 3rd. March 1981, rumblings on the radio mentioned a strike by *Quantas* employees, mostly bag-handlers, "resulting in *Quantas* passengers being stranded all over the world." My inborn optimism concluded that the strikes would be over before we departed, but each day, the news bulletins reported that negotiations hadn't been satisfactorily concluded... telephone calls to the London *Quantas* office were answered politely but with calculated vagueness, but on the day before our departure the good news was that flight QF2 was definitely leaving on time but the flight would terminate in Sydney. A dry-mouthed check on my map of Australia revealed that Sydney was about 500 kms from Melbourne, but I was assuaged by the fact that *Quantas* had promised that a domestic flight would conclude our journey. I am a keen air passenger and have accumulated over 120 flights on twenty different types of aircraft, and the thought of adding a couple of new types delighted me. So my wife and I reported to the *Quantas* desk at Heathrow Airport, and after a repast in the International Departure Lounge, we boarded the 747 Jumbo.

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I am now an authority on the physical and psychological implications of "jet lag" or "jet fatigue", mostly because of the careful research and notage I recorded in the interests of science. I read that the human metabolism is so organised that during regulated periods of sleep the urinary system slows down so that trips to the toilet during the wee small hours of the morning are not usually undertaken... in my case, living for 55 years in the Northern Hemisphere, this facility has become firmly established. This observation is critical to the circumstances of our flight to Australis, and my subsequent mal-adjustment.

Our seats in the 747 were at the front right of the aircraft, seductively close to the first class compartment. I managed to sit next to a window not obstructed by wing or engines. We took off at 20.45, and later the pilot announced that we would land at Bahrain in six hours time, and he suggested that interested persons should amend their watches to Bahrain time... which was 01.00 hours... the grinding of minute mechanisms confirmed that everyone had dutifully performed this ritual.

Before the wheels had been retracted we were given a slug of orange juice, followed by a hot evening meal, skilfully packed on a plastic tray... each item in its own little cellophane wrapper... free white wine... and then gradually people settled down in their angled seats. I had not altered my watch to Bahrain time, suggesting I intended to monitor G.M.T,* but my real reason was that I could not fully comprehend the technique to change my digital watch by the depression and manipulation of mystic devices.

I was delighted at the prospect of visiting another country, even if it was only for a couple of hours... and dawn broke rapidly as we made a perfect landing at Bahrain. My wife said it was 06.30 hours... my watch indicated 01.30 G.M.T. Yet I was fully awake and very hungry, and, extremely pertinent to my research, I did not require to visit the toilet, even though I had imbibed a lot of liquid.

We were permitted to explore the departure lounge at Bahrain Airport. The locals appeared to be small persons, and many of them were enshrouded in all-white (in some cases off-white) ensembles, rather like slack mummies. My wife purchased a Chanel 5 at the duty-free counter, and I scribbled a couple of whimsical cards to my daughter and family in County Down.

Back in the 747... I noted that the first class passengers were being given hot face towels held firmly in wooden tongs, whilst we economy class passengers were given more cold orange juice and shortly afterwards a substantial hot breakfast... it was 03.00 G.M.T, and yet I had seemed to have lived for one whole day in the last seven hours. Our next stop was Singapore, six and a half hours away, and being seated at the window I was able to see the exotic landscape revealed in flawless detail 32,000 feet below.

Our jumbo traversed the Indian sub-continent from Bombay to Madras... the entire country seemed to be eternally brown, and I was amazed to see long parallel black lines crossing the land. I presumed them to be fault lines caused by earthquakes... as we neared the east coast of India I was able to follow a brown river bed as tributaries joined it... it grew wider, and yet I swear there was no water flowing to the sea... here and there little oblongs of parched earth were revealed, hacked out from the wasteland. It struck me immediately why there was so much emigration to England!

Meanwhile the pilot suggested a watch change to Singapore time... we would arrive at 19.00 hours... I checked G.M.T... it would be 09.00 hours back home in England when we reached Singapore... and yet we were now being served with another large meal... that made three meals and countless wines and orange juice when normally I wouldn't be eating or drinking anything.

But it was now 07.30 G.M.T, when I would routinely be leaping out of bed for my 150 press-ups... my metabolism was now following the U.K. routine and I now required an urgent trip to the toilet.

I have explained that I was at the window, my wife sat next to me and on her left was a very old woman who had never flown before and was extremely worried by the experience. Of course, travelling by economy class meant that we were crammed close to the seat in front, rather like a Homo Sapiens sandwich. I passed the message via my wife that I wished to vacate my seat, and after much clambering and apologising I joined the queue. The queue?

As the entire passenger load had departed from Heathrow at the same time, all their metabolisms worked on the same wave-length as my own. If you look at the basic

* G.M.T. is Greenwich Mean Time, measured at the meridian passing through Greenwich UK.

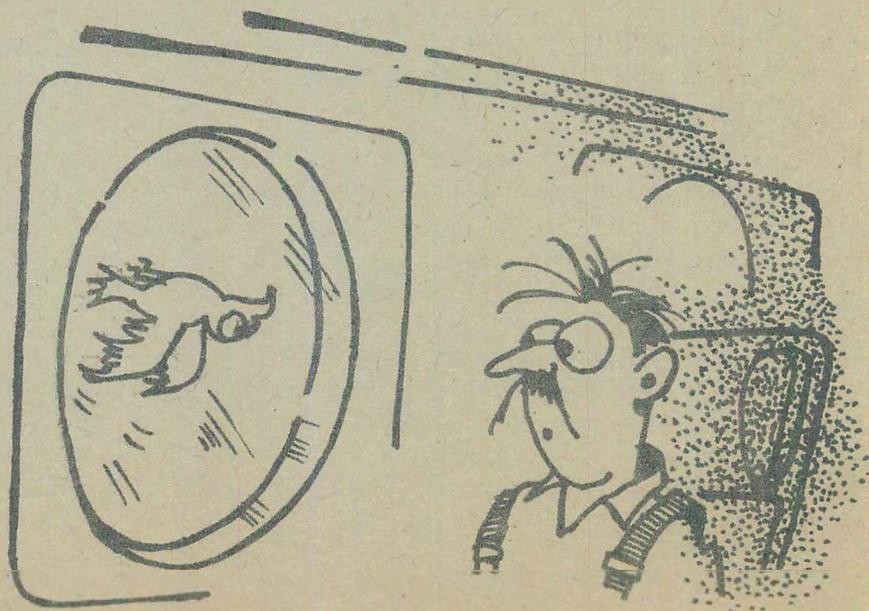
economics of jumbo jet travel, you've got to admit that the maximum number of people have to be carried to ensure financial viability, but at the same time the installation of lavatories must be minimally applied so as not to intrude on maximum seating capacity. After half an hour of knee-trembling it was my turn to nip into the little metal cubicle, and as I closed the narrow concertina doors I noted the intense look of anguish on the face of the next hopeful occupant. The designer of the jumbo had obviously concluded that most of the passengers would be dwarfs... there can be no other explanation for the closed confines of that little toilet. The flush handle was also rather cleverly camouflaged and required a concentrated search to find it... now I knew why each visitor had looked stunned when he or she came out. I would state without reservation that anyone suffering from claustrophobia and constipation should not travel by 747... not economy class, anyway.

I was just settled back in my seat when along came more liquid refreshment. It was dark when we hit Singapore exactly on time. When we left England it was a cold winter's night... in Singapore, as we bussed to the airport lounge, it was fantastically hot and clammy, especially for me because I was still wearing my thick pullover and jacket. I understand that an unofficial census was taken amongst the wide-eyed staff of *Air Singapore*, who universally opined that I was the first person ever to wear a thick chunky woollen pullover in Singapore... thank goodness they didn't know that I was also wearing combinations. Once more into the jumbo, dear friend, en route to Sydney southwards and across the entire Australian continent from Derby on the west coast, over Alice Springs and thence to Sydney. Dinner was served, but the new *Quantas* crew revealed that the strike had not permitted the normal delivery of comestibles... we were to have an economy meal, although it was now 10.00 hours G.M.T, at which time I would have had one cup of coffee and a slice of toast.

After dinner we were treated to a film, *Breaker Moran*, about events in South Africa in the Boer War where an Australian horse-breaker joined the British Army and carried out a few summary executions without awaiting the results of a judicial verdict. The screen was in the First Class lounge, and I got a pretty good view, but the people behind must have had sandpaper eyeballs at the conclusion of the film. I fell asleep before it finished... the arm rest-attached ear plugs had fallen across my horizontal chest, and at my sudden awakening I thought I was being attacked by twin cobra

Another dawn met me over central Australia and another meal... we landed at Sydney and the disembodied *Quantas* voice told us to contact "the local carrier" for the Melbourne flight.

Immigration and Customs were a formality and I tagged onto a queue which lead to T.A.A, a local carrier. I handed over my three suitcases and received appropriate tags. But from then on my control over the situation lessened by the moment... a Customs man told me that *Ansett* was the accredited *Quantas* carrier, and suggested that we should hurry and get the departing *Ansett* coach to the other Sydney airport, otherwise we would miss the flight. Everything was



efficiently arranged at the Ansett desk, except for the sniggers and raised eyebrows at my announcement that my three suitcases were being hacked about by a rival concern.

The hour's flight was in a DC 9, a new type for my list, but I was too frustrated to really appreciate it... but I did forget about my suitcases as I scanned the swiftly-passing Australian countryside... I noted Oxbow rivers snaking across the countryside and detached loops here and there where the river had changed course ... this conceivably happened thousands of years ago and probably wouldn't be noticeable (or even of interest) to people on the ground.

