

The Antipodean Announcer

Issue No. 3, August 1982

MELBOURNE'S THE PLACE!

Australian fans invite you to come to Melbourne in 1985 for the Worldcon of a lifetime. Vote for Melbourne in '85!

Australian fandom is known the world over for its friendliness and hospitality. You can be assured of a warm welcome when you arrive, and you'll find plenty to see and do in a whole new continent.

This is the third issue of the bid bulletin, *The Antipodean Announcer*, the purpose of which is to tell you about Australia and Australian fandom. You'll find in this issue a number of comments by professional authors who have visited Australia in the last few years, telling you about their impressions of Australian fandom and the good time they had here. We're sure you will be able to have an equally good time in 1985.

So let's make it Melbourne in '85!

For more information:

Write to: Melbourne in '85 Bidding Committee,
GPO Box 2253U,
Melbourne 3001,
Victoria, Australia
or to our agents in other countries.

Our Agents:

Belgium: Andre De Rycke,
Ecendenplasstraat 70, 3-9050, Evergem.

Federal Republic of Germany:
Waldeemar Kunning, Herzogspitalstr. 5, D-8000, Munchen 2.

France:
Pascal J. Thomas, 11 bis rue Vasco de Gama, 75015 Paris.

Netherlands:
Annemarie Kindt, Postbus 87933, 2508 DH, Den Haag.

Scandinavia:
Anders Bellis, Vanadisvagen 13, S-113, 46 Stockholm, Sweden.

United Kingdom:
Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER.

USA:
Joyce Scrivner, 2732 14th Ave Sth Lower, Minneapolis MN 55404.
(Please send subscriptions to this address.)
Jan Howard Finder, PO Box 428, Latham, NY 12110.

Australian SF Foundation Sponsors '85 Bid

The Melbourne in '85 Worldcon bid is now being run under the auspices of the Australian Science Fiction Foundation, and the bidding committee is now the same as the Foundation committee.

The Australian Science Fiction Foundation is a co-operative society which was established in 1976 by a number of people who had been involved in running the 1975 Melbourne Worldcon. The aim of the Foundation is to further the development of science fiction in Australia.

The Foundation began its work by co-ordinating the conduct of writers' workshops in Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney. These workshops were led by writers invited from England and the United States, and were supported by grants from the Australian Literature Board. In parallel with these activities, the Foundation supported the production of science fiction programs for the public radio station 3ZZ in Melbourne.

The Foundation has served as a contact point for readers and writers of science fiction in Australia, and to further this aim has sponsored *Australian Science Fiction News* since 1978. In addition, the Foundation has provided seed money for science fiction conventions throughout Australia.

It is therefore most appropriate that, as a continuation of these efforts, the Foundation is now sponsoring the Melbourne in '85 bid for the 43rd World Science Fiction Convention.

At the same time, the increasing pressure of important work has made it imperative that the Bidding Committee be enlarged, and a number of subcommittees have now been formed. These are:

Policy: John Foyster (Chairman), Peter Darling (Secretary), Christine Ashby (Treasurer), David Grigg (Deputy Chairman).

Fundraising: directors: Derrick Ashby and Carey Handfield.

Publications: director: David Grigg.

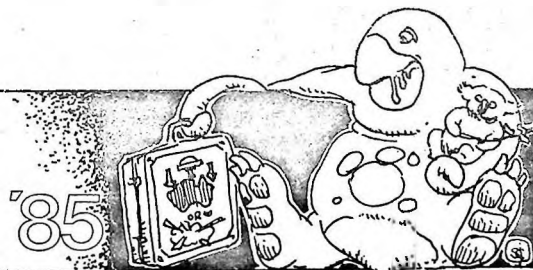
Hotel and Travel Operations: director: Peter Darling.

Membership: director: Derrick Ashby.

Promotions (Australia): director: Carey Handfield.

Promotions (Overseas): director: John Foyster.

Other members of the Committee not mentioned above are John Bangsund, Mervyn Binns, Justin Ackroyd, Andrew Brown, Steph Campbell, Irwin Hirsh, and Chris Johnston.



'The Antipodean Announcer' will be distributed free at major conventions around the world, or is included free if you subscribe to the bid newsletter, 'Kanga Ruse', which costs \$10 for two years. The 'Announcer' will contain items of interest about Melbourne, Australia, and Australian fandom, as well as original pieces of fan-writing. 'Kanga Ruse' will contain detailed information about the progress of the 'Melbourne in '85' bid.

MELBOURNE IN 1985

Melbourne in '85?...

