

# Jean and Eric 'Avalook at the UK GUFF 2001 Trip Report

**Published by:** Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber

(First draft written by Eric; edited and amended by Jean; most photos taken by Jean, some by Eric, but all digitally processed by Jean.)

An earlier version of this trip report is online (HTML) at <http://www.ericlindsay.com/guff/>

**Printed copies are available for a suitable donation from:**

Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber  
P.O. Box 640  
Airlie Beach, Qld 4802  
Australia  
[guff@ericlindsay.com](mailto:guff@ericlindsay.com)

**or from**

Paul Kincaid  
European GUFF administrator  
60 Bournemouth Road  
Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ, UK  
[guff@appomattox.demon.co.uk](mailto:guff@appomattox.demon.co.uk)

**Please make your cheque or money order payable to GUFF. We can take A\$, US\$, UK£.**

For other currencies, ask us or use one of the online payment options given on <http://www.ericlindsay.com/guff/donate.htm>

You can **download this report in PDF** from <http://www.efanzines.com/>. Please make a donation if you download it.

Please support GUFF by buying trip reports, donating, bidding at United Fan Fund auctions, or buying books and fanzines from our website.

© Copyright 2002 Eric Lindsay and Jean Weber

## Contents

Starting the trip.....	1
Corflu - the path to fandom.....	3
Arrival in the UK .....	5
Eastercon - Paragon .....	14
Visit with Skel and Cas.....	19
Scotland .....	22
Wales.....	30
Southwestern England .....	33
Southeastern England.....	36
Wiscon .....	39
Return to Australia .....	42
Reflections .....	46
Background of GUFF (previous administrators & nominees) ....	49

## Other Websites to visit:

Jean and Eric's Australia travel site, Avalook  
<http://www.avalook.com.au/>

Jean's professional site for technical editors:  
<http://www.jeanweber.com/>

## Who's who on the cover:

L-R, top-bottom: Lilian Edwards, Alison Freebairn, Brian Ameringen, Caroline Mullen, Christina Lake, Doug Bell, Steve Davies, Ian Sorenson, John Harvey, Eve Harvey, Alison Scott, Stephen Cain, Giulia de Cesare, Greg Pickersgill, Claire Brialey, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Judith Hanna, Catherine McAuley, Dave Langford, Paul Kincaid, Mark Plummer, Joseph Nicholas.

Here's a sketch map of where we went.



# Starting the trip

It's traditional to start a trip report with the "getting there" stage. In our case, "getting there" is convoluted and includes a stop in Boston for Corflu 2001. This section covers the part from Airlie Beach to Boston.

---

When booking the international flights for our GUFF trip, we found that the cheapest fare was on United Airlines, going through the USA both ways. This suited us, as we usually fly with United. (We ended up with a slightly higher fare, for our own convenience, but we paid the extra ourselves.) So we went to the UK by way of Boston for Corflu.

## ***Monday 26 March 2001***

We had to leave from Proserpine two days before our international flight. It was a slow season for tourists where we live, so Flight West unexpectedly cancelled all but two flights each week when we were intending to leave. The remaining flights were not on convenient days for us. Full service resumes, naturally, just after we were due to depart. The good news was a seriously reduced cost for a one-way ticket to Brisbane, more than enough to cover the cost of an extra night in a motel.

We even had a phone call from the airline, asking whether we were really travelling on that day as their plane was full. Flight West must have really been full, as they used their 90 seat Fokker, the largest plane they have, and they only have two of that model. It is, of course, horribly cramped in the seats.

This slow departure gave us an evening in Brisbane, to catch up on sleep, a chance of a meal at Sizzlers at the Toombul shopping centre, within walking distance from the motel, and time to go shopping in Brisbane city.

Unfortunately, as we were leaving home, Eric had discovered the pull-up handle on his bag must have been destroyed by a previous trip, so we spent some time when we reached the shopping centre inspecting travel bags. He wanted a slightly larger bag, given the way the old small bag bulged with winter coats, and copies of fanzines and flyers and items for GUFF auctions.

## ***Tuesday 27 March 2001***

Mostly when we stay in Brisbane we encounter rain and usually have only an overnight stop before departing early for the airport. This time we had a whole day for shopping, and the weather was good, so we caught a bus to the city centre and shopping areas.

GUFF items were on our mind. Small furry animals for GUFF. Chocolates for GUFF. No chance of finding that sort of thing in Airlie Beach

where we live. Lots of tourist items there, but not Australian made ones such as we wanted. There was certainly no chance of finding good chocolate in Airlie. We would have discovered that long ago had it existed.

Ron Serdiuk's SF and mystery shop Pulp Fiction was in the general area, so after the chocolate shopping we searched for it. Had a great time over lunch talking with Ron, whom we had not seen since the madhouse that was Aussiecon Three. At least his bookshop seems to be managing to continue, despite the GST and the latest drop in value in the Australian dollar. It appears that Brisbane will not be afflicted by a category killer store like Borders, now established in Melbourne, and I believe contemplating opening in Sydney.

Back to Toombul for a second feed at Sizzlers. We were sticking to breakfast and a very late lunch as our only meals each day to start the trip, in anticipation of US food quantities. I sometimes think our primary purpose in stopping in Brisbane is to eat at Sizzlers.

There appeared to be a rock (music, not geology) group at the Toombul shopping centre, surrounded by a screaming crowd. We retreated in some haste. They had a typically memorable rock type name, so naturally I can't remember. Brain Damage, or Silent Shouting, or Noise Level or something. They could have been Deaf Mutes for all the luck they would have had being heard over the screaming.

## ***Wednesday 28 March 2001***

Our seat allocation on Ansett was a bit mucked up. They couldn't give us our international boarding passes, only the one to Sydney. (Jean's comment: the last time this happened to me, the flight from Sydney (to San Francisco) turned out to be cancelled and all the passengers were put onto the flight to Los Angeles, causing severe crowding and rescheduling of connecting flights, so we were apprehensive. Not that there was anything we could do about it.)

They did tag our luggage through, though we had misgivings regarding that. Despite it being just after dawn, we noted they did put the correct city codes on the bags. We have caught a wrong tag once before at an equally early hour, and always check. Unfortunately we then failed to check our seat numbers against each other, and were in different parts of the plane for the short flight to Sydney.

We were scheduled on UA862 to San Francisco at midday, and had asked our travel agent to allow longer than usual between flights. We thus had plenty of time to catch the airline shuttle bus from the domestic terminal to the international terminal, exit the secure area, get our correct boarding passes, and go through Customs. We even had time to visit the Duty Free and pick up some Bundaberg overproof rum to help fans at Eastercon remember us as the GUFF winners. Most people remember the Bundaberg, especially the overproof. This tends to be a rum to lay down and avoid, especially if taken neat as we insist is traditional.

The flight must have been uneventful, as we have no notes about it. We had paid extra (from our own money, not GUFF's), to get upgradeable seats so we could use our Mileage Plus points to get into Business Class again. Therefore the food was good (and plentiful), the drinks were in real glasses, not plastic, and the seats were reasonably comfortable. Well, nothing is comfortable if you're stuck in it for 14 hours, but these weren't bad.

At San Francisco we encountered the new United Terminal, at which the delay getting through US immigration seemed interminable but was really only a half hour. Jean was through well before Eric via the US citizens line and had already grabbed the luggage, as the foreign line is always much slower. After customs, we turned in the luggage again and set off to find our connecting flight to Boston.

We had allowed as much time as possible for this change of flight, and thus reached the gate in plenty of time. Why does your connecting flight always depart from the most distant gate? Is it some plot to ensure airline passengers get plenty of exercise? At least in San Francisco we didn't need to find our cold weather gear. The worst aspect of San Francisco was that the monitors showing domestic flights were inside the security barrier, and we were uncertain whether the terminals were split into multiple separate sections or not. They were not, but it certainly felt like bad communications, since we didn't know from which terminal our flight would depart.

On our upgraded tickets, we were in First Class on the flight to Boston. This means complementary alcoholic beverages, not a good idea for breakfast, especially when you think it is dinner time. Eric tried to get a bourbon and coke, and Jean reacted with great rapidity to cancel that suggestion.

At Boston's Logan Airport we had to find the bus to Framingham, at a time when we were not in great shape. We nominally had been travelling for a day, from taking a 6:20 a.m. taxi from the Brisbane

motel, and catching this bus around 6 p.m. the same day, however there is a nine hour time change in there. Luckily the Logan Express bus was pretty easy to spot, and cheap for airport transport at \$14 for the return ticket. It also thankfully had considerable luggage storage under the bus.

**Ron Salomon** and **Lori Gillen** collected us at the bus station a few minutes after 7:00, and took us to their nearby home. We thought we would probably fall asleep quickly, but we managed to stay up talking until fairly late. Had a take away pizza for dinner, which was a real treat as we never eat pizza at home. What never? Well hardly ever.

### **Thursday 29 March 2001**

We weren't up until close to midday, as the flight caught up with us. We walked down the road to Kinko's so Jean could order copies of her fanzine printed. Then through an open air strip mall in search of a place to get breakfast, or maybe lunch makings. Found Office Max on the way (with cheaper copying costs), but had trouble telling which places might have the food we wanted.

Eric always has problems remembering that US light switches go up to turn on, unlike Australian, which go down to turn on. Likewise the technology of US faucets (taps) keeps him confused and amused, except when he gets burnt. This time one knob controlled the temperature, and a lever changed whether the water emerged from shower head or bath taps. The same lever also controlled the water flow, something he didn't realise initially. "Well, I also don't normally wear my reading glasses in the shower (insufficient waterproof books available), so I do have a slight excuse."

That evening we dined at Appleby's, walking distance away. That had pretty healthy food. Young Aaron (Ron and Lori's younger child) had his heart set on another location, at Jordan's Furniture. Ron, the children and Eric went there afterwards and it was certainly impressive. We were each given a string of beads as we entered, to get us into New Orleans Mardi Gras mood. The entrance ceiling was done like the night sky, somewhat akin to some casinos in Las Vegas.

The show had a shadow projection of movie highlights on a upstairs window. This became a movie screen, with a newscast of a disruption to the Mardi Gras. The blockage was the store owners as the Blues Brothers, sitting in leather lounges mid street. They escaped the hostile crowd in a police car, and drove away with police in hot pursuit. Then as they went out of control, an animatronics version crashed out the steps of one of the buildings, and the rest of the show started.

There were animatronics characters doing a light show of New Orleans jazz and various popular

music. Eric noticed animatronics of Louis Armstrong, the Supremes, Village People, and the Beatles. A helicopter image went overhead, and a giant clown emerged from one building.

He bought the kids some ice cream, which the store kindly produced despite the ice cream stall

closing up. He was very taken by the sketching photo booth, and after a struggle, managed to get a drawing of Aaron. Eric was astonished that this sort of photo booth is not more visible. As well as classic pencil sketches, the photo rendering software can also produce caricatures.

---

## Corflu - the path to fandom

We attended Corflu 2001 in Boston, a great way to start the fannish part of the trip.

---

### **Friday 30 March 2001**

About 2 p.m. we headed off to collect Jean's fanzine from Kinko's. Ron drove us in to the con hotel, which given the continuous cold rain was a real help. Ron had been reminiscing about taking photos at the first Corflu in Berkeley, California at a beautiful old hotel on his first visit to the San Francisco Bay area, so he also wanted to look in at this one so much closer to home. (Rich McAllister writes that the hotel was the Claremont in Oakland/Berkeley, and notes that the boundary between the two cities actually runs through the hotel.)