We met our thirty-year-old son Colin and his wife at Melbourne airport... I also noticed my old friend Frank had come to meet us... he was a Senior Sergeant in the Federal Police, and in the past I had shared many memorable adventures in crime detection in circumstances where the discovery of our status could easily have meant a brief interlude with Mr. Armalite. But here in the controlled commotion of Melbourne airport Frank stated that he had worked there as security officer for some years, and he was so confident in the efficiency of Australian airlines that he promised without prejudice that my cases would be whirling around the T.A.A. luggage arrival centrifuge, and indeed they were.

Frank promised to see us again during the course of our holiday, and Colin drove us to his home in Dandenong, about 35 miles from the airport. It was the first time we had seen the Dandenong-Berry abode, and my wife and I were extremely impressed with their financial and professional advancement in such a short time.

In the middle of a conversation with Colin and his wife over tea, my head dropped forward and clicked like castanets. My wife's head was slowly moving up and down, and the yellow of her eyes shone through the slits of her eyelids as she tried to keep awake. It was 17.30 Melbourne time. We jet-lagged to our bedroom.

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10.00 hours the following morning. We'd slept for sixteen hours and only sweet steaming coffee got us mentally operational again. Colin drove us around Dandenong for a preliminary reconnaissance... it reminded me very much of a middle-west town in the U.S.A.

In the afternoon we were still in a befuddled state, and I offered to water the garden. I switched on the hose, and because I was so exhausted I manipulated the tap-handle to its maximum. This supplied a two-fold function... it forced me against the wall, keeping me in rather a crouched stance, reminiscent of incipient haemorrhoids, and it also assisted me, by maintaining a forceful grip, to water the extremities of the lawn without moving. The delicate spray kept me awake and slightly resisted the sun's rays, which, incidentally, caused a rainbow to semi-circumscribe the hose spray. "That's a lovely rainbow" observed my wife, and tried to wrestle the hose pipe out of my hands. I tried meekly to explain that it required all my strength to retain it against my body, but my wife was insistent, and a split-second before adroitly jumping out of the way, I handed her the hose pipe head. I suppose it would have been reasonable for a casual observer to have concluded that somehow the hose pipe had shorted to a bare wire, thus causing the hose head to leap about in my wife's clutching fingers. Unfortunately, the power of compressed water is quite potent, as I explained to my wife later, it being the basis of the hydro-electric system. She inadvertantly removed one hand from the pipe (she hadn't much option, frankly, otherwise it would have broken her wrist) and immediately it commenced to revolve vertically at 360 degrees. Of course, because the sun was in the high eighties it didn't take too long for the steam off my wife's dress to evaporate, and, as I told her, there was the added bonus of a lovely rainbow.

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The Moomba Parade is held annually in Melbourne on Labour Day; this year on 9th. March. My friend Frank had used his influence to get his car and Colin's parked in a police garage, thus permitting us to only have to walk a short distance to a strategic situation from which to watch and photograph.

Frank's family, and the Berry brigade congregated on a bend at the top of a hill, permitting us to see the parade approach us and swing away to the right. Masses of people impatiently awaited the start of the parade, heralded by clowns and a police car. Luckily the hot orb in the clear blue sky blasted sunshine over us.

Although the floats were ingeniously decorated, there seemed to be a lack of enthusiasm from at least our section of the crowd... no one cheered or shouted or clapped. However, the people on the floats (and many of them were girls, scantily clad) energetically waved their hands, frantically looking round with teeth-clenched smiles, eyes searching anxiously for another set of eyes in the crowd with whom they could click and therefore consolidate rapport. The military, police and brass bands rarely played as they passed us because they had just marched up the hill and didn't have enough puff. As they passed us, a drummer tapped a warning thump, and they licked their lips preparatory to blasting forth with an emotive overture which unfortunately we didn't hear.

Each section of the parade was heralded by two life-savers carrying a banner between them depicting the theme of the section of the procession behind them. The life-savers were dressed only in bathing costumes and plastic caps, and the bottoms of the poles holding the banners were rammed into circular retainers placed vertically at the pit of the stomach. Everytime the wind blew, the men blinked their eyes and winced. But sometimes the banners were carried by gorgeous girls... Australian Amazons... striding out confidently, bathing costumes straining at every fibre to encompass and retain their pronounced physical assets. Frank looked at me and I looked at him, and we raised our cameras spontaneously to record the bobby dazzlers.

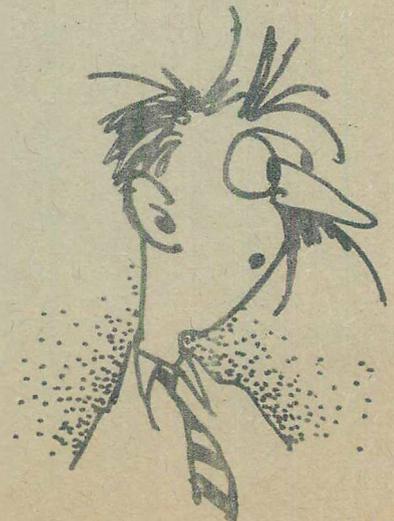
In one of Melbourne's newspapers next morning, a review of the parade was published, which I thought to be much too critical. It mentioned the crude and salacious comments made by men observers as the proud women strode past, but I certainly don't recall a reporter standing behind me. It is a fact that the Melbourne weather is very highly regarded, and in the previous 27 years of the Moomba Parade, rain was never experienced.

My son Colin had already intimated that I was a Jonah as far as inclement weather was concerned, and I did feel a mite guilty as the drizzle changed to rain and thence to individual rain drops hitting the ground like shrapnel. Colin was the only one of the group to bring an umbrella, being forewarned, moodily confirming that as I was with the group its use was inevitable. I held it, trying to cover the seven of us. Being a gentleman does not always have its compensations, because the protruding nodules around the rim of the umbrella I was holding dropped a steady dribble on my defenceless back... this was indeed a trick of fate, because on that morning, for the first time in my life, I had refrained from wearing my thick vest because of the heat of the day.

Eventually the rain became unbearable, and as the biggest Hong Kong dragon in the world passed us, we broke spontaneously for the garage which was a short distance away. Fortunately, I still had the umbrella. I felt rather guilty seeing the four ladies tip-toeing through the puddles, their hair plastered over their faces, but bearing in mind that I was the oldest one in our group, and not being insured against the common cold, I felt rather dignified under the protection of the taut black waterproof fabric.

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About ten Km. north of Dandenong are a range of hills rather optimistically called the Dandenong Mountains, through which we drove one Sunday. During the drive we visited a strange locality called The William Ricketts Sanctuary. It seems that Mr. Ricketts, who is still with us, purchased a plot of land on a wooded hillside in 1935 and from then on exemplified his feeling for the Aboriginal theme by making exquisitely-detailed busts of faces and animals in clay, and firing them in a crude kiln in his shack. The government accepted Ricketts' offer of the collection in 1961, and have since created the present sanctuary, including the provision of a new house for Ricketts, which incorporates a new sophisticated kiln. The area is heavily wooded, including many examples of the strange "stringy-bark" tree, which sheds long thin strips of bark, and the strips drape over anything which inhibits their fall to the ground... also several different types of fern occur. In many places in the sanctuary large rocks protrude from the ground, shaded by ferns, and surmounting the rocks are the Ricketts clay sculptures, mostly of Aboriginal persons, but occasionally with a keen-looking WASP type; on one particular sculpture the prototype aged Aboriginal has a protective arm around the shoulder of the WASP. Many Aboriginal children are featured, sometimes in a homogenous mass, all with honest open faces, as if they didn't know that the latest figures show that percentage-wise, Aboriginals constitute the world's largest ethnic group jailed for criminal offences.

In many of the sculptures, little fountains and dribblets of water gently drip over the bases of the figures, one displaying an advancing plague of rats. Also quite numerous are neatly written plaques describing the Ricketts philosophy, which is all to do with God and Creation and the Brotherhood of Man. In this sanctuary, one normally communicates in whispers, treading carefully, refraining from any outrageous verbal comment of jocularly... the only outward display of sacrilege was the screeching of the deep red and blue-plumaged Crimson Rosellas sweeping in rugged formation just above the trees.

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One afternoon we visited Healesville, about 45 Km. north-east of Melbourne, and had lunch at the Grand Hotel. I noticed that bars and hotels in small hamlets in Australia were always the most prominent buildings, indicating quite clearly that the early Australians had certain priorities. The Grand Hotel was like a Hollywood studio mock-up for a forties thriller film... I became so enamoured of this mood that I expected Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre to descend the central staircase... anyway, the meal was excellent. Our purpose in passing through Healesville was to visit the Fauna Park Sanctuary, inhabited by many examples of the indigenous animal and bird population of Australia, some of them being endangered species... I have developed an especial interest in bird life. Soon after entering the grounds of the Fauna Park, and paying the A\$ 2.50 entrance fee, we noticed a large and belligerent-looking emu. My wife was fascinated by this ungainly bird, and said she would like to be photographed in its proximity. The bird, as tall as she was, gave her the beady eye, and then, as she tried to stare it out, posing for the shot, it commenced a swaying movement and began to edge towards her. She was wearing a white blouse and brown skirt, and I do not know if the emu is susceptible to these colours in the mating season, whenever that is, but my impression was that the emu was preparing to assert itself in a rather undignified way. Having once bred guinea fowl I recognised the pre-mounting tension exemplified by a rapid tattoo of feet on the ground and an uncertain wavering of the head. My wife was unaware of this excited activity behind her, and was wearing her fixed smile, assumed automatically when being photographed, but sensed imminent danger when an old woman, observing the scenario, sent her son to fetch a bucket of cold water. With a flurry of skirts, knees akimbo, terror-stricken eyes (a stance I was fortunately

able to recapture for posterity) Diane sprinted away, and I was able to delay the emu's pursuit by frantically waving my arms and jumping up and down in a territory-challenging gesture.