LARRY NIVEN

We had a wonderful time in Australia.

We were imported to Sydney as Pro and Fan GoH for Nucon, a local convention. Robin Johnson worked like a slave helping us arrange our itinerary. We were met at the terminal by eight fans and a Pierson's puppeteer in papier mache. The committee saw to it that someone was taking us out to dinner every night of Nucon.

There's no tipping in Australia. Or, it isn't expected; you can if you want to. It doesn't save any money; prices rise to compensate; but it's a lovely feeling. I got a quote from a cab driver. He'd driven us to the Opera House. He was fishing change from \$2.50 when I said, 'Oh, why don't you just keep the change.'

He burst out laughing. He said 'That's an excellent suggestion, sir!' And I burst out laughing.

I ate gemfish and John Dory fish and oysters. Australia is a seafood fan's paradise; and a meat-eater's paradise too, because it's so cheap.

But what we brought home were opals and Bundaberg Rum. A local appraiser tells me my semi-black boulder opal (now set in a ring, and very pretty) jumped in value by a factor of eight when I moved it from Lightning Ridge to Beverly Hills. I don't take that too seriously; they're hard to appraise.

Time change didn't bother us much. At home I get up at 11 a.m. There's a seven-hour time difference, and with all the travelling, we found good enough reason to get up at 6.30 or 7; but we never learned whether Australian room parties turn rowdy because we couldn't stay up that long.

We explored. We flew to Dubbo, rented a car, and drove to Siding Spring, where a fan showed us through some of the five telescopes, and where I got some data for my next novel with Jerry (*Footfall*). The sky put on a spectacular display. Alpha Centauris is big and bright, right next to the Southern Cross. The Milky Way looked like I could pick out Trantor. The Clouds of Magellan . . . look like dim clouds, and the Lesser Cloud fades in and out of vision.

Next day we hiked through the Warrumbungles: a volcanic region unlike any other on Earth. We drove on to Lightning Ridge, went through a couple of 'walk-in' opal mines, and bought two good opals and a dozen triplets.

After Nucon, Bert Chandler took us by ferry to the Sydney Zoo. Marvellous! We saw the platypus. Lucky: he's usually hiding. Part of the zoo is a dark enclosure for nocturnal animals.

Adelaide is lovely, probably the prettiest city in Australia. It's the only planned city, and it was planned with *lots* of parkland. The grand old buildings survive very nicely, thanks.

Melbourne was nice and friendly, and a good place to wind down. Merv Binns (owner of the s.f. bookstore) and his father showed us around. We bought another good opal and more triplets and a dozen lapel-size clip-on koalas.

If Melbourne wins the bid for the 1985 Worldcon, we'll be delighted. We didn't see all of Australia, and that's for damn sure. We found that out during the planning: Australia is *big*. So we gave up on the Great Barrier Reef. Next time . . .

JOE HALDEMAN

I've been asked to say a few words about the month that Gay and I spent in Australia recently. Well, okay. How to go about it? How to structure this mini-essay? Ah, *comparison*. That's always easy.

The last country we went to in the unholy service of science fiction was the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is bigger than Australia. You can't deny that. It's also farther north. It has colder beaches. Far more KGB men.

The Russians don't have Australian pie floaters, which most people would consider a plus. But they don't have Moreton Bay bugs, either. Consider that equation balanced. They do have better caviar—furthermore, they have more of it than of beef, pork, veal, mutton, and chicken combined. Vast quantities of stale bread to munch on whilst you think of the food in Australia. (And of that fantastic barbeque in Melbourne—those unbelievable Scotch steaks from the butcher shop in St Kilda, the

coin-op grills on the riverbank, the crew teams rowing by sweating as we got lazily zonked on good cheap wine and beer . . .)

Now there's another thing in Russia's favour. The vast potential for temperance. Russian beer is a thin, flat, rather evil-tasting brew that has no discernible alcohol. The wine we sampled was a vile concoction sweeter than Kool-aid. There is little temptation to overdo either reagent. (They do have good vodka. But do they have Bundaberg Rum? It is to laugh.) Australian beer, of course, is legendary, and the wine is much better than Monty Python would have us believe.

Wonderful music and dance in Russia, but the Bolshoi is a grey mausoleum compared to Sydney's airy fantasy. And although our boat ride down the Dneiper was very educating, I really preferred ogling Sydney Harbour's free beaches.

One must admit that May Day is more impressive than the Anzac Parade. And there's nothing in all of Australia to match the Kremlin. The police seem much better disciplined in Russia. So do the people.