Corflu 22 was held at The Midtown Hotel, Huntington Avenue, Boston, a low, motel style building amidst many taller buildings. Must have been built before property values in Boston went as high as the buildings.

While waiting for con areas to open, we found bunches of fans in the reception area, many of them comparing Palm and Psion and planning a beam-fest in **Ted White's** room. Whatever happened to the traditional comparing of fanzines?

Great hospitality room. They had chocolate chip cookies, and real Coke, both of which I'm attempting to avoid. They also had fresh vegetables and dips, and various other healthy things.

The convention officially opened at 9 p.m. and **Nic Farey** was randomly drawn as GoH, after a minor error with previous winners not being removed from the ballot, which saw previous GoH **Art Widner** drawn first.

Eric was up until 2:30 talking, which was a good start, but shows how short of fannish stamina he is in his dotage.

### **Saturday 31 March**

A bagel in the hospitality room seemed better than the hotel breakfast. At least, it did after Jean convinced me that bagels were actually a food. I associate bagels with rock-hard objects that crack teeth, from poor past experiences. These were fresh. Of course, by the time I next encounter a bagel, I will have forgotten this lesson.

The panels included the "The intersections of professional and fannish life" and "FAPAC of yore, APAC of today".



*Catherine Crockett, Bobbie Farey, Carrie Root, and Sheila Lightsey*

"Life with faned" (above) featured an all women panel, the partners of faneds. **Bobbie Farey's** line about life with **Nic** not being the horror most people think it is brought down the audience. I hadn't met Nic nor seen his zines prior to Corflu, but having seen him in action, I could see why the audience reacted.

"The cult of Corflu in the new millennium" was the presentation of Corflu bids, of which there was only one, from **Nic Farey** for Annapolis. The meeting kindly allowed us to also present our Airlie Beach Relaxa.con, although that was no longer a Corflu bid.



*Nick Farey*

When discussing his Corflu 2002 bid, Nic was talking about picking up sailors, as one of the attractions of Annapolis. Eric asked if there would

be enough crabs to go around at the banquet crab feast. **Catherine Crockett** said, "Plenty of crabs around, after visiting with all those sailors."



*Ed Meskys*

Lots of oldphart fans were there, including **Ed Meskys**, whom Jean had never met.

At the United fan auction, a microphone-waving **Andy Hooper** was asked "Is that microphone actually on, Andy?" "No. (pause) I just like to use it as a prop." Organiser Andy Hooper and Corflu very kindly provided part of the proceeds to GUFF. They had some really great old fanzines up for auction, and I think Art Widner got most of them.

### **Sunday 1 April 2001**

No April Fools Day jokes appeared. This is distressing. I didn't manage to arrange my own joke on the School of Mathematical Sciences either, as Sunday was not a good day.

**Sheila Lightsey** arranged the Cajun Kitchen Banquet, and it was pretty good. Well, as hotel banquets go, it was real good. The only real problem I could see was that some fans couldn't eat Cajun.



*Sheila Lightsey*

**Ted White** explained FWA at some length, which was probably a good thing if there were many new fanzine fans present. **Art Widner** was elected past president, a popular choice.

Andy Hooper gave out awards not only for the past year, but certificates for the previous one. I guess I think this is fun and worthwhile. **Victor Gonzales** got fanwriter, **Robert Lichtman** letter-hack, **Steve Styles** artist, and **Sheila Lightsey** best new faneditor for *The Accidental Fanzine*.

Must admit the only award I really liked receiving was the one where the award was a wooden plinth with a (formerly full) can of beer superglued to it. Maybe we need to arrange to award one to Nic Farey!

Spent much of the day sitting around talking, as is traditional at Corflu. A highlight of the day for Jean was meeting **Anne Laurie Logan** for the first time. Anne Laurie had been in A Women's Apa but gafiated some years ago, presumably to have time for the rest of her life.



*Ron Salomon, Bob Webber, Art Widner*

That evening we went to dinner with 11 fans at Legal Seafood (the restaurant), and no arguments about going there. Jean "suggested" it in a command voice. We had been told about this chain of Boston restaurants by Kurt Maring (a recent immigrant to Airlie Beach from Switzerland), and I did really enjoy my clam chowder and smoked salmon entree. Jean cheated with the chowder and a salad, and got away with half my \$20 meal cost. The problem with the 40% drop in the value of the A\$ is I keep translating the prices to A\$ (multiply by 2!), and blanching at the result. I haven't spent that much on a meal all year.

Discussed fan funds with **Dick and Leah Smith, Sharon Sbarsky** and others back at the con. They seem supportive of us attempting to raise GUFF funds in the USA, and also of it not having as much of a fanzine fan orientation as does TAFF. So far our efforts include the GUFF web site, flyers at cons, and in apas and our fanzines, but we need to think of other venues in which to spread the word.

We didn't get away until after 10:00 to return to Ron's home with him (fans hate leaving a con). As a

result Lori had already gone to bed, so to my regret we didn't get to see her again, or take any family photos.

### **Monday 2 April 2001**

Laundry, how boring, and this time a whole pair of socks vanished, which would be mysterious were it not so frequent. Well, I guess it is still mysterious, just not particularly unexpected. (Later in the trip - Reading? - we saw a shop named the "Lost Sock Laundromat" - how appropriate!)

Eric walked to the bus depot to check timetables, and REI to inspect adventure gear for people far more adventurous than he. His purpose was to get a replacement bag, since his brand new folding shoulder bag had started disintegrating after a week of use. Despite the cost, he bought an Eagle Creek brand, as he knows they can handle a computer, a few books, glasses, pens, notebook, camera and typical fannish junk. He would have used his existing smaller Eagle Creek bag for the trip, but his new Psion 7 PDA occupied most of the space in it, and made it too marginal in capacity to take this trip.

We now seem to be able to occupy half a day packing and repacking bags. Something Will Have To be Done about this. Preferably something on the Fast Side of Life.

Running late, we got a giant sub sandwich from the supermarket across the parking lot to share for lunch. Even this early in the trip Eric was in full "count the cost" mode, as a result of

anticipation about costs in the U.K., which we hear is expensive. Also this being his third year out of work, a situation that would count as retirement had he actually an income rather than spending savings that are in swift but not yet (he hopes) catastrophic decline. At least he starts getting his pensions in 2002. That should cheer up the accountant portion of his soul. All that red ink saved.

Finally packed, we took the multiple bags for a twenty minute drag across many parking lots (full of melting-snow puddles) to the Logan Express bus depot. Building cranes seemed the city symbol, with demolition all around, as a better historic Boston arose from the destruction, especially near Logan airport.

At Logan we found a Waldenbooks, some phones with data ports, a Staples, and several other stores that seemed somewhat out of place in an airport.

Aboard the plane, we soon headed out of our (Economy Plus class) seats to the almost empty rear of the plane, where we each commandeered an entire row of (3) seats, intending to get some sleep.

This plan was foiled for Eric when he discovered that **Alison Freebairn** was on the same flight. They sat up and talked all night, thus keeping Jean awake, and had drinks for breakfast. Eric discovered that Alison lives near Ian Sorenson, thus helping overcome his geographical ignorance of yet another fan. It was fun to have Corflu continue in this manner.

---

## **Arrival in the UK**

An account of our arrival at Heathrow well before dawn, getting from the airport to where we stayed, and what we did for the 11 days between then and Eastercon.

---

### **Tuesday 3 April 2001**

British Customs didn't show a stiff upper lip, nor any traditional reserve. We got passed through with minimal formalities and in minimum time. Baggage collection is after Customs, so it is no wonder that some visitors to other countries (such as Australia) do not realise they have to collect their baggage at their first stop for Customs inspection.

**Alison Freebairn** had her luggage booked through to Glasgow. She had some time before the flight, and kindly lead us to the Underground. (It wasn't difficult, despite the crowds, but it's always nice to have someone experienced confirm that we're going the correct way, especially when we're not functioning real brightly. – Jean)



*Alison Freebairn*

We got on the Piccadilly line tube train for our trip across London to Seven Sisters station, via a rapid change of train at Finsbury Park. As Heathrow

is the beginning of the line, we got seats and a place to put our luggage, which was fortunate since it's a long trip and passes through central London at peak hour, so the train got quite crowded at times. Other riders seemed used to clambering around tourists' luggage.

Changing trains at Finsbury Park was easy, as all we needed to do was drag our luggage across the platform. Both Judith Hanna and Alison Scott had warned us not to change at any other station, where the distances would be greater and more convoluted.

After some confused exploring of the Seven Sisters platform, we finally located the desired exit, where Jean phoned **Judith Hanna**. We spent or possibly wasted considerable time inspecting a map of the neighbourhood on the station wall. Reality did not match our map-oriented expectations, due to multiple streets being missing from the map, which was thus more a symbolic representation like the underground diagram.

Judith appeared on the street before we got too confused, and so we dragged the bags back to her abode. **Joseph** made a brief appearance in his secret guise of a Public Servant running late, and gave us a brisk formal salutation and handshake on his way out the door.

Judith later revived the household revolutionary gardening credentials by taking us on a walk to see their allotment, entered under a traditional old arching brick railway bridge. We later lost the plot by assisting in measuring the various beds, Judith and Eric with a tape measure, Jean sitting with a rough diagram.

Judith later produced a masterly and very neat drawing of the plot. Naturally Eric wanted to know when the web version would appear, but was shushed by those present more sensible than he.



*Judith Hanna in the allotment*

We fell upon cheese sandwiches for lunch, a special treat for Eric as he normally avoid cheese.

After lunch Jean and Eric both collapsed for a while, with Eric claiming he didn't need any rest.

**Alison Scott** and **Stephen Cain** brought their children **Marianne** and **Jonathan** (aka Jo-phan) over and Judith served up a tomato and mushroom pasta for dinner. Judith also entertained Marianne, who at four years old is very enthusiastic about Judith's 1/12th scale dolls' house.

We talked until fairly late, over several bottles of mellow red wine. We noted the wines were more mature than we can risk in the tropics, where we tend to stick to recent vintages, and then try to find ones ready to drink while still young (which seems to me to mostly mean a merlot).

Stephen drove us back to their house where we were to stay, and we had to admire the luggage and people carrying capacity of their small people mover.

### **Wednesday 4 April 2001**

We tried to sleep in, but Eric failed to do so when he awoke soon after 4 a.m. We were also very warm with the heavy bed covers, a problem we had not expected.

We're not sure this is a typical UK breakfast, but Eric had Weetabix, some hot cross buns, and bread with Rose's Lime marmalade. This last we're familiar with from some supermarkets in Australia, and although it doesn't actually taste all that much like a lime marmalade, we rather enjoy it. The Weetabix seemed very similar to the Samitarian Weetbix we're used to in Australia, but had sugar and malt as well as wheat and salt, and had rounded ends and a finer structure rather than the large, straight-cut flakes of material we knew.

It was raining and this discouraged us from exploration, especially as we were both still feeling jet lagged and less than at our best. However we did have a loan of an A-to-Z map of London and lots of hints from Alison.