We followed Diane to the cockatoo cage, and I have to report one of the most charming experiences I have ever undergone. The Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo is an Australian bird, and about twenty of them were in a long oblong-shaped cage, together with some black cockatoo's and galahs. We stood in various positions around the cage... I was preparing my camera for another shot, when a flurry of white wings alerted me to a white cockatoo which hit the wire immediately in front of my face and gave me an intelligent look. "Hello," it said. I mean, what was the protocol on such a formal occasion? "Hello," I said, looking around in case anyone witnessed this bizarre confrontation. "Hello," replied the cockatoo.

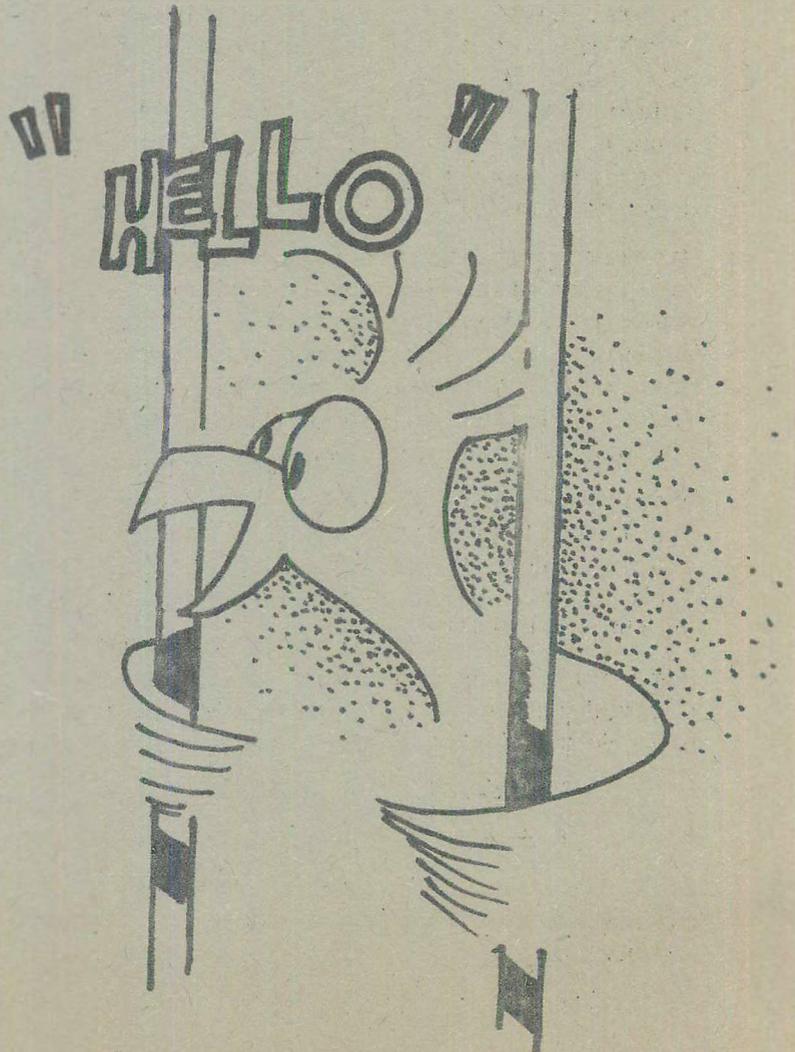
"Hello," I answered, licking my lips. "Hello," rejoined the cockatoo. I sensed that this conversation was going to be non-productive, so, with great daring I inserted a finger through the wire mesh and tickled his chest. He liked this very much, and the glare in his black eyes softened. My wife approached, warning me of a digital amputation, and the bird, at this juncture, erected its soft yellow crests. "Hello," it said, looking at her. "Hello," said my wife, charmed at this delicious moment. He swivelled his head to me. "Hello," it prompted. "Hello," I

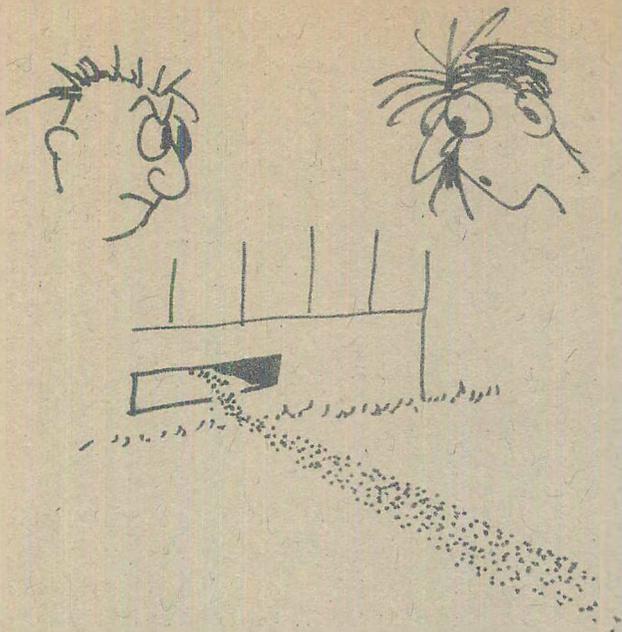
breathed. I didn't like the way people were crowding behind me, and we sidled away, trying to ignore the screeched "Hello" as the bird flapped along beside us until we cleared the cage area.

The locations featuring the varying animals and birds are separated by wire fences, and short walks connect the sites. There were countless numbers of white ibis probing the undergrowth with their long curved bills, and I once noticed half a dozen emus pestering people for tit-bits. Many little blue wrens were afoot, darting after insects, and I was fascinated by this game little bird. I also saw several of the extremely rare Cape Barren Geese and a wide variety of fairly common Australian birds, together with mundane kangaroos, wallabys, and a fairly torpid platypus.

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Colin has built a patio in one of his gardens, adjacent to the house. One day, shortly after our arrival, I saw a line of ants cutting diagonally across the brick floor. These were small creatures, about 3 mm. long. Traffic was always two ways,





and it seemed that every second ant met his approaching cousin, touched each other for exactly one second, and continued on their unerring route. I noticed that the ants disappeared inside the brickwork underneath the steps to the house. I mentioned this to my son, who was quite flippant about it. He said that the builder had confirmed that the house was pest-proof. I acknowledged this, but observed that the builder, Colin and I knew the house was pest-proof, but who had told the ants? Notwithstanding his statement that "it didn't matter", I ruthlessly decimated the enemy by progressing along the lines and stamping up and down on them.

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We visited the Melbourne Military Tattoo on Saturday 14th. March. I have

been told that the admission money alone was worthwhile, even without seeing a performance, because the tattoo was held in the M.C.G... *Melbourne Cricket Ground*, which only rates second to Naples and Mecca as being worthy of visitation before rigor mortis sets in.

Most of the programme contained the usual miscellany of kilted pipers, naval and air force brass bands, excellent high-stepping girl precision marchers... but a novel item was a Ghurka Kukri Dance, accompanied by a pipe and drum band. I liked the "Sailor's Hornpipe" performed by members of the Royal Australian Navy; the distance and lighting did not permit a close scrutiny of the personnel, and I have not been able to obtain confirmation of a certain point, and it certainly wasn't made clear by the announcer, but I sincerely hope that some of the dancers were of the female gender.

Pride of place went to the utterly magnificent display by the United States Marines Drum and Bugle Band. I am told that their drill expertise was par excellence, consisting of complicated intersecting movements which bewildered observers by its sheer audacity, but as a music lover I was almost oblivious to their technique, being totally enchanted by the musical aspect of their performance. For instance, in "Strike Up the Band", at each ascending chord the rows of players opened up like a flower, exposing new players blasting a brilliant cadance on their bugles.

They played six numbers with tremendous elan... huge blasting chords, followed by even more incredible noises which defy description. Minor subtleties attracted my attention, for instance, when the cymbal player clanged his discs together, he turned to face the row of drummers, placed the cymbals face downwards on the nearest drums, and the drummers rattled their sticks on the cymbals.

After their show, the applause was thunderous... anything which came afterwards was bound to be anticlimatic... a throaty shout of "encore" overpowered the applause, which almost strangled my epiglottis, but with confident bravado this unparalleled band swaggered away. I am delighted to report that subsequent reviews in the Melbourne press exactly expressed these sentiments.

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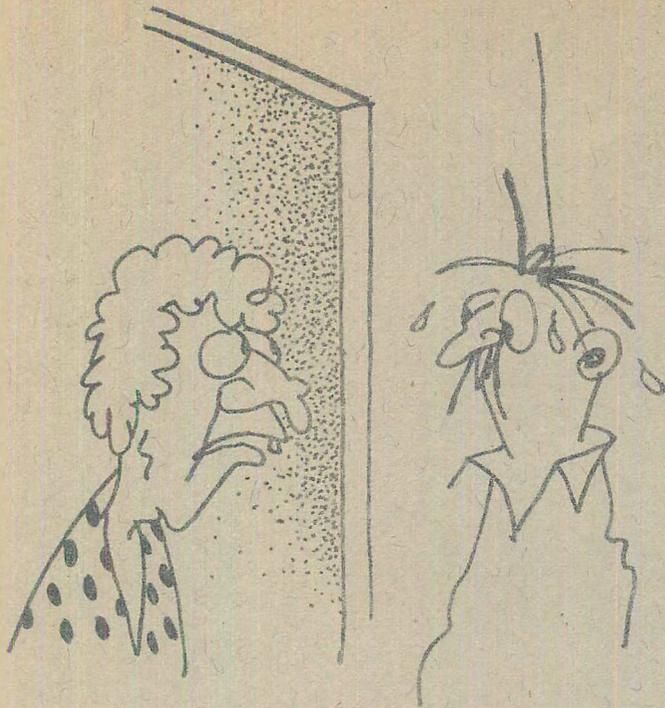
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Colin and his wife work on computers in a Melbourne skyscraper complex, and enthusiasts in their office organised a treasure hunt car rally, held on Sunday 15th.