The people . . . and this is where we have to wax a little serious. The Soviets are good people, a little stern, a little narrow-minded about the West. Justifiably concerned that the rest of the world does not understand them; justifiably haunted by the horrors of their recent past. Being with them is a rigorous exercise in compassion and empathy; even the science fiction fans see you first as the representative of a potential destroyer. And they can't realistically be blamed for that.

But what a contrast to the automatic friendliness and fellow-feeling we experienced in Australia! Everybody we met there seemed anxious to take us under wing and show us the town, the countryside—shout a few rounds, climb a few rocks, see this do that. We've never had so friendly a reception; never felt so at home in a supposedly foreign country.

That has to be the final comparison: After two weeks in Russia we left with a great feeling of relief. After a month in Australia, we wanted to stay.

CHRIS PRIEST

The first time I went to Australia I flew in by British Airways jet from London, and discovered as others had done before me what the almost preternatural journey length does to your perceptions. Anyone who has flown has probably suffered the effects of jetlag . . . but fly to Australia from anywhere in the world that isn't Papua/New Guinea, and you will look back on your previous jetlag experiences the same way mountaineers look back on foothills.

The flight from London takes about thirty hours, and although there are a few refuelling stops on the way, most of that time is spent in the air. Seasons change with hemisphere, clocks change with time-zones, diurnal and circadian rhythms go into a crazy boogie. As you walk unsteadily from the aircraft, drenched in Australian antiseptic (they spray foreign passengers) to do battle with the immigration system (they have a terror of foot-and-mouth disease), you have become *Homo Australiasis*, upside down, very glad to be there, and given to confused smiles.

I put this emphasis on the journey to Australia (it's a slightly shorter one from the US) because, at least as far as I am concerned, my whole understanding of the place is based on its massive separation from everything else I know. It is a long way away, and what lies between us is more than mileage: in my case, the crossing of Asia induces a sense of osmotic culture shock, and for Americans it means twenty hours above the largest ocean in the world. But when you get there, Australia itself has its own cultural surprises, and these are based principally on the similarities.

My first glimpse of Sydney's suburbs from the air reminded me of nothing so much as Surbiton in Surrey . . . but then I saw the Harbour, and there's nothing in Surbiton like that! Melbourne has streetcars and colonial buildings like a manic combination of Blackpool seafront and Huddersfield Town Hall, but then it also has eucalypts and drive-in bottle shops and tarantulas and houses with cast-iron balconies.

In the first week of my first visit I was comparing notes with Vonda McIntyre, also there on a first trip. She said it looked to her very much as she had previously expected Britain to look like; my own impression was that it looked to me as I expected California might be. Neither of us was right, but there, somewhere between the two, lies the probable reality.

But since we are here concerned with matters fanciful and science fiction, and since both of my visits have been directly or loosely connected with fandom, let's leave the travelogue stuff to the Australian Tourist Commission.

...We'll Drink to That!

My overwhelming impression of Australia, in this special sense known to us in the s.f. world, has been of friendliness and familiarity. I knew very little of Australian fandom before 1977, and to be completely honest, I don't know that much more about it now. What I do know is that my two sixty-hour return trips feel now as if they had never taken place, because I recognised and knew what I found.

I knew none of the faces, I knew few of the fanzines, and the fannish jokes and in-group references were all concerning things I did not know. But I knew their *type*! I never felt I was a stranger, I never felt they were from a different fandom of a different literary culture. Their houses had rows of smelly old pulp-magazines, their beds had boxes of old fanzines stuffed underneath; they too reminisced about the Golden Age, argued about the New Wave, cheered when they read a good novel and booed when they read Spider's reviews.

They ran a Worldcon in 1975, and, by all the accounts of American and British fans who attended, it was as enjoyable as anything we in the northern hemisphere have ever put on. Ten years will have passed by 1985, and I think it's time they put on another. Perhaps none of this sounds an especially good reason for my supporting the Aussie bid in '85, but like all the really rare and worthwhile things in the world, an appreciation of Australia, and of Australian fandom, tends to defy description.

I've been twice, and all I can say is that those two visits were the two best times of my life. Given half a chance, I'd drop everything and make a third trip tomorrow.

ANNE McCAFFREY

Let me say at the outset that you, dear readers, must not be unduly influenced by the fact that I had a marvellous Melbourne. I mean, a grand time in Melbourne. However, it is only fair to warn you that you will, too! Therefore do pay especial heed to the Melbourne in 1985 bid!

Vote for 1985 to go down under for the super con of the decade because, of course, the beer is good. (The wine's not bad, either. Eat your hearts out, you Californios!)