The big excitement for the morning was a rather large Navy rescue helicopter landing in the school ground a hundred metres away. Never can find a camera when we need one.

Alison demonstrated Internet grocery shopping, and insists it is faster than actually going to the supermarket. Eric would have to agree that it seemed slightly faster, but thought the frustration levels still far too high. Still, it was interesting to see someone actually use this technique. Jean avoided this demonstration by falling asleep again, while Eric took notes. In fact, Jean slept most of the day, emerging for meals.

We went shopping at the local high street markets with Alison in the cold and rainy conditions, only to find that even the market vendors were packing up and leaving. Jean was interested in the

clear plastic rain covers over the numerous babies in push-chairs (prams). She found them an interesting adaptation to the climate. I'm sure they would be too hot in our own area. The markets seemed incredibly crowded to me, and the vendors much more numerous (albeit repetitive in their stock) than I expected.

Delicious chicken breasts with orange and olives, accompanied by couscous and salad, for dinner. Alison says she likes cooking. We certainly enjoyed the results.



*Alison Scott and Stephen Cain*

### **Thursday 5 April 2001**

**Victor Gonzales** arrived early in the morning, around nine, from a redeye flight from Boston, whereas we had feared his arrival would not have been until late in the afternoon. He said five vodkas had helped him sleep through the flight. He promptly engaged in lively literary debate with Alison, some of it involving his forthcoming joint fanzine with **Lilian Edwards**.

Alison made what I am sure was a typically wonderful Greek oriented set of starters for lunch, a characteristic we think ensures that lots of overseas fan travellers visit and try to stay for a meal.

The one day travelcard we were advised to buy (cheaper than a return train ticket after 9:30 a.m.) turned out to be a magnetic striped piece of cardboard labelled Walthamstow Central to zones 1 to 4. As expected there seemed few staff visible at the tube stations to check what went through the barriers.

Jean, Victor and Eric set off for the traditional fannish First Thursday gathering (still known as "The Tun"). Victor and Eric talked Roman history while we travelled along the Victoria line. At Oxford Circus we changed to the Bakerloo line for the four stations to Waterloo station.

Finding the Florence Nightingale pub was an interesting exercise as part of the area was under construction, but with three people looking, plus Alison's directions, and Jean's printed instructions from Dave Langford's web site, we didn't really have real problems.

The meeting was in a dark but large room upstairs, which rapidly became smoke filled as numerous fans arrived. It certainly was a large meeting by my standards. **Dave Langford** greeted us, bought us an ale, and gave us a copy of *Ansible*. This seemed an excellent start. We started handing out fanzines and also flyers for our *Relaxa.con* plus our GUFF bookmarks.



*Dave Langford*

**Bridget Wilkinson** gave us *Fans Across the World*, a listing of fannish conventions and the like.



*Bridget Wilkinson*

Eric chatted with **Bernie Peek**, looking dapper in suit and tie direct from his marketing job. Bernie mentioned using IR lasers and cameras to find where subjects' eyes are looking when evaluating billboards. Eric also had a long chat with **Chris Cooper**, a software engineer with Symbian, about new models that had been announced.

**Avedon Carol** and **Rob Hansen** were there, perhaps our only chance to see them, although we have hopes also for the party Joseph and Judith are doing on Saturday. Jean saw Caroline Mullen.

There was so much noise from that number of people that we had little chance of hearing many conversations once the numbers increased.

(Jean's comments: the smoke and noise were a problem for me too, especially when I couldn't converse with people I really wanted to talk with,

such as **Jane Carnall** and **Sandra Bond**. Fortunately we expected to see them again at Eastercon, in quieter circumstances. We saw numerous others that evening, whose names we failed to record.)



*Chris Cooper, Bernie Peek, Eric*

### **Friday 6 April 2001**

We headed off rather late (nearly 11 am) to take a train from Walthamstow to Liverpool Street, and then the No 11 bus around the tourist areas of central London. We took almost no photographs this day, figuring that if we wanted photos we could buy some postcards and get much better scenes than we were likely to take. It does make a trip report a bit dull by modern expectations.

From the train we could see lots of low brick buildings, some small factories but mostly housing, looking crowded together like we associate with inner Sydney back in Australia.

Some of the station platforms appeared abandoned, with greenery breaking up the brick and concrete, just before the train entered the magnificently restored and updated Liverpool Street railway station.

We were amused (and relieved) to see the "Look Right" and "Look Left" signs painted on streets at crossings. Certainly helps tourists, at least if they could read English.

It took a while before a No 11 bus reached us, as the terminal seemed to have a black hole that swallowed them as they arrived.

Once started, we had a wonderful tourist ride. We sat at the front of the upper deck, where we had a good view. Eric's notes (following) are scrappy and don't pretend to cover everything.

The Bank of England, a statue of Wellington on a horse (actually about half the statues included a horse).

In contemporary contrast, we sighted several Starbucks coffee houses, Burger King, and totally

unexpectedly, a WestBus looking exactly the same as the ones we used to see in Sydney. There were phone boxes in red, and phone boxes in black, and even phone boxes with email facilities.

We passed St Pauls, and rode along Fleet Street, where we totally failed to spot any newspaper offices, although I did note the Old Cock Tavern proclaimed it was the oldest in Fleet street, dating from 1549. Past the Royal Courts of Justice, and The Strand and Aldwych, where we spotted Australia House, and the area where Eric managed to get his British bank account back in 1976 on his previous visit. It seemed easy to suffer a surfeit of history, as everything seemed to be labelled as an historic building or monument.

The pedestrians seemed really careless, stepping in front of any vehicle. We were amazed that the bus didn't run down someone walking across the road. Workers in tee shirts in the streets looked unconcerned about the weather, while we were bundled up in every coat we owned inside the bus. Traffic was at a standstill for minutes at a time in what seemed to us monumental snarls. The streets seemed almost uniformly narrow, contributing to our feeling that we wouldn't cope well here as a driver.

Other sights: Trafalgar Square, Kings College 1829, University of London, Piccadilly Circus, Great Scotland Yard, Parliament Square, Westminster Abbey, and in sudden eye relief from stone, a nice little park on Victoria Street. New Scotland Yard, Westminster Cathedral, Victoria Station and a bus interchange point. Lots and lots of little shops, on every street, selling antiques, furniture on Pimlico Road, statues and fountains all over.

We rode the bus to the end of the line and turned back on a return bus at Falham Broadway. We were amused to hear a nearby youth start playing tunes, apparently from part of his overcoat. This occurred several times over a few minutes, and then he looked startled, snatched off his CD earpieces and started digging in a pocket to find his mobile phone, which was indeed ringing musically.

We took a long walk through the Westminster area and past Buckingham Palace and the Queen Victoria Memorial before returning to Alison's.

**Bernie Peek, Alan Harris** and **Mike Scott** came for dinner, but **Martin Smith** couldn't attend. Alison produced a wonderful array of dinner items, and always seemed determined that no-one will fail to find delicious things available to eat.

### **Saturday 7 April 2001**

While the weather forecast was for poor and declining conditions, this dawned as a beautiful clear day with blue skies, unlike any day we had seen previously in the UK. So we started washing

clothes, which is rather an anticlimax, but seems an inescapable part of a traveller's life.

As the washer took a very long time to do its job, we took a short walk past lots of Church graveyards to nearby parks, all of which seemed to have flooded and muddy paths. So we returned past some nice houses, many converted to a duplex style. Returned to remove clothes from the washer and hang them out to dry, mainly because we couldn't work out the superfluous technology of the British combined washer dryer.

Next we walked to the local High Street market, which continues almost forever, although the densely crowded conditions slowed us down so much that perhaps it was only really a few blocks long. Eric checked phone stores, seeking a SIM card to allow him to use his mobile phone in the U.K. This search was a precautionary move for when we get the hire car.

Eric also checked any places selling Psion organisers, to get a feel for how widespread they were. More so than he expected, and certainly a rebuttal of the USA newsnet readers who claim it is impossible to find a Psion for sale. It just depends upon where you live.

Back at Alison's home, she supplied quiche as a late snack. Jean seemed very pleased.

Stephen kindly drove us to **Brian Ameringen** and **Caroline Mullen**'s spacious home, which was close to a station, but radially displaced so one would travel further into London before being able to get the correct line. Stephen was rejected by Caroline's baby **Meriol** at the doorstep, and I was once again impressed by how well some UK fans can multi-task.

Brian and Caroline have a very nice multiple level home, with an actual separation of the book collections from the stock for Brian's bookselling business. They were also very organised in fannish terms, as you tend to expect from a bookseller.



*Brian Ameringen*

Although not the least similar in appearance, Brian reminded me a lot of Justin Ackroyd of Slow Glass Books in Melbourne. A similar breadth and

interest in literary and other topics leading to him being able to recommend worthwhile books based on the interests of his customers.

Brian and I were able to work out we first met at a Boskone at Framingham several years ago, after deciding Aussiecon Three was not our first meeting.



*Caroline Mullen*

The meal they produced was delicious. A sauce based upon the water from cooking red beans, with water chestnuts, young corn, English and spicy continental sausages as the main meal ingredients, accompanied by a great red wine from their fine cellar. I could see myself trying to make a similar meal at home, if I can find appropriate sausages.

A lengthy drive to a party at Judith and Joseph's house near Seven Sisters, with streets and a view I thought more typical of US patterns on the motorway section. We emerged on crowded and narrow streets, and traffic was almost at a standstill as we approached our destination. We did see some of the most amazing exhibits of individual interpretations of the traffic code, with the stretch limo going down the wrong side of the road in the face of oncoming traffic almost certainly the winner for eccentric driving behaviour.



*Party at Judith and Joseph's*

Lots of attendees at the party. **Brian** and **Caroline** with Meriol, of course. **Alison** and **Stephen** and the two children were already there. **Rob Hansen** and **Avedon Carol**, who won't be attending Eastercon. **Martin Smith**, first met at the Florence Nightingale.

**Avedon, Victor, Alan Harris** and others headed outside frequently to inhale tobacco smoke in the chill of the garden. Victor was talking about Roman history, and reading Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. **Joseph**, looking stunning in a satin skirt, was later seen indulging in two glasses of wine simultaneously. He was shortly after seen to recline and fall.

(Jean's comments: on our arrival at the party, Judith cheerfully asked me how we were finding London so far. I replied, "It's too cold, too wet, too windy, too crowded, too noisy, and far too expensive." Judith riposted, "Other than that...?" So I admitted, "The people are great." Which, after all, is the purpose of the trip, isn't it?)



*Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas*

### **Sunday 8 April 2001**

Spent part of the morning updating my notes, badly. Luckily Jean will be the one producing the final version.

Continuous argument and discussion raged in the kitchen as Alison edited the fanzine **Victor** and **Lilian Edwards** were producing. I was really impressed by the intensity and concentration displayed by all involved. Certainly I'll never produce a fanzine half as good, as I simply don't concentrate on what I am doing. My fanzines are products of a butterfly mind.

(Jean's comments: During a discussion about layout and using PDF as a distribution medium, in addition to printed copies, I remarked that I wasn't concerned when the page layout in the PDF version of my fanzine did not exactly match the printed version (because of differences caused by using different printer drivers). Victor and Alison were predictably aghast at this heresy.)