March. Dandenong, where our son lives, was about twenty miles away from Doncaster, and Colin stated he'd read all about my superb map-reading in the U.S.A. in 1959,

when I navigated with pin-point accuracy to a convention hotel in Detroit, and would I do a test navigation from his house in Dandenong to the start. I was anxious to impress, because being navigator was a plum job, and meant that I would be esconced in the front seat with the driver for the entire rally, and not jammed in the back seat of the Cortina with my wife and his wife's sister, Michelle. Personally, I though I did tremendously well. I mean, the map I was using was three years old, and I hadn't been told that many new sets of traffic lights had been installed in the interim. I did notice that we passed the same cemetery entrance twice, but I hoped that my secret was safe, until my wife remarked on the apparent coincidence of a man with a black hat selling red roses from a yellow van outside two cemetery gates. Of course, the one major advantage of sitting in the back seat is the opportunity to see new countryside without interruption and being able to surrepticiously steal butterscotch from the big bag on the back window shelf. We departed from the starting centre and Colin, in charge of our car, read out the instructions... it was the normal sort of thing... having to obtain a few unused items, such as pine cones, and a long length of bark off the stringy-bark tree, which I've mentioned before. There was also the usual quota of questions relying on the navigator and passengers noting house names or telephone numbers, or the colours of mail boxes at various houses. We did well for half an hour, when we came to a long stretch of road which featured several times in the questionnaire. I was on my fourth butterscotch when my valuable experience was sought. The difficult question was: "Who needs filling?" Colin presumed that as houses were in the same neighbourhood, presumably someone had a large hole to fill, or maybe required hard core for the foundation of a new garage or outbuilding... this optimist was looking for someone who had a surplus on his premises. But who? I was once in a car rally in County Down where the questions were also obtuse. Whereas one is supposed to scour the area looking for the necessary answers, it occured to me, as an ex-village constable in County Down, that an aged inhabitant of the area would have all the local knowledge... I found one, being held up by a five-barred gate, and speedily got all the answers. We were disqualified from the County Down rally because our mileage was under the required figure to show that the entire course had been negotiated. But here, there was no fear of a sub-mileage penalty, because we only required one answer and we were on the correct route. "Who needs filling?" And then my County Down experience came to the fore. Approaching on the grass verge was a big young Australian girl. At first, I thought she had water wings under her blouse. She had straggly blonde hair, and her jaw was thrust forward aggressively. "Stop the car," I hissed. I opened the rear off-side door, got out, adopted my knowing smile, and confronted the girl. "Excuse me, my dear," I said, "but do you know anyone around here who needs filling?" "Pommy bastard," she snorted, and continued on her way. Eventually we saw a sign *Kline Needs Filling*. Following directions on the instructions we entered Circular Road... it was unsurfaced, pot-holed and narrow. Collin's wife was driving on this occasion, and she drove very slowly because the problem was: "Who was in?" Bushes and trees bordered the road except for the occasional rickety house, and we came to a clearing on the right with seperate notices "In" and "Out". But who was in? A wooden house, with warped boards, stood twenty yards away, and in order to recover my abating prestige I offered to find the



name of the householder. I knocked the door, and it opened with a noise like a rusted coffin lid being unhinged. A crone stood in the doorway with her arms folded. She wore a blue spotted apron, had a face like a pickled walnut and looked as though she had just wrestled a kangaroo. "Ah, you're in," I observed politely. "Of course I'm f---ing well in," she answered.

"Ahem," I said, "but who are you?"

"What do you f---ing well want to know that for?" she answered.

I suppose when you're living in the outback your phraseology is bound to deteriorate, especially when not having the opportunity to converse frequently with a person of my cultural level and vocabulary. Nevertheless, Anglo-Australian co-operation and friendship can never be enhanced by the use of vulgar

expletives and a volley of potted plants. As I backed away, I noticed a newspaper on the front step with the name "Blenkinsop" written on it. I triumphantly gave this information to Colin, who wrote it down. When the rally papers were later checked, it was revealed that her name was McGrath, but one driver, with a large piece of elastoplast on his forehead said his name was Blenkinsop and he'd dropped his newspaper on her step as he'd run away.

Following the vague route instructions supplied we concluded the rally at Jumping Creek Reserve in the Warrandyte State Park, where we barbequed the foot-square lumps of steak.

Whilst penetrating the bush at Jumping Creek in pursuit of sightings of the Bell Miner, a green bird emitting an unusual "tink" noise, I noted an ant on the ground, about an inch long. It had a large head, thin thorax and a big abdomen... it looked like a miniature set of dumbbells. I bent down to look at it more closely, and it swivelled round to face me, and raised the forward part of its body aggressively. I planted my shoe in front of it, but it wouldn't retreat. I admired this brave little insect, and immediately decided to give a "thumbs down" to my son's projected camping trip to the outback.

Unfortunately, due to the Blenkinsop error, we didn't win a prize.

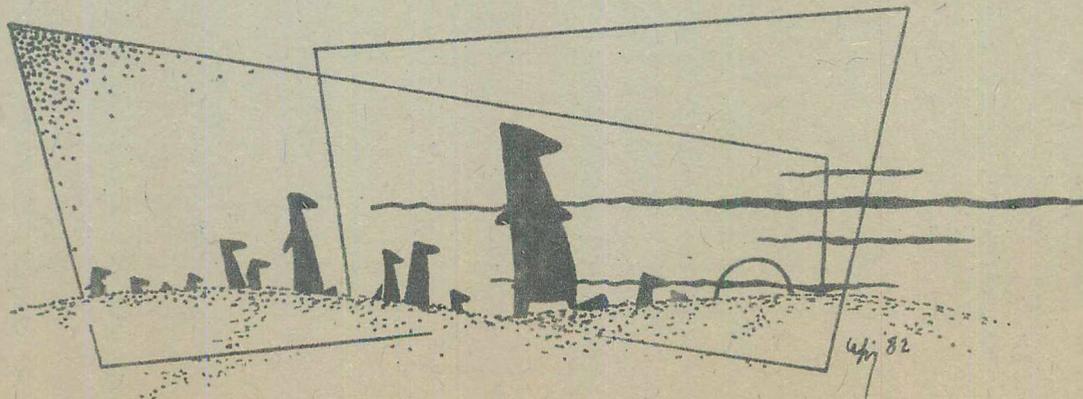
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Korumburra is about 85 Km. S.E. of Dandenong, and is the location of Australia's only "re-created" coal mining town. The large site contains buildings from the late 19th century local to the surrounding area and they have been gathered on the actual site of the Coal Creek mine. I suppose a family group could spend a day there, because there was so much to see and appreciate, but we spent a couple of hours there prior to our departure to Philip Island. The drive from Korumburra to Philip Island is about 50 Km, but contrary to the brown scenery of Victoria, all was green and lush, rather like meadows in England. The Korumburra area is a raised plateau interposed with hillocks where streams have eroded across the plateau over the aeons. The grass and vegetation is healthily green, with rows of evergreen trees sited on hilltops, presumably to try and arrest the erosion. Sometimes, as we drove westwards, the road crested a hilltop, and as far as the eye could see in every direction the level top of the plateau was clearly defined.

My wife and I mentioned to Colin that we hadn't seen the sea pounding on sandy beaches, as he'd promised. He detoured southwards, south of San Remo, and halted near high sand banks. We crossed them, and before us was a long wide beach, with huge waves breaking on the beach in relentless continuity... but the sand was clean and clear with nary a footprint to despoil it. It seemed amazing to Diane and myself that not one single person other than ourselves considered it worthwhile to stand and watch Nature at its most elemental. We walked along the sand, scuffing our toes in its soft unblemished surface, a warm but strong sea breeze blowing against us, boasting unashamedly at its affinity with the waves. Onwards to Philip Island... Colin had once explained in a letter that he had witnessed the unique nightly parade of the little Fairy Penguins from the sea and up the beach to their little underground nests on the sandy beaches. We wanted to see this, and reached the beach at 7 PM, at which time they were due to emerge from the sea. I was surprised at the physical arrangements made to protect the penguins during their nocturnal advance, and at the same time to accrue relatively large sums of money each night from the massed spectators. My private dilemma was to assess whether the financial gain was to the advantage of the penguins, and I eventually decided it was. I would estimate around three hundred people were present, carefully marshalled by virile young men. Roped fences were constructed on the beach, leading to a small section of grassy sand-bank. As soon as dusk descended, several strong spotlights were switched on facing the sea at a point from which the little penguins were due to emerge for their nightly tryst, probably carried on for many thousands of years. At the same time, a firm voice over a broadcast system stressed that observers were to remain quiet and to definitely refrain from using camera flash, as this would scare the penguins. Just after 7.5 PM I noticed a blob of little black heads swimming en masse a few yards from the beach... soon, the creatures emerged from the sea to face the inquisitorial white lights. Well, they had faced them for years, and probably regarded the glaring lights and attendance of Homo Sapiens Sapiens as just another obstacle they had to face in order to roost for the night. They were certainly smaller than I had thought... the broadcaster said they were 33 cm. tall. A dominant penguin was in the first group... he waddled forward confidently, useless stunted wings flapping at his sides, and others followed, but the hesitant ones at the rear of the group were engulfed in a rippling wave and tumbled back into the sea from which they had just retired. One independantly-minded penguin was unable to walk on his feet, he shuffled forward on his fat stomach, making very little progress, and actually terminated his advancement up the beach by bumping into a large rock. Out from the edge of the roped barrier, where he was maintaining an eagle eye for human transgressors, strode aaaa blond giant. He crossed to the frustrated penguin, picked him up tenderly and carried him to the safety of the sand dunes. A ripple of applause grew from the admiring audience, until they were sternly hushed to silence by the uncompromising gravel voice.