Go down under in 1985. Experience a holiday crammed with new insights, no crowds, exceedingly different vistas, friendly people, and good cold beer. Australians are the most civilised beer drinkers in the world. The glasses *have* to be pre-chilled. In Ireland they faint if you ask for a cold beer. Then you faint because they put an ice cube in the beer to cool it down for you. But then, it rarely gets hot in Ireland.

Mind you, it did give me a turn to enter a pub (bar, that is) and see crates of empty pint glasses resicent in every fridge. Only way to drink beer, pour it in a cool frosted glass.

And food is very good in Australia. Oh my word! You can eat the cuisine of any country in the world in Melbourne, and cheap! Melbourne is a pleasant city to walkabout in, clean, well-laid-out, with some nice architecture to commend it. And a whole street of cinemas just in case you've already seen the films at the Cen. I might also point out that Australian films are great. Almost as good as the beer.

You will also have a committee running that Con with a lot of experience in turning themselves inside-out and down-side up to make your entire journey fascinating, entertaining, rewarding, and unusual. Let's face it: you can't be strangers in a strange land where they speak English as the Aussies do, that is, if you can get them to stop mumbling behind their clenched teeth.

One place you really must see is the Windsor Hotel in Melbourne. Straight out of Kipling with yards of potted palms and rotating fans and leather stuffed armchairs and quiet! And there's a pool hall around the corner. That's where Gigi struck a battle with the barmaids and won the pool contest. Of course her opponents had been drinking beer all afternoon, but she is a good pool player. Ask Lee Harding. He lives in Melbourne. So does Damien Broderick, which are two more good reasons for visiting Melbourne in 1985.

Simon Duncan took me and Gigi to the marvellous open air zoo near Melbourne. We got to see the platypus who is basically a shy fellow and only appears between 2.30 and 4.00. He keeps strict hours. Have you ever had to protect your dinner from the advances of an emu? A real emu, not the kind on the end of someone's right arm. But the beer was good and there were thousands of kinds of birds with the most gorgeous feathers. I mean, we kept seeing these 28s—that's a green and yellow parrot type

who yells 'twenty-eight' as he flits across your car hood at the rate of knots. So you need another beer to recover from the fright you just had.

Saw some super horses in Australia. Gigi and I went to some stud farms. They do things *right* in Australia. Almost as good as we do it in Ireland—with horses, at least.

So, you see, there's an awful lot going for you if you bid Melbourne for 1985. Do not be influenced by me. Go find out firsthand. Go to Melbourne in 1985. Try the beer yourself!

ROBERT BLOCH

A few words about Australian hospitality? Impossible! It would take thousands to describe the warmth and tenderness which I encountered during the time I spent in Melbourne at the 1981 Cinecon.

Australian fandom is a very special breed, reminiscent of American fandom in the days before the discovery of filk-singing and the Rocky Horror Show—that is to say, it is a fandom still centred on science fiction as opposed to splinter-group interests. Not that the Antipodeans are unaware of fringe-fanac; it's just that they seem to have a keener appreciation of s.f. itself. To say nothing of a much better taste in beer.

They give great parties, and I've heard nothing to match their wit since a visit to Belfast fandom almost twenty years ago.

But these are matters of personal preference. To all and sundry I can heartily recommend Melbourne for its mundane pleasures. The food is superb—particularly Chinese and Italian specialities, both of which make good use of fish and crustacean delicacies. And for mental nourishment I direct you to their Art Gallery, to say nothing of the City Jail, with its Ned Kelly memorabilia.

In case you don't happen to know who Ned Kelly is, then it's time you found out. This primitive forerunner of John Bangsund has a special place in history. Melbourne is full of history, and offers you one of the last chances you'll ever have to ride streetcars. Not the cutesy-cutesy tourist-trap trolleys of San Francisco, but *genuine streetcars*, the kind your grandparents used when travelling to and from the welfare office.

The city itself is beautiful—not that you'll want to spend much time sightseeing when you can be enjoying the company of Australian fans, learning to speak the native language, and participating in their Aboriginal rites and customs.

I count it a lucky day when I had the opportunity to meet so many friendly and generous members of Melbourne fandom. Of course I did get a bit tired after ten days without sleep, and what with the meals and the parties, I gained forty-five pounds.

But it was an experience I shall never forget, and one which I strongly recommend to all and sundry. To say nothing of mundry, tuesday and whensday is done the nights are even better!

FRANK HERBERT

It would be hard to describe how much we enjoyed Australia—from the moment my wife and I were met at the airport by a group of helpful and friendly people to the last sad goodbye.