Again we took the above ground train to Liverpool Street station, thus gaining a fine view of the outskirts of London. Then by tube to Tower Gateway.

Ancient walls from the 11th Century were on view near the Tube station at the Tower of London. We wandered over Tower Bridge, and London Bridge, along Queens Walk, across Southwark Bridge, ignored the Modern Tate Gallery and crossed the Thames at least three times while mostly semi-lost. HMS Belfast was moored in the Thames at a location which appeared impossible for it to actually reach given its height and the bridges downstream. The weather helped us decide against taking tour boats along the Thames, but we had a fine walk.

### **Monday 9 April 2001**

Jean and I went separate ways this morning. I got away at ten, via Tube for Euston, then Northern heading south to Tottenham Court Road. A little more complicated than expected, as to get to the appropriate platform involved going up and down rather a lot of stairs and escalators. Jean was heading off later by bus towards Greenwich, while I was shopping.



*Tower of London*

Tottenham Court Road seemed full of electronics and computer shops. The nearest comparison I can think of is some of the 42nd Street area of New York. They also each seemed to have clones of the Lebanese staff for these shops, each with their own counter. I wandered somewhat bemused until I entered furniture store territory, which I'd been advised was the end of the line, and then returned on the other side of the street.



*London Bridge*

I had a fine time comparison shopping, but have to admit that the prices for what I specifically wanted were not startlingly good. Doubtless compared with High Street they were a great saving, but many of the shops had obsolete computer software in stock.

I was looking for a Psion compatible PCMCIA card modem, however the Dacom Gold Card prices seemed unreasonably high. The lowest I could find was an OEM version at £100, and since I had no evidence it really was compatible, I decided it was not for me.

I did get a copy of Palmtop NV Street Planner UK, for £43 (they claim it is listed at £69, which I think is true). I could get an electronic version from New World Technologies and possibly elsewhere for less, but then I wouldn't have all the maps on CD, and would have a massive and expensive download.

Comparison shopping completed, I took the Central line east to Bank, after following signs (and someone who appeared to know what they were doing) down a really steep and long circular stairway. The Tottenham Court Road station appears to be a fairly early tube station, with many passages that appear considerably older than in some other stations I've seen. The narrow spiral staircase down was just one instance. There were also old barriers separating traffic in each direction, and numerous signs saying keep to the left.

The Docklands Light Rail to Cutty Sark station near Greenwich took me out of the Tube system. The above ground views of the large new buildings by the water were a considerable contrast to my previous views of historic old London. I can't imagine how the developers managed to get access to so much area in which to build, unless wartime damage was the clearance method. Although I have to admit that the building crane seems to be the most common bird in all of London.

Greenwich was less than perfectly signposted for tourists, so my walk took me past Sir Francis Chichester's custom around-the-world yacht Gypsy Moth, and the famous clipper ship Cutty Sark. Both were certainly a lot larger than I had imagined, but then Cutty Sark was a merchant vessel. I did

however wonder if the deck ports formerly covered a battery of light guns. Piracy in the South China Seas isn't dead even now.



*Cutty Sark*

I found Jean at Royal Maritime Museum at 2 PM, after some frantic hand waving at her as she wandered away, and a little running, as I was coming from the wrong direction.



*Gypsy Moth*

The Royal Observatory, up a steepish but small hill, provided a wonderful view over Docklands and parts of London. Worth visiting just for the view, even without all the history the place evokes. Nearby there were even clean loos that were free, something I've had considerable trouble locating in tourist London.

The park in which the Observatory was set is just one of many all over London, which seems to have set aside all sorts of land for such purposes. I gather some of the many parks were preserved for Royalty, which almost seems a sufficient reason to want to continue such a quaint custom.

Goddard's beef pies each for a late lunch, from a little family store near the railway, surrounded by construction barriers, and a good deal they were too at under a pound. I just hope Mad Cow Disease really has been eliminated (to be honest however it wouldn't surprise me if isolated cases of human infection were seen for the next fifty years).

We walked a tunnel under the Thames to Island Garden DLR station. The tunnel turned out to be narrow at the far end, as if a large band aid had been applied inside a leaking pipe. It also had a lift for Jean to use. I was happy I could still cope with the steps, albeit not as fast as the children racing their parents up to the street.

At Stratford shopping centre we wandered looking at shops. Found a crazy prices style shop

with UK road map for £1. With luck the roads shown in it won't be too wrong. Compare and contrast the value and usability this with the quality of the £43 computer map noted above (especially when you neglect to bring a GPS gadget to connect to the computer map).

The bus back from Stratford took us past numerous interesting looking small business premises. I can certainly see how the "nation of small shopkeepers" tag arose.

The narrow houses we saw from the bus seemed much the same nearly everywhere we went around London, and reminded me a lot of the areas in which I grew up in Sydney. The houses are a single room wide, with an entry door on one side. I get the impression that many opened onto either a hall or a narrow entry foyer, whereas what I recall from Sydney was the front door opening directly on the front room. Perhaps the climate leads to these different approaches. Upstairs on the Sydney houses was often an open veranda area, which I don't recall seeing in London.

Some larger houses has a fairly similar one room wide pattern, however the rooms were far wider. Rooms from half landings lead to perhaps five levels of rooms, offset vertically from each other by a half room high stairway. I noticed this mainly because there seemed to be stairs everywhere.

I recall in Sydney that older terrace houses were perhaps 16 feet wide, and that the larger ones seemed about 33 feet. In the suburbs, land was often sold as 66 feet blocks, for individual houses several rooms wide across the block. This eventually became the standard housing pattern in all Australian suburbs.

Internet phones (no, not the sort you think that connect voice via the Internet - these provided email) abounded in the streets. We must have seen half a dozen red BT phone boxes that offered email access for 20p an email. They had a very small display, and a robust but small keyboard. We thought it a great idea for travellers lacking connectivity. We also noted several internet cafes at exceedingly good prices around London. I think this may have been the evening Alison and Stephen took us to their local Italian pizzeria, Mondragone, for a traditional restaurant meal.

## **Tuesday 10 April 2001**

I worked on the first two parts of the trip report, and Jean did a rough edit on it ready for an initial upload. A very boring day in trip report terms.

**John Harvey** collected us at Alison's, and we left around 5 p.m. We drove around in circles a lot, because someone had changed all the roads on John. Our confidence in our own navigation potential plunged to a new low.

Wonderful and very sudden transition to green and pleasant fields less than 20 miles from Central London on the way to Tonwell.



*John and Eve Harvey*

Business associates of Eve and John were staying at their home for a while, and they had a dinner ready for us. Shepherd's Pie, yum! **Eve** wasn't due back from Cyprus until later in the evening.

Eve claims I am to blame for introducing John (somewhat disastrously) to Bundaberg Rum at Aussiecon Two. I'd try to deny this if I thought I creditably could.

## **Wednesday 11 April 2001**

A lazy morning visiting Eve and John's office at The Maltings owned by the French and Jupps malting company. Lots of interesting small businesses there to keep each other company.



*The Maltings*

John and Eve kindly took us on a countryside drive, and a visit to interesting small towns nearby like Ware and Hertford. At Ware we walked along part of the pleasant path alongside the River Lea or Lee. Canada Geese and ducks lay in wait for a wary Jean, who seems to attract aggressive water fowl. We couldn't continue our plan of walking across the bridge back into the main street, as the bridge was closed and being renovated. There were

vast numbers of tiny lanes leading off the main street, with interesting looking buildings along each.

We had an enormous pub lunch at Checquer's some distance by car away at Wareside. We were later to discover such enormous meals were not uncommon at pubs.

Then we were on our way to St Albans, named after Britain's first Christian martyr.

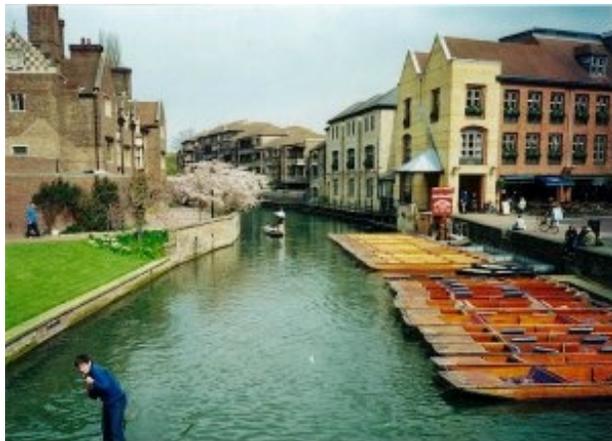
We visited the fine Roman museum near the excavation site, showing Verulamium, third largest town in Roman Britain, and depicting everyday life in Roman Britain. The museum had a fine range of reconstructions and original material removed and restored, but good guides to the way parts of the buildings were used.

The Verulamium site has a hypocaust underfloor hot air heating system, mosaics of a bath suite, part of the third century city wall and London Gate. There is also a Roman theatre excavation.

The evening meal included steak and kidney pie for me, a fine trout for Jean, while John and Eve raved about the pie with Stilton cheese at the friendly local pub, the Robin Hood and Little John in Tonwell. Nothing beats local advice on which of the local pubs to visit.

### ***Thursday 12 April 2001***

John and I went shopping at Tesco for snacks to consume at the convention, just in case. This probably ensures that we will have a plenitude of food available once there, but hints about the isolation of the Eastercon site make me unwilling to take a chance. I also bought Jean a replacement umbrella, since her brand new one broke, and she had taken to stealing mine.



*Punts on River Cam, Cambridge*

John and Eve took us on a long but interesting drive to Cambridge through the countryside. They went off to check a (musical) keyboard store, while Jean and I wandered through historic Cambridge.

We rapidly decided either the Cambridge streets were too narrow or else the buildings were too high. We tried to locate all the colleges so we could see at least their entrances, if not every detail. (Jean: We were far too stingy to pay to go into any of the colleges. In retrospect, this was a mistake. We should have inspected at least one, just for the experience.

We did wander along bits of the river that we could reach, cheerfully rejecting the numerous opportunities to be taken for a river "cruise" on a punt. I expect that would have been a pleasant experience too.)



*Entrance to a college, Cambridge*

After walking many streets we spent a fair amount of time in an excellent and well presented (and free) natural history museum. Lots of material about British birds we would never have seen otherwise.

On emerging from the museum, we came upon Eve and John only a block or so away, as we all headed for our rendezvous point.

On the way back to their house, we stopped at a really nice Waitrose supermarket, that I liked better than any Sainsbury or Tesco I had seen.

Another feature of the return trip was John and Eve giving instructions on finding B&Bs. I had totally failed to notice the signs on the buildings before this. I think I was expecting them to be advertised on site via the garish (and large) billboards I associate with motels in Australia.

We dumped our preliminary GUFF report pages (on starting the trip and Corflu) up on our web site.

# Eastercon - Paragon

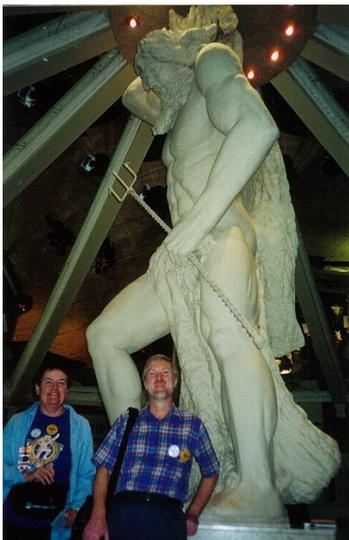
An account of our adventures at the British Eastercon, Paragon.