Another group of penguins appeared from the brine... they were nervous, and stood uncertainly, awaiting another Sergeant penguin to lead them... and indeed another forceful character waddled forward, closely followed by his cohorts. Only one penguin remained. He was just too late to join the advancing band. He stood on tip-toe, head raised, assessing the possibilities of a solo run, when this really big wave hit him from behind. I caught a quick flash of an inverted rump with despairing webbed feet before he disappeared in the waves to await another gaggle of penguins.

Eventually the invasion became a dribble... the final act was now revealed. About thirty of the penguins had not sought their burrows... a wire mesh fence about three feet high banned their progress... but they had not been forgotten. The penguin guardians forcibly ushered the spectators behind another fence, lifted the mesh barrier and the little penguins waddled along between an avenue of adoring spectators ... the path they followed was about three feet wide... the penguins looked up at the wall of people either side of them, but they were not to be digressed.

As we trooped towards our cars in the darkness, even when we were at least a quarter of a mile from the beach, little Fairy Penguins were negotiating the countryside. Subtle lighting revealed the penguins outside their burrows, preening themselves, little wing stubs as horizontal as they could maintain them. My own presumption was that they were drying themselves before descending into their homes. So was the commercial aspect totally justified?

Would it have been simpler to have the beach area totally and permanently wired off so that the penguins would be at peace, as they had been for ages before Man's intrusion?

On balance, I consider that this unique phenomena has created considerable public interest... if the public wish to see this nightly invasion, then this is the way to do it... criticism is therefore superfluous.

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We drove from Dandenong, through Melbourne northwards via the Hume Highway... Colin and his wife, his sister-in-law Michelle, Diane and myself. For many Km. the free-way followed a fairly level trail circumnavigating the brown hills, with here and there long rows of trees man-planted to attempt to stay soil erosion. Over the foothills of the Great Dandenong Range we reached fairly level countryside... there was an overall brown colour to the land, with clumpy evergreens dotted here and there, and very many stunted tree skeletons, white, broken branches fingering blindly upwards... We passed through Seymour, thence to Benalla, when Colin announced proudly that we were approaching Ned Kelly country, where he and his killer cohorts roamed almost exactly one hundred years ago... we passed through Glenrowan, where he was finally captured, head surmounted by a slitted bucket, chest and nether regions protected by moulded plough shares. Colin promised that we would return the following day, but pointed out the site of the hotel where the Kelly gang were captured on that fateful day in June 1880.

We shortly reached Wangaratta, and booked into a comfortable motel, the only drawback being that the radio sets in our rooms exclusively broadcast religious programmes... the type with enforced cheerfulness, wherein a person exuberantly describes his miraculous cure by the Almighty from a horrible disease, not realizing that's who gave it to him in the first place.

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The weather was superb next morning when we returned southwards to Glenrowan, as promised. The little hamlet appears to depend on the notorious Kelly gang for its financial security... obviously every car which passed through will be aware of the historic associations, and the occupants, if as curious as myself, will wish to examine the locus. Even though it was just after 9 AM, the souvenir shop was doing

very well, with several customers purchasing the inevitable plaster Ned Kelly, cardboard Ned Kelly masks, and the yellow Ned Kelly T-shirts, of which I purchased two for my grandsons in Northern Ireland.

Outside the store was a symbolic life-size flat version of Ned... a Ned head on top of the wooden canopy over the shop, and a few yards away was the "beautiful little statue of Ned Kelly" standing on bluestone from the Melbourne jail where Ned was imprisoned in 1873. The statue is assertive, showing Ned in his armour, a belt of ammunition across his chest, and a short-barrelled rifle held in the ready position across his metal-protected groin.

So putting my T-shirts, postcards and sundry gear in the boot of the Cortina, we drove hastily southwards to experience my son's pleasure, no less than a visit to three vineyards, such sties being numerous in the area.

Smiling triumphantly, Colin swung the car into the dirt road leading to the first vineyards, which was established in 1870.

He led us into the "tasting section". A lady arrived with five small wine glasses, which she placed on the counter, and then splayed out her hands to indicate the bottle of wine awaiting examination. Although I am not "into" wine, knowing only that you must have red wine with fish, my son has indicated to me that he is quite knowledgeable on the subject, so when I saw him fill his glass with Chimmen Blanc, I confidently expected him to permit a delicate dribble to seduce his tongue, followed by a prolonged rumination of his lips, and then emit a terse but accurate comment on the bouquet and acidity of the wine. In fact, he was such a fantastic expert that all he required to make his prognostication was the abrupt inward swing of the glass, precipitating the contents down his cavernous throat.

"Nice," he said. "I'll have a dozen bottles of that." I immediately perceived that this was the way a real wine expert demonstrated his knowledge, and I speedily attempted to emulate Colin's technique to impress the attendant, but after the fifth different wine sample in as many moments, my stomach felt as though a nuclear explosion was imminent inside it, and my limbs became unco-ordinated. I went outside for fresh air, except that it wasn't fresh, it was burning hot (that day the temperature was close to one hundred) and I have to report frankly that my wife had so much wine I had to assist her to the Cortina, and if it hadn't been for my steadying support she would have subsided on the hot grass.

I certainly recall the second vineyard we visited in Malawa, because I shall never forget that Aussie voice shouting "Don't let that blowhard come in," but, if this rejoinder was made in any way as a reference to myself, I outmanoeuvred this officious oaf by crawling on my hands and knees behind him. I definitely recall hiding under the display table and furtively reaching up to take my wine selection, but with the heat and all it was difficult for me to adequately cope with the situation.

I understand that we visited a really nice vineyard in Rutherglen, near the New South Wales Border, but I was officially declared hors de combat at this juncture.

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We lunched at Corowa, just over the Murray River into New South Wales, then returned to Victoria and drove westwards, through



Warrawonga and booked into a motel at Cobram. We settled in our respective rooms, then walked to the Murray River... it was wide and the water was brown. The southern bank of the river had eroded during a periodic flood, and I noted that almost the entire root systems of trees were revealed, the trees hanging on grimly by a couple of roots... but the next time the Murray floods they will be swept away.

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Next morning we drove westwards yet again, to the historic town of Echuca, once Australia's largest inland port. The weather was wonderful once again.

The story of Echuca as a premier port was short and unsweet... a river boat service started up around 1860 and swiftly expanded, the geographical situation of the port on the Murray enabling inland Australia to be opened up for settlement, thus rapidly increasing the wool trade. A rail link from Melbourne to Echuca permitted goods landed at Echuca to be rapidly transported to Melbourne and required goods returned.

This euphoric state lasted until the mid 1880's, and the railways reached isolated areas previously serviced by the paddle steamers and barges; so the trade to Echuca deteriorated, until, by the end of the last century, only a small number of boats berthed at Echuca.

The huge wharfs, over 38 feet above river level (to allow for the massive Murray floods) still remain, and a tourist passport document, available in Echuca for A\$ 1.50 enables visitors to inspect the remaining vistas of what was once a bustling port area.

A paddle steamer was berthed nearby, the P.S. Canberra, and we boarded it at 2.30 PM for an hour's trip up and down the brown and slowly-moving Murray.

I was rather surprised to see a respectable gentleman in captain's uniform unhitching the ropes on the river bank, a menial task one would have presumed to have been normally performed by a minion of low caste... however, it transpired that the P.S. Canberra had a crew of one.

We paddled upstream, the captain giving us an instructive discourse on the history of the port, explaining that at one time the Murray was in flood to a width of forty miles; at another time it had dried up. He delivered home-spun philosophy, and interjected with elaborate jokes... one of them concerned a farm worker whose wife was expecting a child imminently, and the Murray was flooded. A doctor was delivered to the farm by paddle steamer. The doctor ordered the farmer to hold a lantern whilst he delivered the child... then another child... then another. The farmer threw the lantern out of the window. The irate doctor demanded an explanation for this... the farmer replied: "I think the light is attracting them."

This was his best joke.

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We drove north-westwards from Echuca to our destination for the next two days, Swan Hill... still on the Murray. The landscape was perfectly flat, suggesting an ancient lake bed, or very wide river. Once again I'm afraid that the sight of dead trees was not unusual... there must have been a ratio of two live trees to a dead one... this happened for kilometer after kilometer... always just about the same ratio. If I worked for the Victoria Forestry Commission, I'd be very worried... they probably are. Also, the terrain was usually brown, with patches of scrub here and there, and a small farm every few kilometers. I would have thought that as the road roughly followed the Murray, some sort of irrigation system would have been utilised, but it was rare to see green fields such as I have always known in Britain. The sun, as usual, burnt a hole in the sky. Just after 6 PM we reached Swan Hill and booked in at a very plush motel.

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Next morning we visited the Pioneer Settlement at Swan Hill. It is an extensive site on the banks of the Murray, and contains buildings removed from the area and

reconstructed on the site. Many pioneer functions are still carried out in the village as a tourist attraction by employees in period costume... the serving wenches looked most attractive in their long contemporary dresses with puffed sleeves. Several kangaroos sprawled about on the grass, and a young kangaroo was extremely tame. It very much liked green grass, and as the 'roos shared the grass in the settlement with free-ranging hens, ducks and peacocks, such a delicacy was rare. I noted three old graves nearby, with lovely long grass tufting from them. I suppose I defied convention once again, but I plucked a few handfuls and made a friend for life. After lunch we drove eastwards for a few Km. to the much advertised Puck's Room, on the banks of Kangaroo Lake. Colin left the main road and turned right, and for 3 Km. we drove along a rutted road alongside the lake bank... the vibration and necessary avoidance of flying stones caused Colin to drive slowly, we hoped that Puck's Room was not going to be an anti-climax.