Among the highlights of our trip there was a most informative trip to the wine country plus breathtaking views of Adelaide and the country nearby. In fact, our chief complaint is that you have made Australia too big with too many things to see—and only a short time in which to see them.

We plan to revisit Australia as soon as possible and see a few of the things we missed the first time. In fact, if we're lucky it may take several trips!

THE SITE'S IN SIGHT!

Because negotiations are still going on, unfortunately we cannot reveal the planned hotel site for the 1985 Convention yet, but we are very close to completing negotiations, and we're very confident of the outcome. We'll keep you posted!

Australia? Where's that?

A Guide for Overseas Fans
by David Grigg

Where's Australia? How do I get there? You may well ask. The Aboriginal people stumbled across the place about 30,000 years ago, when the oceans were lower and it was rather easier to get to on foot, but for the next 27,000 years no one really knew it was there or how to get to it.

It was only in the late 1600s that some Dutch trading vessels were blown off course and found themselves bumping into a huge bit of land that wasn't marked on their charts. Being Dutchmen, they quickly dubbed it 'New Holland' and then left it alone and went on to India, which was where they were heading in the first place. But they marked New Holland on their charts so that, if they were ever blown off course again, they'd know what to call the bit of land they got shipwrecked on.

About a hundred years later the British decided they weren't going to let the Dutch get away with creating New Hollands and New Zealand's all over the place, and they sent off Captain Cook to name something suitably British. He found a lovely bit of coast on the eastern side of this chunk of land, which now was seen to take up rather a lot of room. So he looked at this coast, musing what to call it. New England? No, the Americans already had one of those. New Yorkshire? No, not quite right. Ahah! Cook spotted some fancied resemblance to the south of Wales. New South Wales! You couldn't get much more British than that.

What the British Government thought of Cook's choice of name, I'm not sure, but perhaps they didn't think much of the south of Wales, because they decided pretty quickly that New South Wales would make an excellent dumping ground for convicts. After all, if you tried to dump convicts in Old South Wales, they could just walk home again, and besides, the Welsh (a noisy people) would no doubt object. The Aboriginals in New South Wales (I'm sure they had a much better name for the place) could object as much as they liked, but the British Government could afford to ignore them.

And so the great southern continent was settled by Europeans, and eventually the whole place came to be called by the much more sensible name of Australia, though a large part of it continued to be called New South Wales (and indeed, still is, though it's a smaller part nowadays).

Civilisation arrived, with steam engines, railways, electricity, and the wonders of science. And with science, science fiction. And with science fiction, of course, science fiction fandom. And with fandom, conventions. And eventually, World Conventions (you knew I'd get around to that, didn't you?).

So, when you come to Australia in 1985 for the Melbourne Worldcon, you'll find it much easier to get here than did the Aboriginals, the Dutch, or the British. Instead of walking for thousands of miles over temporarily dry sea-bed, or spending years in a leaky boat, you will be able to fly in relative comfort in a modern jet, taking less than a day to get here.

We are currently negotiating with an international airline, and eventually we will be able to arrange discount airfares for fans coming to the Worldcon from overseas in groups. Imagine a 747 full of fans... a MidairCon! And we'll certainly be able to offer package tours of Australia for interested visitors.

No one would try to argue that it will be cheap to come to Melbourne from overseas for the Worldcon, but the air fares are certainly within reach of the average fan, provided you have plenty of warning, and can start putting some cash aside. And remember, you can make it part of the holiday of a lifetime. Start saving: Melbourne in '85 will be worth it!

SF T-SHIRTS

Science fiction T-shirts in a variety of interesting and amusing designs are available from Mike McGann, 194 Corunna Rd, Petersham, NSW 2049, Australia. Ask him for a catalogue.

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GAMES, T-SHIRTS, BADGES AVAILABLE!

Melbourne in '85 T-shirts are now readily available in a number of colours, including white, bone, blue, yellow, for a price of \$10 (Australian or US or equivalent other currency) from us or our agents. Please make sure you let us know your size. Also available are 'Melbourne' badges for \$1.

Siawol! Fanzine FANAC! Mundanity party

But our most exciting new production is a fannish board game called 'Fanac!'. Supplied complete with board, cards, counters, and dice, Fanac! simulates the fannish life as up to six players compete for the Hugo under the supervision of the Secret Master of Fandom. Go to a convention, publish a fanzine, but watch out for gafiation! Fanac! was designed by David Grigg, and is available for \$10 from us or our agents.



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