---

## Friday 13 April 2001

On our way to Hinckley at 11 a.m. for the Eastercon with John Harvey driving, Eve explained the numerous things I missed in my previous notes of our stay with them. The countryside looked green and lush, doubtless a consequence of the recent rain and floods.

The Hanover International Hotel at Hinckley was a lot nicer than I ever expected. I must admit however to having misgivings about the massive figure of Poseidon in the foyer, holding up the ceiling. It should have been Atlas, or maybe Hercules. Late one evening, the trident held by the statue became occupied with a giant piece of polythene painted to look like a slice of toast.



*Foyer of Hanover International Hotel*

We entered our room, and just about turned around and fled from the sybaritic splendour and luxury exposed to our unaccustomed gaze.



*Our room at the Hanover*



*Another view of our room*

The convention material we received at registration included a Harry Turtledove novel *Into the Darkness* donated by John Jarrold of Earthlight (Simon and Schuster). This is the first part of a fantasy series in which Harry rewrote the history of WWII with dragons and mages. Cute, but not to my taste.

We also had an extensive Paper Tiger graphics catalog, listing all manner of SF and fantasy artwork books. I see their interesting email newsletter on a fairly regular basis.

Some slightly worrying material appeared in the Paragon programme book. At least two of the committee, **Steve Lawson** and **John Dowd**, revealed they had read Kemlo books during their misspent youth. Also GoH **Mark Plummer** revealed he had re-read a Neil R Jones Zorome story, for research, he says.

The program book also had a nice little writeup about GUFF, but alas, Jean's name was spelt Webber rather than Weber. (A fine name, just not hers.)

The program book also revealed the 1948 Eastercon had Bertram Chandler as GoH, and as he was often thought of as an Australian writer, it is nice to see that continuing connection with GUFF attendees at the con. Indeed, we want to make GUFF an annual event, rather than once every few years.

**Dave Langford** and **Cheryl Morgan** were in the fan room before it opened, and we were able to get in and say hello to **Sandra Bond** working behind the desk. We also wanted to introduce ourselves to organisers **Greg Pickersgill** and **Catherine McAuley**.



*Fans in hotel bar*

In the bar we talked with GUFF administrator **Paul Kincaid**, who kindly bought me a most welcome beer; **Maureen Kincaid Speller**, who dodged off frequently to see others; and **David Stewart** from Ireland.

The opening panel in the fan room was appropriately enough about fan rooms, with **Greg Pickersgill** as moderator, **Rhodri James**, **Claire Brialey** and **Eric**. I'm not sure that I was an appropriate panelist, but given the material in this fan room was the best I have seen, I tried to contribute to the discussion.

Talked with **Ian Sorenson**, last seen at the Seattle and Boston Corflus. He introduced a Leeds fan, not that we ever got to Leeds, with many insults as is his wont, and also introduced **Eileen Weston**.

I recall a large card being prepared for sending to Arthur C. Clarke, so as many of the attendees as possible were encouraged to sign it, just because it was 2001.

Dined in the Brasserie with **Ben Yalow** of the bow tie, and active convention fan **K.I.M. Campbell**, originally from Canada. Ben Yalow had to head off for the Buffy panel. He advised that even Smofcon had a Buffy panel and he has to be on each one.

The queue at the buffet cashier was so large that Jean soon found that you could avoid it by ordering a pizza at the door for delivery to the table. Food is Jean's area of expertise. Grolsch turned out to be the most acceptable beer in that area of the convention.

Later, in the bar with **Maureen Kincaid Speller** and **David Stewart**, I talked up our re-axacon planned for Airlie Beach in June 2002.

I tried getting our GUFF and Relaxa.com publicity into the next convention newsletter by talking to the helpful staff, and managed that with the GUFF material. We had already handed out some of the round GUFF badges we had made to some previous winners and helpers, just to help with publicising the fund.

The very late night GUFF and TAFF quiz lured lots of people into the fan room, more so I think than the earlier panels, which I think is a bit of a worry. Quizmaster was **Roger Robinson**, while the TAFF members were **Maureen Kincaid Speller**, **Sue Mason**, and current TAFF winner **Victor Gonzalez**. GUFF was represented by **Eric Lindsay**, **Jean Weber**, **Eve Harvey** and **Paul Kincaid**. The TAFF folks proved somewhat better at answering the questions, assisted mightily by an impressive performance by Maureen.

### **Saturday 14 April 2001**

We started at 8:30 with a giant breakfast (included in the room rates) of five varieties of incredibly fatty eggs, bacon and sausage, baked beans, fruit, toast, cereal. I was later to argue that this actually included five varieties of vegetable, at least for the purpose of following a healthy diet. Well, it is plausible that the sausage was mostly vegetable.

Talked with **Peter** and **Eileen Weston** about travel to Australia. Peter says the weather in the UK is depressing him. I talked with Peter several times during the convention after panels, and really hope he will make more trips to Australia when he retires.

Saw con publications organiser **Peter Dowd** in the con newsroom again for a while. He wants to organise an interview, thus proving convention newsletter editors get increasingly desperate as the convention proceeds. Of course, they were never there when we checked the room. **Wilf James** even asked Eve Harvey early this evening about the interview, having sighted her propaganda GUFF badge.

The Art show consisted of two rooms organised by **Robbie Bourget**. I went through a couple of times, and was very impressed with the high quality of the work presented. This was materially assisted by the large number of David Hardy items, however there were several other artists of like standard whose work was also on display.

The Dealers' Room was crowded with book dealers, and also some fantasy rings and brasswork and the like. The aisles were very narrow, and I felt the prices mostly very high for my pocket. However the place was crowded every time I saw it. The proportion of book dealers was most pleasing to me, even if I couldn't afford to buy.

Talked with **jan howard finder** about his Australian trip report. He was waiting for someone to arrive for his readings for children, however the audience so far was nil. jan says he could keep his notes up to date by stopping at 3 p.m. and writing, however on his short (6 month) trip, he always felt he needed to check something else later in the day. I'm not sure any of us take the leisure any longer to

reflect upon what we write. Writing now means, for most fans, an e-mail workalike, and all style is lost, as you can clearly see on this draft.

Some panels, like the one on World Building, were somewhat too interactive. People sitting around a beachball they were about to terraform is a little too intense for me.

Fan GoHs **Mark Plummer** and **Claire Brialey** had a panel at 4 PM in the Lakeside fan room. This was done as a photoshow of fans via a computer projector. Fun presentation of various fans, including several uncharacteristically in suits under circumstances that were neither a wedding nor a funeral.



*Claire Brialey*

Naturally young and cute photos of the GoHs were included, whereas had I been them, I'd have attempted to suppress such items. The photo of **Ted White** was blurred around the edges, perhaps a case of art following life. There were more embarrassing photos of British fandom than I ever expected to see in a single sitting. I think Marianne would have said they were all very silly.



*Mark Plummer*

Jean went for a meal around 5:30, and I accompanied her to the Brasserie. I think I'm still full from the giant individual pizza last night, and the even more giant breakfast. It was interesting to note that every pizza appeared distinctly different from the ones seen the previous evening.

Purpose of fanzines panel at 6 p.m. in the fan room. Before phones and the internet, fanzines were perhaps the glue keeping fandom together. **Mike Scott** said Plokta's purpose was to enable them to get together every six weeks of so and eat too much food, and also to avoid having to do locs. You can control who reads your fanzine, but not who reads your web page. A fanzine establishes connections between people who may have never met. In joint fanzines, sometimes one editor was enthusiastic, and this carried the fanzine along when it might otherwise have stalled. Fanzines are great because you can edit and rethink your material, which perhaps is not as common in electronic media. **Greg Pickersgill** complained that the sercon and the fannish side of fanzine fandom are a great divide, and throw away zines from the other side of the great divide.

End of year family letter was raised as almost a fanzine, except not written as well, and with fewer jokes. The family version is intended to be informative, whereas the fanzine version is intended to be interesting and if that happens to be less than totally accurate, then so be it. The fanzine depicts an edited life.

Greg thinks about perhaps eight people as the audience when writing a fanzine, although the completed version eventually goes to a whole bunch of people you don't give a toss about. Certainly raises the question of whether it is worth the postage to you.



*Greg Pickersgill*

**Greg Pickersgill** and **Catherine McAuley** organised the fan room, which was one of the best and most comprehensive I have ever seen.

It certainly had by far the best display of fanzines I've seen. Greg however pointed out that it had only a few percent of the total attendance, which was disproportionate to the space and resources allocated. Greg found the fanzines were not selling, and not even being able to be given away free. This was despite him having some really fine examples. He even indicated he would perhaps be giving up the reprint functions of Memory Hole.



*Catherine McAuley*

Hotel and memberships person **Steve Lawson** seems on vast numbers of con committees, and I met him briefly while he was between his various duties. Interesting character.

**Steve and Ann Green** were present on a day trip to the con, and it was great to get a chance to talk to them. It has been a fair while since we had heard from them.



*Steve Green*



*Ann Green*

The Eastercon panel at 8 p.m. was, as expected, about how to ensure there was a future Eastercon. The scale of Eastercon was raised, and how this affects the hotel required, and the effort you need. I don't believe anyone actually knew what to do, and the possibility of there not being a con some year was mooted. This sort of topic is not unfamiliar to an Australian audience.



*Yvonne Rowse*

We spotted **Yvonne Rowse**, also seen at Corflu. Yvonne won a FAAN award last year at Corflu; Best New Fanwriter? Don't recall exactly. (See how much attention we pay to details? If it's not written down immediately, it's gone, alas.)

As an aside, this year Paragon appears to have had 814 members.

Being a very short person, and at the back of the crowd, I didn't see much of the masquerade that **Giulia de Cesare** organised. Certainly a backstage area, rather than a corridor, would have made life easier for any organiser. Photographs of the various winners appeared in the convention newsletter, and should also be on the Paragon web site.

The fireworks around 10 p.m. were magnificent, a lengthy and elaborate display of considerable quality. We cheated and watched them from our hotel room, rather than brave the cold outside past the parking lot. We later learned that £2000 of fireworks were set off by the volunteers.

Various parties in the lobbies, bar and rooms through the hotel. I sat around talking with a veterinarian about foot and mouth disease, finding with no great surprise that the newspaper and TV reports are less than accurate. It also appears that vaccination is not the panacea some seem to believe, as some animals then get the actual disease, possibly from production problems with the vaccines.

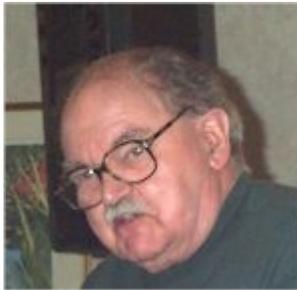
It was **1/2r Cruttenden's** birthday, and he ran a fine party in his room 555. **Chris Carter** took me there, with me assisting with his wheelchair. **Brian** contributed the year-old Stroh's soaked glace cherries and mandarins, which were the base of the tasty and dangerously smooth punch. **Caroline Mullen** was there with their very quiet baby Meriol. **Alison Scott** was noisy about Corflu and other cons, and con bids. **Ben Yalow** and I agreed that a Corflu could probably run successfully as part of a Boskone, just like FanHistoricon ran with a previous Boskone.