Weeeell... it was a smallish room, stacked with paintings, pottery and drawings of local execution, the overall theme of artistic purpose dampened somewhat by the pronounced smell of moth balls. My wife purchased a tea towel depicting Aborigines in various stances... her fifteenth tea towel purchased on our travels that she would admit to. As we left the premises I noted that a critic had slightly amended the first letter of the sign "Puck's Room" by a slight erasure.

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Sometimes the monotony of our long drives was broken by bird sightings... several times a day I noted large flocks of ibis, either flying or pecking in the brown fields, and once I saw dozens of white cockatoos perched on a single tree... from a distance they looked like candles on a Christmas tree. Occasionally pairs of galahs flew across the road in front of us, and once a kestrel swooped in front of our car, flipping its wings expertly to avoid us. One memorable day seven black swans flew ponderously northwards over our car.

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Next to our motel in Swan Hill was a rival concern which featured a novel structure. A curved frontage was chopped off at both ends and Pullman coaches inserted across both sides as dining rooms with red plush seats and curtains. Colin and his wife said they would treat us to a meal... it lasted about three hours and cost them a fortune... but this exemplifies the spirit of the New Australians.

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Our last day of our little holiday... we drove southwards to Bendigo. The whole triangle Echuca, Swan Hill and Bendigo was utterly flat... in some instances the road and attendant telephone poles disappeared with determined perspective into the horizon. Of course there were thousands of dead trees, a sort of flora Treblinka. We waited for two hours for a ride on the "talking train", which drove for fifty minutes, a synchronised tape explaining historic locations of this gold-fever town. Unfortunately, even though we were at the tram terminus, unscrupulous coach trippers had ambushed the tram at a prior stop. The first time the tram stopped with its unlawful load, the aged driver got out and apologised profusely, saying we would be able to catch the tram in one hour. We walked around the center of Bendigo, and at the appointed time the tram rattled past without stopping, windows crammed with excited and smirking passengers. The driver recognised us, and opened his palms in supplication... we waved back and got into the Cortina.

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Ever homewards to Dandenong. South of Bendigo the terrain became hilly and more fertile, with apples and peaches on sale at the side of the road. When we were

still some Km. from Melbourne, Colin advised us to watch for the magnificent view of Melbourne as we crested a rise... it was, as he promised, magnificent; the cluster of skyscrapers was projected between two hills as though through the back-sight of a rifle...

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We had been away touring northern Victoria for just under a week, and during this time I thought about ants quite a lot, revealing the onset of a possible obsession. The very first thing I did when we got to Colin's house was to examine the patio floor. Oh, Christ.

No change at all... except, perhaps, about fifteen or twenty percent more of them... they seemed to be hurrying somewhat, but the little insects were following exactly the same route. This time I was utterly without the slightest tinge of mercy. Besides eliminating the ants on their two-way route, I also quarried individual ants, until not one un twitching body was left.

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It was bound to be a good night. My wife had insisted that I take a shower... that meant two in one day, a record I had never actually meant to perpetrate. Also, for the first time on the holiday, she ordered me to wear a blazer and polish my boots. I was secretly rather worried about my wife's avowed acceptance of Woman's Lib, because normally she would have polished my boots for me. It wasn't that so much, really... it was her firm statement that never again would she bring my shaving gear up to bed for me to ablute before getting up for breakfast. Yes, that was the final insult... she wouldn't even bring my breakfast up to bed. I foresaw the day when I would find it necessary to make my own nightly cup of coffee. So I was neatly dressed, polished and shaved, and we boarded the Dandenong tram to South Yarra, a Melbourne suburb.

It was almost 7.30 PM, and dark, when we detrained and walked to number 279, Domain Road, the abode of young and talented fanned Irwin Hirsch, of *Sikander* fame.

We could see from the outside that it was a large house, and on the stout wooden gate, overhung with greenery, was a message exhorting intending entrants to enter at their own peril because of "the dog". Even a timorous hand on the latch evoked an excited growl, a mere prelude to a frenzied barking which would have petrified anyone other than a hardened faan.

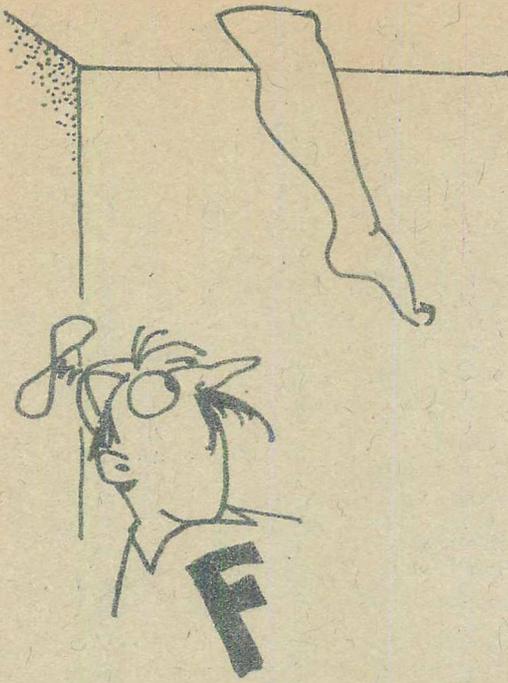
The door was knocked, and a minor fracas occurred inside the glass-panelled door between the dog and Irwin, who eventually managed to open it. Seeing the dog was perfectly under control, my wife called me in from outside the front gate.

Irwin escorted us to a large comfortable room, with paintings, sculptures, deep pile rugs and other object d'arts on display, and introduced us to his father, who produced drinks and a gourmet's delight, smoked Tasmanian trout.

My assault on the trout was temporarily delayed by the appearance of well-known international fan John Foyster, and Jenny Bryce, and I was delighted to be asked to autograph my account of my U.S.A. trip which was published in 1960... John presented me with copies of the latest issues of his fanzine, *Chunder*.

Irwin is about twenty years of age, and he is presently training for a career in films, hoping ultimately to be a director. My wife commented later that he is incredibly handsome and should seek his niche as a leading man in front of the camera. I scolded her for not revealing this to Irwin publicly, as it would certainly be highly rated as egoboo.

Irwin's mother and his two teenage sisters made their appearance. All very attractive people, and we discussed a number of topics, including the inside story of Irish Fandom, aspects of Einstein's Theory of Relativity, the scarcity of suitable duplicating paper in Australia, and the current London Punk scene... John Foyster expressed amazement at my knowledge of the latter phenomena.



Later we were escorted to the dining room... a long table had been prepared, and we took our seats, to be treated to a superb repast, highlighted by convivial conversation. The artistic persuasion of the Hirsch household was also revealed in the high-ceilinged dining room... paintings covered most walls, ranging from a contemporary portrait of Irwin's mother to unfathomable abstract designs. It was whilst admiring the artwork that I noticed a leg protruding from the ceiling. Actually, it was a marble leg, and I understand that a builder had inadvertently damaged the ceiling and the error had been permanently recorded in the manner of its perpetration. In such an inventive and artistically sophisticated environment, it was obvious that Irwin would eventually discover fandom. This was an evening to be remembered, and my ability to report it in mere words is inadequate. I never thought I would make an admission like this.

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I've frequently mentioned the tremendous weather in Victoria, and a perusal of the weather charts on TV generally shows the west, north and east coasts of Australia have a higher temperature than Victoria, and accordingly more sunshine.

Obviously the country is vast, and the majority of the population of Australia is in Victoria State and in the isolated cities on the coasts... the continent can easily hold and sustain several times its present population of around 14,000,000.

In Victoria, Aborigines are hard to find. Nevertheless, it is the epitome of a multi-racial society, but it does appear to me that although the Australian Government is anxious for everyone to come under one category, Australian, the ethnic barriers exist in an overwhelming manner. When travelling in crowded trains to and from Melbourne, the English language is not all that commonly heard ... people still stubbornly retain their national language, and do not seem anxious to punctuate their conversations with English words.

People who newly arrive in Australia, generally speaking, can initially only find friendship and solace with their own ethnic group. For instance, an old friend of mine, previously mentioned, is Frank, from Belfast. His circle of friends is almost exclusively from Northern Ireland. He is extremely friendly and out-going, and I've visited his home several times in Mordialloc, and everyone I've met there is Northern Irish or English. He has been in Australia for eight years, and I think this is very sad.

For the perve, a good thing in Melbourne is the general rule that school girls wear short skirts. I understand that the bottom of the hem of the skirt must be eight inches above the knee, and my prolonged observations tend to suggest that this is a measurement which is strictly adhered to. There is no greater thrill than to be on a train in an empty compartment when suddenly a crowd of sixteen-year-old schoolgirls burst excitedly in the carriage and sprawl about on the seats. I always made our train journeys coincide with school departure times. It is also interesting to point out that for some reason, shop assistants also wear short skirts, although the hem height above the knee is decreased, according to my measurements, to 4 7/8"... female assistants, of course.

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"The one thing I don't like in Australia," observed Colin's wife, as we drove to a barbeque (or "barby", in the local vernacular) "is the tendency for the sexes to divide. The women are regarded as second class citizens, and we are ignored by the men."

"True," said Colin, "It always happens." "Well, I'll tell you one thing," snapped his wife, "I don't like it, and it will not happen again."

We drove to Jack's and Hazel's, in north Melbourne, friends of Colin. My friend Frank and his family were there, with other people I'd never previously met.

It was a large garden, and to the west was a magnificent sight... a large lamb on a spit. There was no atmosphere of the pioneering days on this operation... the spit was a steel rod with metal screws to imprison the carcass... it rotated slowly by means of a belt drive powered by an electric motor. The basting power was supplied by small ingots of special coal which were red hot and didn't lose their heat for one and a half hours. There was some discussion amongst the men as to the length of time it would take to get the beast ready for the meal. Frank, a spit-expert, opined that five hours would be required, and as this would prolong the festivities, and we were all hungry, it would be necessary to lower the spit, which was a delicate operation requiring the muscle power and skill of the male species.

