



NUMBER 8.
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"AND IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS RAQUEL WELCH....."

MEMORABLE MOMENTS AT THE SYNCON DEPT.

Itching.....running out after Bill Moser's speech on the Thursday night with Noel Kerr to grab our flagon of claret out of Gerald Carr's car...and finding that the car was gone.....scratching.....putting the leg of my chair through some framed original Al Williamson artwork.....Raquel Welch in "1,000,000 B.C.".....the odd feeling when the entire audience at the film night moved into the projection box.....itching.....being locked in the store room with Gary Mason.....watching, numb with horror, as Lee Harding auctioned my entire pulp collection at prices that averaged at 30 cents.....scratching.....listening to Paul Wheelahan describing how he wrote a pornographic novel....having a conversation with Leo Harding during the Saturday night party while drunk and marvelling at the number of eyes Lee had.....collapsing at the Saturday night partywatching Peter Darling fling open his toilet door to reveal a stunned Leigh Edmonds huddled on the seat.....seeing Raquel Welch in "1,000,000 B.C." for the second time....losing part of the auction list at Peter Darling's house.....and discovering that Elizabeth Foyster had taken the rest of the auction list back to Melbourne in error.....itching.....

PSSSSST! ANYONE WANT TO BUY A BUS DEPT.

Is your life drab, humdrum? Need excitement? Well, this is what you do. Buy a share in a double decker bus. Preferably a double decker bus that is going to travel across Asia and Europe. Then just sit back and quietly go mad.

Things have been happening fast and furious lately. Keith Chatto filmed the bus and some of the crew the weekend after the Con and the result appeared on Channel 2's newsreel the following Monday night. Then the travel agent ~~that~~ he admitted that he had booked passage for only six on the "S.S. MALAYSIA" instead of 12 which meant we would have to fly to Singapore instead of by ship. This meant extra cost of course but Chris Guy (our glorious leader) threatened them with court action with the result that the agency has offered to pay the difference between the air and boat fare (about \$500.00). Of course our date of departure was altered. We had intended leaving on the 20th of Feb but now we would be leaving about the 12th of March. I was disappointed as I had been looking forward to the boat trip but it meant the chance of earning extra money. Or it did. Today (the 28th of Jan) I learn that there may still be a chance of a few of us to go by boat. But we won't know until next Monday. Which means I'm up in the air. I've already changed the date of my resignation twice and GIG are getting touchy. Perhaps we'll end up going by Russian trawler.

The bus is due to be loaded tomorrow. "Don't go and watch it being loaded," the shipping agent advised us, "it would break your heart." TV fame hit us again last weekend. This time it was Channel 7 who were informed by our venture by one of our sponsors (I should say by one of our two sponsors). We left the bus in Channel 7's car park on Sunday night. Chris indulged spending the night in it but I joined those well-known Sinney fans, Peter Darling, Gary Mason & Robin Johnson at a mid-night drive-in. We went to see "TARGETS", one of the greatest films ever to be so overlooked and ignored. "CRACK IN THE WORLD" was the first feature and provided ample comedy relief. Robin had seen it before but he spent the time watching Peter's portable TV in the back seat. Peter earned my undying wrath when he dropped my packet of Jaffas while it was being passed between cars. He says he picked all of them up but I refuse to believe him.

I returned to the bus around 5 am as the sun was beginning to rise. I spent an hour lying on my back on one of the bunks listening to the sparrows running up and down the roof then it was time to ~~rise~~ ^{get up}. Chris, who was babbling in an alarming manner, was obviously getting. I wasn't, because I had no intention of going on camera. Just how nervous he was became apparent when he locked his car up with the keys lying on the back seat. He had to push one of the back windows in to get them.

Ron Clarke arrived a little while later wearing a SULT, and the bus was driven round to the front of Channel 7 (I had better explain at this point that we were to appear on the breakfast program, which was the reason for all this ~~early~~ early morning activity). We were greeted by a TV camera, a couple of technicians and Bruce Webster, the star (?) of the show, who was still doing up his tie. Leaving the bus unattended, we descended into the bowels (a good description) of Channel 7. When we reached the studio

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where the TODAY show was to be filmed we were surprised to see our bus on the monitor. We hadn't realised the outside TV camera was operating. I fought down the urge to run back outside and do something in front of it.

The studio was total confusion. Everyone gave the impression they didn't know what they were doing. Oh, I said to myself, it just looks that way. In actual fact this chaos is just an illusion. But as time went on it gradually sunk in that they really didn't know what they were doing. No one explained anything to us and we were kept in the dark until the last minute when the three who were going to be interviewed were told that they would be filmed outside by the bus. Out they ran. I stayed in the studio to watch the fun on the monitor.

As soon as CRUSADER RABBIT was finished the show began. Being Australia Day they started it with a flag raising ceremony. During this emotional period the camera slipped too far to the left and we got a quick view of the back end of our bus. Then they switched back to the studio for the weather. Tension mounted. Webster, the star(?), came running back into the studio after his flagpole stunt. He and his female partner sat like emotionless dummies at their ~~desk~~ desk until it was time for them to go on. Then, as the light on top of the camera lit up, they suddenly came alive and began to exchange banalities. As soon this was over the expressions dropped from their faces and they resumed their former passive state.

A commercial or something followed and then it was time for the bus. Just before this the continuity girl or whatever she was came running over and asked where the three who were to be interviewed. Outside, I replied. She seemed a bit staggered by this and started to shuffle through her sheaf of papers. Oh yes, she said at last and disappeared at great speed out of the studio.

Ron Clarke and I leaned back in our ~~seats~~ seats and waited nervously. The great moment arrived. The bus filled the screen. Bruce Webster began to utter his usual brand of banalities. Our three intrepid crew members stood with their loins girded (not a comfortable state on such a warm day) and their knecaps firm. Keye was the first to be submitted to the ruthless line of questioning. Now Keye isn't exactly a familiar with all the details of the trip, not being involved with the actual planning. So most of the questions Webster asked she didn't know the answer of. But she adlibbed very well.

Chris was next. Mumble, he said. Then someone in the control room turned the volume up and we could hear him. He did rather well, except near the end when he got a bit grandiose and began to rave about "an achievement for the youth of Australia...." and rot like that. David was next, and he too got carried away, and mentioned the \$700.00 worth of duty-free film we hoped to pick up in Singapore.

Then it was all over. Ron and I left the studio and joined the others outside. There was complimenting, backslapping and a small argument about the increasing price of fares. Then we began to go our separate ways. Chris and I climbed into the bus and choofed off. We got halfway back to our base when the bloody thing ran out of fuel. Fuel guage was stuck again.

I hope this isn't the last WHY BOTHER. Issues may make their way across the great water, and its possible there may be a posthumous edition if I find the time. Spelling and typing errors in this issue, of which there are many, shall remain nameless to protect the innocent.....