There were several parties in the same area, and even a noise complaint, presumably from early retiring fans. I was surprised to find that the bar was still open around 2:30 a.m. and I crashed fairly early, at 3 a.m.

## Sunday 15 April 2001

After the usual enormous and unhealthy breakfast, Jean checked out the book auction, while I listened to the end of the world panel. I'm so depressed. Usual suspects. Global warming, floods, bad weather, disease, nuclear disaster, asteroid impact, terrorist use of chemical and biological weapons, especially against animals so as to produce economic disruption like foot and mouth does.

Jean and I met in the newsroom, where **Wilf James** had wanted to interview us for the newsletter as GUFF delegates.



*Ken Slater*

The Forward into the Past panel in the fan room had **Ken Slater, Steve Davies, Claire Brialey** moderating, **Victor Gonzalez, Doug Bell** and **Jean Weber**. Jean mentioned the addition of the woman's movement to Australian SF, and the addition of extra program items as fans were interested. Ken Slater mentioned the hoax woman fan Joan Carr in U.K. fandom who produced Femezine around the late 1950's, and drew in many woman fan writers.

Claire thinks new fans are looking for something new and different, to take the free spirit they see in fandom, but reject the dead past as a tyranny. Later they may perhaps find the past still has relevance and immediacy. Ken Slater said rituals keep changing, and gave the Knights of Saint Fantasy as an example, while Victor added FWA (devised by Ted White in the 1980's) as a still current silly trend. Every group has problems with active members. The active ones are the students, and the retired. Claire had said tribal groups were disappearing. Victor says technology allows them to make us work harder. This in response to a comment that maybe they want us to do trivial things instead of thinking about problems in society.

What's the Point of Awards with **Martin Eastbrook, Chris Hill, Dick Jude, Tony Berry, Eric Lindsay**. For some reason Greg Pickersgill found some comments on the sample aspect of voters most surprising and engaging. Greg also seems to have recovered his enthusiasm for trying to draw people into thinking about the material presented.

**Bill Burns**, whom I'd known previously only via the Memory Hole mailing list, offered us a lift to Manchester or Stockport, but on Monday rather than the Tuesday we were scheduled. This sounded like a wonderful idea, as we were not looking forward to braving the trains with all our luggage, even though we will miss the dead dog party.



*Recumbent bicycle in use*

I don't know whether there was actually chariot racing around the hotel during the weekend (we heard rumours, but didn't witness any ourselves), but at least some of the three recumbent tricycles present did pass through my field of vision at different times outside the hotel.

Snacks instead of dinner (or lunch), just like yesterday. Jean was sensible and bought another pizza, and then went to sleep early, as on most evenings since she hurt her back in the early days of the trip. Too many airline flights is my suspicion.

Fund raising panel with **Alison Scott, Vince Docherty, John Richards** moderating, **Maureen Kincaid Speller, and Bridget Bradshaw**. United fan fund distribution method tends to favour funds and fan charities most in need. I thought it went rather well, and is a topic we need to consider given that GUFF will need to raise much more money if it is to go to an annual event as we want.

The grand one hour Plokta and Son auction on Sunday at 7 p.m. seemed to do a fine job raising money, although several items were not presented for one reason or another. The propellor beanie I plunked on Alison's head raised £10, but probably only because Alison said she would wear it all evening in the bar. Jonathan was later noted to be assisting Alison in this wearing experience.

The late night quiz in the fan room gathered a pretty decent audience, but I'm not a quiz fan so I soon left.

Alison Scott's party in the creche at room 314 around 11:30 seemed worth attending, but I must have been too late for it. Or more likely, I checked room 341 instead. I crashed around 1 AM, having failed to bestir myself enough to find any late night parties this time.

## **Monday 16 April 2001**

We loaded our bags into Bill and Mary Burns' car soon after breakfast. We had a trouble-free checkout despite experience in Australia of payment for convention-sponsored rooms going wrong at the hotel end. It was good to see the

Eastercon assisting GUFF with the rooms, as this leaves the fund in a better position for the next set of candidates.

We left the convention around 2 p.m. to drive to Stockport, where we'll be staying with **Paul and Cas Skelton**.

---

## **Visit with Skel and Cas**

An account of our visit with Skel and Cas, and travels in the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, and Lake District national parks.

---

### **Monday 16 April 2001**

**Paul Skelton** and **Cas** greeted us at the door in some considerable amazement. Everyone has to phone for directions, they said, after they get lost.

I was encouraged by this evidence of the accuracy of Street Planner Millennium on my Psion, which was how we navigated through Stockport, once we got beyond the areas **Bill Burns** knew. It would have been a lot easier if more streets had real signs. Bill did have to get directions from Skel to get out again, and I'm sure those were better than the PDA's.



*Paul "Skel" Skelton*



*Cas and one of the terrorists*

Cas had prepared delicious cold cuts and salad for dinner for all of us. Bill and Mary stayed for that, and sat around and chatted before leaving for their destination. There was some disruption as the two Yorkshire terrorists ... I'll say that again, the two Yorkshire terriers competed for attention.

(Jean here. We started calling our trip the "old pharts' tour of the UK" because we planned to visit many of the mostly-gafiated fanzine fans we corresponded with years ago; often when we'd tell currently-active fans who we planned to visit, they would say, "We haven't seen them in ages! We didn't know they were still around." Skel and Cas are the first in this "old pharts" category, but others will follow.)

Paul and Cas are Manchester United fans, and were checking things using Teletext. The teletext seems used a lot by fans, and I keep wondering whether the equivalent has as much material of use to us in Australia. Of course, I'm not sure we are even in range of appropriate transmissions where we live, and we have never made getting a teletext equipped TV a priority. Indeed, I doubt we will replace the analog TV when TV in Australia goes digital in a few years.

### **Tuesday 17 April 2001**

Before setting out for the day we went food shopping, including lots of wine, at ASDA, a giant supermarket that now seems owned by the US Walmart chain.

Our drive with Skel and Cas in the overcast conditions took us into the Peak District national park area. We were stopped by foot and mouth precautions on some roads, and had to drive over disinfectant mats fairly often. Cas was delighted to spot a crane, so Skel later helpfully pointed out a building crane. Lots and lots of dry stone walls all over the green hills. Lots of sheep, which given the TV reports back in Australia was a little surprising to me. I'd been expecting death and destruction and pyres of burning carcasses.

We totally failed to keep any decent notes on where we went today, and as we went into the same general area the next afternoon, we've probably combined them in the description. Not that it matters; we had a good time and saw interesting stuff. It would help in identifying photographs if Eric had kept better notes and Jean had marked our route on the map when we could still have some hope of remembering where we went.

Rain stopped play (by us) so we returned in the late afternoon. After two years in the tropics, I can't get used to the idea that it is still light at 7 p.m. so I consistently thought it earlier in the day than it really was.

Cas made us an enormous chicken dinner and (again) lots of wine, but we were enjoying ourselves even before the wine.

Cas liked opals, so Eric was able to give her a few small opal split badges.

Each side showed off photos of their last few trips. Eric promoted the idea of talking Mike and Susan Glicksohn into coming to our Relaxa.con or on a later trip to Australia with the Skeltons. We seemed to stay up very late talking. Well, Jean didn't. She was still having problems with her leg and back and spent a lot of time resting.

### **Wednesday 18 April 2001**

Eric went for a walk with Skel and Cas as they took the two Yorkshire terrorists to the park. It was cold, despite sunshine for part of the walk.

We had to take Jean to a chiropractor, in the hope it would help her leg problem. Meanwhile the rest of us visited Cas's daughter Debra, and collected Jean after her appointment. Then we set off again into the Peak District.

We drove past many historic looking pubs under cloudy skies. Contrary to some impressions, we did not stop at all of them.



*Eyam*

Some of the towns were Disley, Newtown, Furness Vale, Bridgemont, where some sunshine illuminated the countryside, Sparrowpit (in the High Peak), all with lots of dry stone walls and green green fields. Peak Forest. Wire fencing over some dry stone walls, with poles alternating on each side of the walls, so they were not dug into the field. No place to stop to take photos, alas.

The small town of Eyam, just off the A823, has a wonderful informative museum about the Bubonic Plague of 1665. This amateur museum deservedly received the 1998/9 Museum of the Year Shoestring Award winner. The mural in the main room explains the Plague of London, with tales of individual families in Eyam. This continues upstairs together with material on old medical treatments, and demographic material, plus the story of the Rectors Mompesson and Stanley. Like most such museums, there is also a small tourist shop. The Miner's Arms pub provided best end of lamb, beef mushroom and ale pies, and beer.

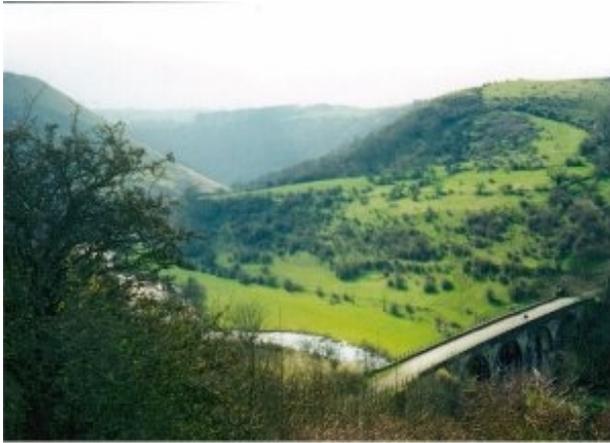
We made a long search for Surprise View, near Hathersage, and eventually discovered it on the road to Sheffield. There was lots of discussing of maps and locations before we got there. Skel and Cas wanted to show it to other visitors, but they had found it when bicycling (years ago), and had not located it again by car.



*Monsal Head Hotel*

Later in the afternoon we visited Monsal Head, which had splendid views and a nice but full pub, for a half a pint. Around 4:30 we finally got some sunshine so I took more photos of the view and the viaduct. These were all locations that Skel and Cas had taken Mike Glicksohn on a previous visit.

Manchester lost that evening, so there was consternation in the household. I didn't really understand the rules, but thought there were some missed opportunities and some rough moves.



*View from Monsal Head*

### **Thursday 19 April 2001**

Two national parks were on the agenda today, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales.

After a relatively early start, Paul drove us for around 90 minutes to Bowness on Lake Windemere via M6, A590, A5074.

(Jean here. Cas had a printout from some computer mapping software, with directions to Bowness. I was following along on the map we'd brought. The road signs were a trifle ambiguous at one point, so a loud discussion raged - did we turn left at a critical intersection or continue straight ahead? Cas said we wanted the A5074, but thought we should continue straight ahead, following the signs to Windemere, as she and Paul recalled they went through that town on their way to Bowness on previous trips. I said that according to my map, they could go either way, but if they wanted to go via A5074, they had to turn right.



*View from Bowness on Lake Windemere*

(Paul, driving, muttered, "What do you want me to do?" "Turn left!" I shouted. "Straight ahead!" yelled Cas. Eric interjected, "I've found that Jean's usually right when it comes to navigating, so it's not worth arguing with her." Paul turned left. Cas

muttered. A few miles later, the turnoff to Bowness appeared, and we turned onto the A5074. The scenery was attractive and the traffic minimal. Everyone was happy.)