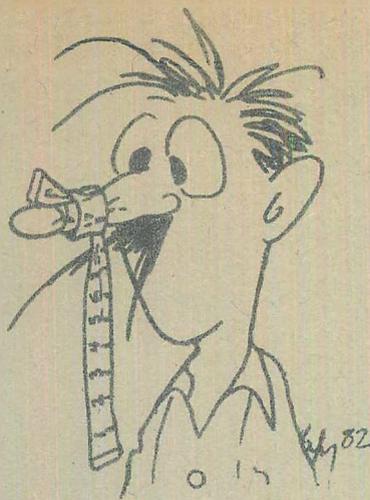
I glanced round the other side of the garden and saw all the women sitting together, Colin's wife looked very peevish. I felt it imperative that I should break the ice and demonstrate that the Pommy male does not believe in the social separation of the sexes. I crossed the lawn to the ladies area, when I heard someone say, apropos an aeroplane crossing the sky, "It definitely isn't a Cessna 172". I have unjustly earned the reputation of being somewhat of an authority on aircraft identification, and my son, who fostered this image, called me back to settle the argument.

I checked the overfly, and said, yes, it was a Cessna 172. An argument ensued, but I eventually persuaded the men that my identification was correct... I knew because I had recently flown in one where the pilot had something in his eye shortly after take-off, and a neophyte had controlled the 'plane until the pilot could see again... I emphasised that I would never forget such spontaneous and unrepeatable aerobatics, nor the 'plane in which they were performed.

Well, the dusk descended, and the lamb was ready for meat-stripping. This commenced as a disciplined programme, some men holding lamps, a couple with plates, and Frank, who, in my company, had witnessed many post mortems, handled the electric knife adroitly... but the women started to shout that the first delivery of lamb was getting cold, and to rush the remainder. Gradually, men started to surreptitiously strip off lengths of meat, and some of the more impatient men actually started to eat it instead of putting the meat on the plates for mutual consumption indoors. It tasted superbly.

In the house, the women had sorted out containers of lettuce, tomatoes, onions, etc, and Hazel, mine hostess, realising that all the people in the house had at one time lived in Belfast, commenced cooking the famous Irish indigenous fare, fried potato bread.

When the cafeteria system had concluded, the men were called into the front room to eat their food and talk about the next round of the Irish/Australian Gold Tournament. I don't play golf, and once again started to move to the ladies' room, but a humorous discussion started about the circumstances whereby Colin had won the previous month's trophy. It was quite amusing, and suddenly it



was about eleven PM and time to go home. We told the ladies to collect their accoutrements. On the drive home I observed how amazing it was that the men and women were socially separated at the function. Colin's wife said it would never happen again.

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Footy, or Australian Rules Football, is a very important game in Victoria and surrounding states, significantly more important than soccer, which is nevertheless a World Cup game.

We saw a footy match on 31st. March at the South Melbourne arena, under floodlights, a superb ground where everyone is seated. On this occasion, because the match was televised all over southern Australia, only a few hundred spectators were present, but it was my last opportunity to see a live game, and even though there had been a severe thunderstorm an hour before the start, the five of us and Frank's family went to see South Melbourne play Adelaide. What surprised me so much and caused me some amusement, was not the activities of the players, or even the four referees, but the frequent pitch invasions by numerous subsidiary persons seemingly at will.

But first of all, the rules: Eighteen men play on each side, with a rugby ball. At each end of the huge oval pitch are four white posts; the two inside ones are taller, the ones either side are half size. If the ball is kicked through the middle posts, 6 points accrue... if it is kicked through the two outside posts, 1 point is marked on the score. As I've stated, four referees control play on the pitch, and under each set of four posts is a man in white overalls and a white trilby hat who assesses whether a goal is worth 1 or 6 points, and signals with a white flag accordingly. These men appear to be of small size, and are each guarded by a uniformed policeman.

The players can kick the ball, or punch it, or carry it, and even dribble it like a soccer ball. They can run with it for about fifteen metres before passing it, and they strive to kick the ball between the two middle posts for a maximum score.

However, apropos my initial point, whilst the play is continuing, various extra-mural activities are seen to be in operation on the field; I cannot think of any other sport where this aspect is so widespread.

The two teams have managers and coaches who are situated high in the stand but are in radio communication with personnel in concrete dug-outs just outside the vast pitch area. If they wish to commend or condemn one of their players, they radio to the dug-out, and pass a message to the trainer or another minion who then dispatches a track-suited vassel to actually go onto the pitch to contact the particular player and verbally deliver the coaches comments. If a player requires a drink, another messenger speedily fulfils this requirement. Medical treatment is frequently urgently needed, because this is a contact game, and in this respect two or even three assistants cross the pitch to administer relief, and sometimes signal for the doctor. This important person wears a white shirt and black tie, and he gives emergency treatment on the field of play. I must stress that these activities continue whilst the players are chasing like mad around the field in pursuit of the elusive and sometimes slippery ball.

To sum up this fantastic situation, it appears to me that it is possible for as many as a dozen non-participants to be milling about on the pitch on their various missions, admittedly not interfering with play, but when you include the four white-dressed refs as well, it does become confusing to the uninitiated.

The little men between the posts possess large white flags, as I've intimated, and when a score is made at one end, that umpire signals to his partner a couple of hundred yards away between the opposite posts, and he repeats the flamboyant flag-waving ritual.

Another innovation with footy is that there are four distinct periods of play... two of fifteen minutes and two

of thirty minutes, and each time they change ends... it is miraculous to me how they manage to orientate themselves.

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A very common sight in Victoria, especially on a hot day (and most of the days were extremely warm) is the dreaded Australian Salute, which my "Aussie" dictionary defines as "the movement of the hand in brushing away flies." I read that in 1976, CSIRO scientists in Canberra announced the development of a "sexually-mutated blow-fly" which, it was firmly anticipated, would lead to the demise of this ubiquitous pest. It was April 1981 when I was in Australia, and I could not detect a noticeable lack of flies, indeed, Australians I have spoken to aver that the fly situation is possibly worse than it has ever been. The 1980 summer season was one of the hottest on record and perhaps this has caused the fly situation to become uncontrollable. But certainly it is infuriating to be sitting on the lawn partaking of a large slice of Pavlova Cake, pears and cream, persistently performing the Australian Salute. A brand of insect repellent is available for personal protection, but it smells strongly of furniture polish, and after all it is a defensive measure. An ex-soldier of my experience prefers to attack, and I have developed an interesting method of decimating flies which eliminates the accepted use of an insecticide spray, which is to blast the fly once it has settled down for a rest. I prefer to go on safari, hunting them round the garden and house, preferably catching them on the wing when they themselves are tracking an unsuspecting human. I have adroitly affixed a delicately thin tube of plastic to the hole on the release button with cellotape, and my technique is to attempt to shoot down a fly with a short sharp burst of the noxious liquid whilst it is in flight. Anyone can shoot down a fly with a huge cloud of insecticide, but it takes the dedicated hunter to eliminate one with a single accurately projected burst. I do not recommend my technique to bring down a wasp. The Australian wasp will not be easily intimidated, and once they lose their tempers they become a most dangerous foe. I had a titanic battle with a wasp the other day. Because the fly hunt had become so boring, I attempted to take out a wasp as it flew past me. Some sixth sense warned it of the approaching blob of insecticide... it did a clever side step and then disappeared rapidly behind a row of small bushes in my son's garden. Although the adversary had eluded me, I had at least put it rapidly to flight... and then I heard a menacing drone behind me, and adroitly moved my head to one side as it buzzed past me... I zapped at it again, but it escaped with an aerial manoeuvre which would have delighted the Red Baron. For ten minutes it had me pinned to the middle of the lawn, ruthlessly raiding me from all angles with the speed of a bullet, nipping behind the trees and bushes to re-appear from an unsuspected angle. Of course, the end of the battle was predictable. After its fourteenth mission, the wasp disappeared behind a raspberry bush. With a deft movement I ripped off the cellotape and plastic tube, and rapidly sprayed the area all around me with the noxious spray. It zoomed straight at me at supersonic speed from behind a large fern, and hit the unexpected cloud of spray. The gallant foe tumbled over and over to finish up-side-down on a rhubarb leaf with its legs twitching. I tiptoed quietly away, reminding myself to write to the CSIRO department in Canberra, asking for the latest situation with regard to the development of sexually-mutated wasps.

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The coincidence was contrived... I arranged it exactly as I had done in 1974 in Amsterdam... the