In Bowness, Cas hunted for and found a bear shop and bought an entire German bear called Otto to eat. Well actually it was for her collection. I hunted for chocolate shops, and saw far too many of them, but I didn't get any chocolate, due to Jean looking disapprovingly at me. Cas managed to locate the home of her grandma, where she had spent time as a youngster, and we photographed Cas in front of it.

The scenery was very pleasant, the sort of thing I associate with the British pastoralist painters. It really does look like that.

Lunch at Lake View, with good but almost plastic appearing menus from the Brewers Fayre set. It had great real views, despite the decor. The pubs we checked in the town seemed overly expensive for their appearance inside, which was not to our liking.



*Derwent Water*

Three Hercules transports made a low pass over the lake as we walked back to the car. Seems that air force pilots like the view also.

The view from Ambleside at the head of the lake was not as good, as you didn't have the high hills behind the lake. The town was larger than Bowness, and appeared far less tourist oriented.

Off to Keswick, which again was a much larger town. We had trouble locating the toilets, despite a very good tourist information centre in the middle of town, with good maps and other material available. They have a motor museum, and past the miniature golf, a Theatre near the lake we visited.

Derwent Water is the lake, which looked like the really nice scenes on the pencil boxes I remember from when I was a kid. I notice that the Cumberland Pencil Works and Museum existed nearby, and realised that as a child I did indeed have a pencil box with exactly that view.

After some searching for a parking spot, a tourist centre, a map and a toilet, we finally got to the lake, and it was very much worth the trip. The only problem was it was cold when the sun wasn't out, which was a lot of the time. A jet fighter made two passes over parts of the lake. Your defence pounds at work, I presume.

Around 4 we set out to return. Got rained on while on the way to the distant car park. Skel and Cas wanted to take a more scenic route home, with more of a selection of places for dinner, through the Yorkshire Dales. We returned to old Windemere via the A591, past even more snow dusted hills, then through scenic country areas. We went through the back streets of Kendal, after a little glitch in directions.

Five giant three bladed wind turbines at Lanbrake energy farm almost at the M6 were impressive, although probably almost futile.

Through Sedbergh, then Hawes. We saw a wonderful railway viaduct. Moorland was closed, with Do not leave the road signs, and disinfectant pads across the road.

Jean's leg problem got even worse and we had to stop so she could take pain pills. All this driving probably negated any good done by the chiropractor.

There were snow flurries falling on us on one of the mountain paths, with poor visibility. We did eventually get out of the snow, but during this trip we encountered every type of weather. We ran into sun again at 6:30 for example.

We stopped at Racehorses Hotel at Kettlewell for farm pie (lamb and vegs). Skel and Cas had stayed previously, and were intending to take Mike and Susan Glicksohn there in August. Nice spot.

8:30 on the road again, still some light, which always surprises those of us from the tropics. We didn't get back until 11 p.m., long after we had planned.

### ***Friday 20 April 2001***

Paul took us to the Budget Rent-a-car place on Hyde Road, where we collected a small black Ford Fiesta. Seemed a nice car, although we had to report to the attendant a small scratch on the left hand front door. Took us over an hour all told to collect it. We also discovered somewhat later that the radio cassette doesn't work because it lacks the code needed to start it (apparently the car's battery had gone flat at some point, causing the radio to reset, a precaution against disconnection and theft).

Eric was surprised at the number of dark coloured cars on the road. In Australia no-one gets a black car a second time, as they are too hot to use in the sun.

We didn't do much except do the laundry, sit around and talk or read for the rest of the day. Well, we did take the Yorkshire terrorists for a walk. Cas tried to convince Eric he needed more than just a marmalade sandwich for lunch, but he was full of her wonderful dinners. Lots of wine went down with the prawn salad for dinner, as we recall.

---

## **Scotland**

An account of our time in Scotland.

---

### ***Saturday 21 April 2001***

We left the Skeltons' home around 10 a.m. Promptly got lost before getting away onto the motorway, having missed one instruction in the list I had tried to write down at the last minute. The major problem was the lack of road signs, making it almost impossible to recover from any initial error. If there were a next time, I'd add a GPS to the street maps so I could find where I really was when navigating. I'd also find a daylight-readable display. (Jean: I got us "found" again fairly quickly by studying the map on Eric's Psion - not easy, since I had to put my coat over my head to get a dark enough surround to be able to see the display.)

I did note on packing the car that our luggage exceeded the capacity of the boot. We also had yet another bag problem, as Jean's fairly new small

wheeled bag had already split the stitching along one side.

The M60 and M6 were fine for travel, much like a US highway, though similarly boring. We were also lucky to find traffic very light considering the capacity of the road. However most of it was travelling significantly faster than us, and also apparently above the speed limits. There seemed a general lack of road speed signs, and even more so of signs advising when speeds had reverted to normal. I don't believe I saw any advisory speed signs on corners, which I something I expect on virtually every blind corner in Australia. There were some slow-down signs on some roads, but no indication why you should, nor what speed might be safe.

(Jean's comment: Eric was doing the driving, since my right leg was still giving me a lot of trouble. I usually do most of the driving in a car, since Eric dislikes driving more than I do. He's a good driver, but doesn't get a lot of practice, and found British driving conditions nerve-wracking. The few occasions that I drove, I suspect he found just as nerve-wracking, because I drive more like the Brits do.)

We stopped at each service centre along the M6, just to get an idea of the facilities available as well as to stretch our legs. We were unimpressed to find that at some service centres, the only toilets we could find were inside a Little Chef eatery that didn't want non-customers to use their facilities. I think I'm willing now to ignore Little Chef and try for Granada and Welcome Break service centres, which were much better designed and had more shops.

We were headed generally north towards Scotland, but we turned off the motorway a bit south of Kendall on the A590, to drive around the coast of the Lake District, through Newby Bridge, then via the A5092 and A595. If I recall correctly (always a suspect assumption), the road led up and over ridges, then down steeply to spots where rivers met the sea, often diverting inland for some distance around a long tidal bay, then rising steeply up again on the other side. Quite attractive, but rather winding. We turned aside around 2:15 p.m. to stop at Ravenglass, where they have a miniature railway and an old Roman bath. Fuel on half at less than 130 miles indicates that the tank wasn't really totally full when we picked the car up from Budget.

Fuel prices were high, over twice the cost in Australia, but we had expected this. It was one reason we wanted the smallest rental car we could get - that and having a chance of getting it through the narrow lanes in towns... about which more later.

While travelling along the coastal areas, we came across one wind turbine power generator, then much later 16 wind turbines, and further along another six wind turbines. These were tall single slim tower structures, with three bladed aircraft style propellers. While I am sure they kill off birds that hit the blades, these alternative power experiments should be keeping some of the environmentalists happy. They are unlikely to be happy about places like the BNFL sites, which had tours of (probably) the nuclear press office available. On the other hand, I happen to think that any country that aspires to a better life for its citizens will have to eventually go nuclear to remain a high-energy civilisation. Oil won't last forever, and coal is an even dirtier fuel.

Back on the motorway system at Carlisle, we made better time, although we never did spot a telephone and so didn't call **Ian Sorensen**. There is probably some algorithm by which locals find telephone booths (Clark Kent always managed). Or

maybe they all have a mobile (cellular) phone. We're increasingly attracted to the idea that we should equip GUFF winners with a SIM card or a cheap mobile for their trip.

Navigating to Ian's home was interesting. We overshot a little, and had to regenerate the map and get a new route. As usual the actual street didn't seem to have a name on it, and we had to ask a passerby to ensure we had the correct street.

Given the state of Jean's back and leg, we didn't think it a good idea to use Ian's offered fold-out bed. One of the alternatives Ian had on offer was at a friend's place in Livingston, towards Edinburgh. I hadn't realised that Edinburgh was so close to Glasgow.



*Ian Sorensen*

(Jean: We drove over, following Ian in his car. We'd explained that we didn't like to drive fast, so Ian kept his speed down to 70 mph, the limit. Everyone later made sure we knew what a concession that was, and after riding around a bit in Ian's car with him we could see what they meant. On the other hand, he knew where all the speed traps were, and pointed them out to us for reference when we were on our own.)



*Ruta*

In the evening we sit around talking with Ian's friend **Ruta** after another excellent Brewers Fayre meal. It was interesting to see a modern housing estate, rather than the much older homes we had

seen up till now. Unfortunately the roads nearby seemed expressly designed to have confusing names, all being the same except for the extension (X Street, X Road, X Place, X Close, X Circle...). Ian remarked that ordering a pizza to be delivered was not a good idea there.

I forget what we had for dinner, but it was good, and we really appreciated having a comfortable bed in Ruta's guest room.

### **Sunday 22 April 2001**

A very lazy morning, which really suited Jean (still with back and leg problems) and me. We eventually headed off well after noon in Ian's car for Edinburgh and Linlithgow palace. There is a nearby pub, the Four Marys, where we planned lunch.

There was an interesting formation you drive past, that turned out to be a giant slag heap from a mine. I gather so many of these are being used for road base materials that this is being preserved.

**Lilian Edwards** phoned from a nearby supermarket parking area while we were coming from the Linlithgow Palace parking area, seeking further instructions on how to meet us. Rain didn't seem to have emptied the Four Marys, and we had a fair wait until a table was available. **Alison Freebairn** had to meet a midday deadline and was a little late arriving from near the Glasgow area. We had a fine conversation over lunch, and this included some information for us on where to visit in Scotland.

Afterwards we all returned to Ruta's home, where Jean (map in hand) relentlessly quizzed the locals on how to make our way to various tourist destinations, and which destinations we should seek out.

Jean also solved an equation set as homework for Ruta's son, fueled by celery and brie, producing great excitement. (Jean: it was a trivial problem, but took me longer than it should have because the wine, accompanying the celery and brie, led me astray.) Ian says Jean is a sad bastard (he couldn't solve it either).

(Jean: Warning, cat story. Meanwhile one of Ruta's cats, both of which were billed as "afraid of people," kept sidling up to be noticed but running away if anyone paid it any attention. Eventually the cat climbed on the chair next to me and curled up with its back to me. After it had been there awhile, I touched it and it didn't run away. In fact it acted as if it hadn't noticed at all. So I petted it a bit and it did that little wiggle that cats do when they're pleased. This went on for quite awhile, with the cat never looking at me or overtly acknowledging my existence, but eventually it began to purr. It was as if it were saying, "Oh, I love to be petted, but I can't admit it because I'm afraid of people. If I don't notice this person is there, maybe I'm safe.")

### **Monday 23 April 2001**

We left Livingston at around 9:15, managed to get onto the M8 going the wrong way, and had to turn around several miles later to make our real escape.

Up M9 past Stirling, then A84 past Callender. There was a hydro power station with a long drop from pipes down a mountainside. That looked neat. The A84 went beside the pretty Loch Lubnaig for a while. Somewhere in all that we passed through the tiny town of Barcaldine, the namesake of a town in outback Queensland, Australia we visited last year.

We joined the A85 at Lochearnhead and took that to Crianlarich. Then the A82 halfway down Loch Lomond towards Tarbet, following the top end of Loch Lomond south for awhile.