sudden surprise to find ourselves outside the *Concert-Gebouw* hall. Opposite the concert hall in Swanson Street, Melbourne, was a shop selling dresses "as advertised on TV". My wife was one amongst many who thronged the shop, and she even queued up for a fitting. Whilst I was waiting outside, my sneak newspaper spotting of a free concert by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra was confirmed. The doors opened at 2 PM, and people, mostly middle-aged to the infirm, staggered up the stone steps and inside the wooden glass-panelled doors. My timing was impeccable. As my wife came out with her purchase which cost me A\$ 30.00, I pointed out with feigned surprise that, lo, a free classical concert was being performed just across the road. "We must have a look." Diane looked at me askance, but I was wide-eyed and bewildered at this apparent stroke of luck, and she just couldn't be sure that it was purely coincidental. Although the concert was free, tickets had to be obtained at an agency. I told the nice chap at the entrance to the hall that I was a pommy "returning home tomorrow", and this stroke of good fortune caused him to smile and give me two passes. He didn't know what the programme was, except that Mozart was featured. The orchestra was recording for a subsequent TV programme, being shown nationwide on the only non-commercial Australian TV company, ABC. I have got to admit that the tickets were free, and it was a TV recording to be suitably edited later, but I honestly felt that the noble status of the conductor, the breed universally being accepted as a supernatural race, was ingloriously shattered. This conductor (no name given) and the orchestra performed admirably, as did the selection of artistes, but the requirements of the TV director made certain aspects of it almost farcical. On one occasion he announced the appearance of an artiste four times, to initially thunderous but ultimately sporadic applause. The work to be performed was for piano and orchestra by Mozart, but the piano wasn't on stage. What a shocking oversight. This was remedied by perspiring minions. On the fifth introduction, the conductor was politely applauding, looking at the wings on the left, and the soloist, looking somewhat bemused, appeared from the right. Very embarrassing for everyone. Another time, presumably because the previous "takes" were unsatisfactory, the conductor asked the audience to applaud for no reason at all whilst he bowed and waved a hand of acknowledgement to the bewildered orchestra. It is normal procedure at concerts for the artistes to take curtain calls if the audience reaction is sufficiently enthusiastic. A solo trumpeter played marvellously, and the thunderous applause certainly merited at least one return to the stage. The conductor also expected this, and clapped, smiling confirmation that he would like the artiste to return. The curtains at the side of the stage billowed somewhat, as if a slight scuffle was taking place, and the conductor appeared to take a signal from the wings that the artiste would not be returning, and he reluctantly turned to scan his scores for the next work. The solo violinist played a gorgeous little gem with such bravado that we knew definitely he would return to claim his well-earned applause. He smirked confidently as he walked off, violin triumphantly held in his left hand, and I knew he would expect at least two curtain calls. However, by this time the conductor had seemed to realise that in the world of commerce, time is money, and curtain calls were time-wasters and banned for the afternoon. Presumably, due to pressure of work, the soloists had not been told, and as the violinist appeared from the right, he presumed the estatic applause was for himself. Actually, a soprano had appeared from the left of the stage, and the conductor had kissed her hand. The conductor launched the orchestra into a Tannhauser selection, and the soprano, a big woman, took a deep breath. The violinist was smiling at the audience, waving his thanks when the soprano let rip. He tip-toed off the stage as if he'd been walking on hot coals. I know that the programme will be edited expertly, but I felt that a

certain prostitution of talent was on display here.

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Our last hours in Dandenong. The ants? I rushed outside to the patio. They were frantically carrying eggs again, disappearing into the ventilation slits. Quite a lot of them as well. I shouted for Colin to bring the insect sprays and my size nines. We stood side by side and sprayed and stamped. Colin said it was entirely my own fault... I had disturbed the balance of Nature. He said that if I'd left them alone, a mere dribble of them would have traversed his patio, but my frenzied attacks on the species had made them presume a cataclysmic happening was pending, and they had accordingly increased their population and were invading his home to find security from the final holocaust. Some people do have this propensity for unwarranted exaggeration.

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We left this wonderful country on Thursday evening, 2nd. of April 1981. The *Quantas* strike was over, and the 747 took off from Tullymarine, the site of Melbourne International Airport, and flew westwards to Perth.

We took on more passengers here, and after stretching our legs, took off and flew north-westwards for Bombay. Meals seemed to be served as soon as the previous one was cleared away. We tried to sleep, but the hours seemed to drag, even when an up-to-date film was shown.

Just as dawn yielded up the day we landed at Bombay. The shops in the Departure Lounge were already open for business and assistants drummed up trade by easing out of the shops and solicited bleary-eyed travellers who were transfixed by the variety of luxury goods on display. Before I knew where I was, I had purchased a carved elephant with real ivory tusks. The 747 built up revs at the end of the runway, and I saw on each side of the take-off point, a couple of hundred yards away, shanty towns roofed with rusted corrugated iron. Even at this early hour, the inhabitants were milling about aimlessly. What a masterful strategic ploy to show the world how people had to live in Bombay... not a 'plane load of travellers could avoid observing this demoralising aspect... no wonder they all wanted to go to England.

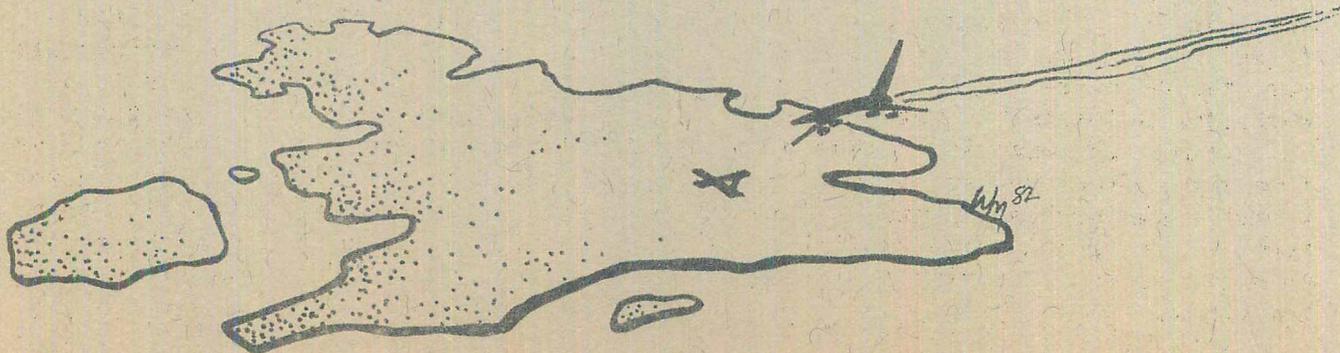
Don't worry folks... we noticed...

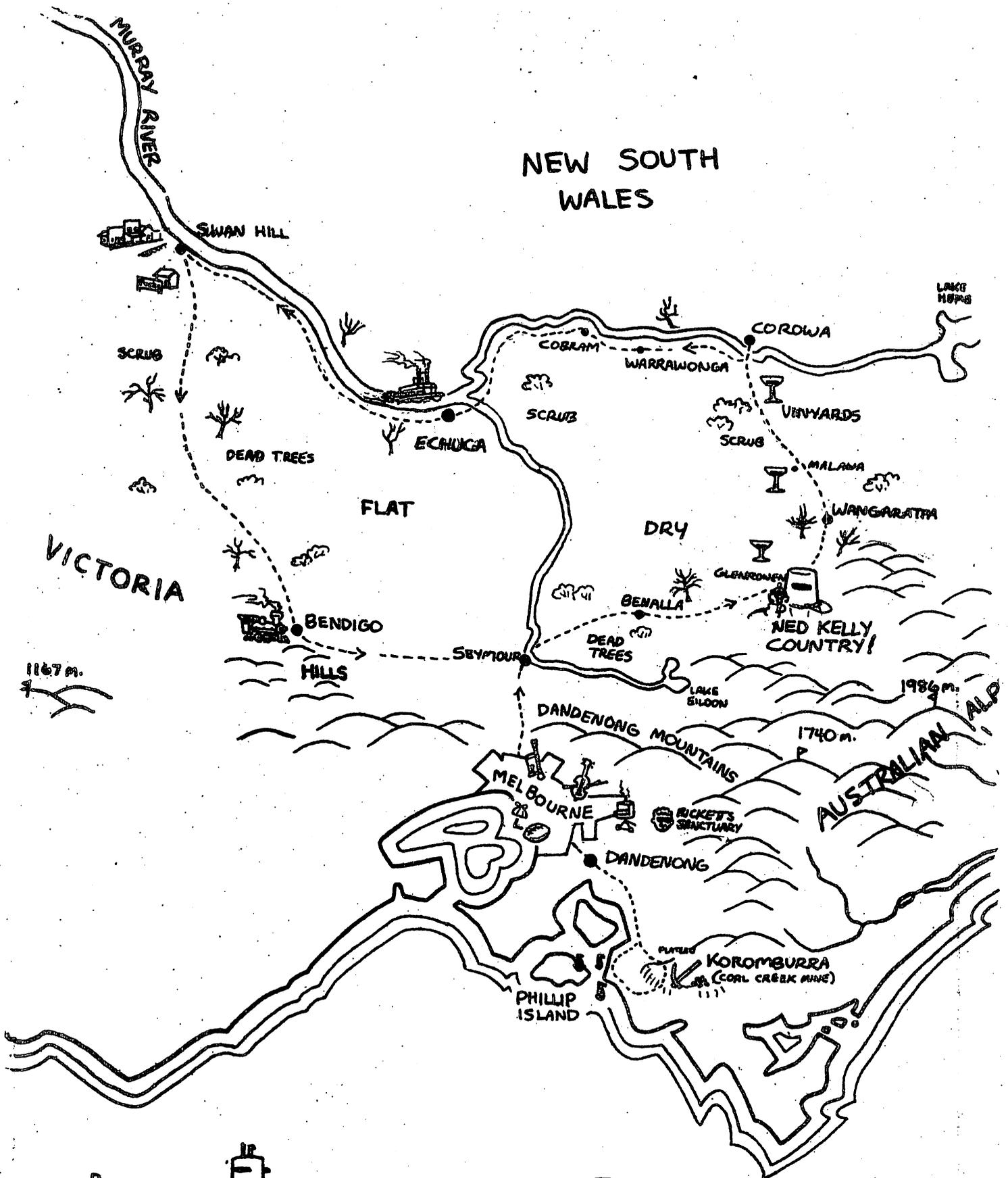
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It took several more hours to get to London, and the tedium was broken by an old lady, probably well over seventy years old, who wandered up and down the aisles between the seats, asking passengers to get a taxi for her. It was cold and raining at Heathrow. Unfortunately, my thick vest, pullover and raincoat were packed in our suitcases. When we collected them, and successfully negotiated Customs, I instructed Diane to get my warm clothing from the suitcases, which she did with considerable reluctance in the middle of the international concourse. Suitably attired for an English spring, I sallied forth to the Hatfield coach stop...





NEW SOUTH WALES

VICTORIA

NED KELLY COUNTRY!

BERRY'S WANDERINGS

RECONSTRUCTED FROM THE AUTHOR'S OWN MANUSCRIPT! *WJ 82*