We turned west on the A83. At Arrochar Jean photographed some hotels reflected in Loch Long. We followed a ridge through part of the pretty Argyll Forest Park to Cairndow, and then around the northern end of Loch Fyne. Then to Inveraray. We continued south on the A83 down Loch Fyne.

At Furnace we ran into a funeral procession going to the Minad Forest Gardens (Carae Glen) nearby, our first bumper to bumper traffic for the trip. We continued until we reached Lochgilphead. We couldn't face continuing on down the coastline, so we took the A816 north.

We did make a detour at Kilninver to the coast to photograph The Bridge Over the Atlantic at Clachan between the mainland and the island of Seil. This was one of the items Ian had pointed out to us on the map.

We really wanted to collapse by then, however I couldn't find a place to park as we went through the port city of Oban a couple of times, mostly by different routes. Jean of course spotted lots of places, just after it was too late for me to change course.



*Our room at the Hazelwood B&B*

Stayed at Mrs Irene Harrower's Hazelwood Bed and Breakfast, just off the Dunalie Road (A85) to Fort William and Inverness, on Rowan Road, Oban, in the Argyll area. We had a large upstairs

room with wonderful views of Oban Bay and indeed the entire town. We were so impressed we took some photos, despite the failing light.

Dinner at the Kings Knoll pub around 6:30. This is the place I totally failed to recognise as a Bed and Breakfast or as a pub despite driving past it three times. I stuck with steak and ale pie, and had yet another variation in the pastry that came with it, this time as a puff pastry slab. The food was impressive and the bar decore very Scottish and warlike indeed. It was a fine place to eat.

## ***Tuesday 24 April 2001***

A ferry that seemed too large for the area left the port at Oban (the name means Little Bay in Gaelic). Mrs Harrower told me the ferries depart every two hours or so to Mull. She also said divers are active in the area looking at the wrecks in the deep waters. Ocean liners visit at times, taking advantage of the deep water, and they dwarf the ferry.



*View of Oban*

Good weather today, with even some sun early in the morning before we left, so we took photos of the port. It was overcast during almost all our drive, but no rain, unlike the previous day.

We visited McCaig's Tower, and took photographs of both the tower and the town. James McCaig was an art critic, a philosophical essayist and a banker, and built this incomplete and empty tower in 1900. It certainly is a real landmark, and also totally pointless as far as I can tell.

Back into town to do food shopping for Jean (again at the co-op, although we inspected a Tesco also), so we didn't leave as early as our starting time would indicate.

North up the coast on A85 across Loch Etive, until we came to the turnoff to Glencoe. We stopped at the new-looking Visitors Centre.

We viewed a video about the massacre of 38 of the Macdonald clan at Glencoe in 1692 by troops

commanded by Robert Campbell at the orders of Secretary of State Sir John Dalrymple. All these items make me realise over again that I should have read up more extensively, and researched more of the history.

The sheer sides of the mountains around, and the bleak conditions there made me wonder that anyone would either settle there, or manage to escape into the hills in winter. The location is obviously normally popular with walkers and climbers, for the scenery is spectacular.



*View in Glencoe*

In Fort William we went shopping in the High Street for luggage straps for Jean's broken carry-on bag. Fort William was easy to visit, with free parking fairly close to the shops. We even found a Woolworth's, similar to the ones in Australia, although their range of goods wasn't as I expected. Lots of hiking goods shops, which is where we got luggage straps. We also saw one of the McTavish's Kitchens, which specialise in having a Scottish show during the evening meal.

Several people had told us that Fort William was not at all interesting and not to waste our time there. Around this point we began to realise that our interests and our friends' interests may be somewhat different.



*Views of Ben Nevis and the Nevis ranges, snow capped.*

On the road to Malaig, although we didn't go far along the road. We stopped at a railway and canal lock, just to have lunch, around 2 p.m. Hydro power station visible back in the hills.

We came upon a striking monument to the World War II commandos, isolated in the countryside beside a road junction, with the very impressive backdrop of the mountains. It seems the commandos, formed during WWII, trained in these areas.

Chair lift, or more accurately a gondola lift to a chalet restaurant well up one of the mountain sides. Ben Nevis was three mountains along to the right. Must be bedlam during the skiing season.

A82 along Loch Lochy past Fort Augusta and along Loch Ness. Stayed near outskirts of Inverness at Park B&B, where a nice room with ensuite cost us £35. Naturally the bedside lamp on my side didn't work. I think I'm going to have to revert to my Australian habit of carrying my own reading lamp with me.

Dinner at Best Western Loch Ness Hotel in Inverness. Food was passable, service was good, but the amount of noise from the competing TV, other AV gear and the jukebox in the next room was far too great. Why don't venues hand out headphones like the airlines, so people can deafen themselves however they like without inflicting their noise on people who prefer silence or conversation? If there were a next time, I'd head for the center of town, but by then I didn't want to cope with traffic and parking problems.

### **Wednesday 25 April 2001**

We were ready to leave Inverness a little earlier than usual today, despite overcast skies, as we had given up on locating a supermarket. We left town on the A9, and then took the A835 past Contin. At Rogie Falls we came upon a fine nature walk. Loch Garve was impressive, with the Garve railway and the township, and we even ran into sun at 10. Ben Wyvis and Little Wyvis were impressive snow topped peaks visible from that area of the road.

Loch Glascarnoch was very water carved at the bottom, which we could see beside the road thanks to a dam at one end, weir at the other.

We decided to take A832 and check the Wester Ross area. First we continued a half mile past the turnoff to see Corrieshalloch Gorge over the River Droma from a small viewing platform. Over the falls is a rather swinging suspension footbridge designed by Sir John Fowler, Forth rail bridge co-builder in 1867. This gives fine views of the narrow gorge, and is directly over the falls. The valley is formed by glacial melt waters.

We went along the edge of Little Loch Broom, and around Gruinard Bay past small townships.

Took a photo of the coast back towards Aultbea and Lake Ewe, then from Poolewe across more headland towards Gairloch. Much of the road past Gairloch was single lane, so some care was required when we encountered another car or a bus.

Gairloch information was very helpful, situated in a clean spot with good parking in nice village. Lighthouse at the end of headland. Loch Maree, Shieldaig, Loch Kishorn. One lane road for a while, reminds us far too much of home. Joined A87 near Auchtertyre.

Stopped at Dornie Hall, near a really nice semi-ruined castle on A87. This made a wonderful photo opportunity. Eilean Donan is the castle, and it seems to have been restored and be open for tours, at a price.



*Eilean Donan castle*

Loch Duich and past Shiel Bridge. Rain later in the day makes it less obvious how good the views might be. Invergarry.



*Aonach Mor Hotel*

Aonach Mor Hotel (a pub) at Spean Bridge seemed pretty pricey at £45 for an inadequate sized room, so we asked for a lower rate and got £40. (Jean: I should have haggled to pay even less, since the room was small, the bed was uncomfortable (though I didn't realise that until too late; a

quick bed test suggested it was okay), and the place was otherwise empty. I realised later that indicated how tired we both were.) The meals were likewise somewhat higher than in many other areas, and both rooms and bar area less than impressive. However, we didn't really want to continue on much further, and there was nothing wrong with anything provided. (Jean: the next morning when we set out, a short way down the road we found 2 or 3 B&Bs that we hadn't seen the night before. Probably cheaper and nicer than where we stayed.)

### **Thursday 26 April 2001**

A86 from Spean Bridge. Came upon a dam, made by The British Aluminium Company in 1930s, and took some photos. Probably Tulloch Station. Through Loggan, Newtonmore, Kingussie. Then A9 towards Aviemore.

We diverted through Coylumbridge to Glen More Forest Park, which had nice views to the Cairngorm Mountains across the small Loch Morlich. A9 through Pass of Killieerankie past Perth, where we joined M9.

Side trip to Blair Athol and Athol Castle. The mine is small compared to the Blair Athol we know in Queensland, but we wanted to see the original once we saw the name. We enjoyed spotting many Australian (and American) place names in the UK. Not surprising, and many names were expected, but it was still fun to see places like Perth, Ayr, Penrith, Barcaldine (all place names in Australia), Kilmarnock (a town my parents used to live near in Virginia), and many others in such a different setting.



*Views of Cairngorm Mountains  
across Loch Morlich*

We took a complicated route over the Forth of Firth, which got us to Edinburgh, and thanks to good advice on how to proceed, and Jean's navigation, we reached **Lilian Edward's** neighbourhood before 4 p.m.

Didn't even have to go around the block a second time before we found one parking spot (on walking, we found a closer one). We left the car and don't intend to move it. The narrow streets and abrupt parking manouvers make the crowded cities a horror for driving if you are not used to it.

Took a walk through the local area, but Jean's leg was bothering her so it had to be a short walk. Located a nearby bar where we could sit and wait over a drink, and Jean could phone every now and then.

Lilian arrived slightly after 5 PM so we were able to unload most of the car. I went wine shopping with Lilian at Oddbins. Nice store, and a good opportunity to get Chilean and other wines I didn't know. (Jean: Their Australian wines were, alas, overpriced, compared to the prices we'd seen in other stores in the UK. We found a nice Wolf Blass Chardonnay at an acceptable price if bought by the half dozen, but the store only had three bottles. I asked about getting the three bottles at the half-dozen price, if we bought three more of something else, but the shop assistant said he wasn't authorised to do that. He also said that they didn't sell very many of that wine, which was why they didn't have many. Seems to me if the wine doesn't sell, they ought to clear it off the shelf by giving me the discount, but what do I know?)

Jean couldn't get past the proxy server at Lilian's workplace to get her e-mail. I didn't bother trying. I've pretty much given up on e-mail as a means of communicating while travelling. (Jean: this was the only time on the trip that I had any difficulty.)



*Lilian Edwards*

Lilian had kindly organised a rest evening and meal for us at her home, however we did have a visitor. Jane Carnall is a tech writer with a long correspondence with Jean. (Jean: Jane and I first "met" through IBM's internal e-mail system about 10 years ago. Then she kept popping up in other places and I realised she was also a fan.) All seemed to have a good time, talking at a great rate about various topics. Lilian and I talked a little about

her visit to UTS where I formerly worked, and tried to identify people we had mutually known there, with Andrew Mowbray at Law being the only candidate found.

Not having seen any of the TV shows being mentioned, such as Buffy or Angel, Jean and I could contribute little to that side of things, but it didn't seem to matter much to the flow of conversation.

### **Friday 27 April 2001**

Couldn't figure out the shower controls this morning, as the dial wouldn't turn and we didn't want to attempt to force it in case some interlock was stopping it moving. Somewhere, we thought, there must be a power switch for the instantaneous water heater, but it wasn't the obvious one like we had seen in other homes, and we couldn't locate any other likely power switches. We asked Lilian afterwards and she said it didn't work, which does rather explain why we couldn't solve it.

Eric went food shopping for Jean's lunch materials at the local 24 hour grocery, where as usual he couldn't identify brand names readily enough to find everything. Later he went for a long walk without Jean, as her leg is still giving trouble. Didn't locate a bookshop, nor an internet cafe, although he did look at a computer shop.

**Lilian** returned around 7, with **Ian** and **Ruta** turning up only minutes later. I remain amazed at anyone managing to find a parking space here. Talk over wine, but Jean says we shouldn't talk techie about the Internet.

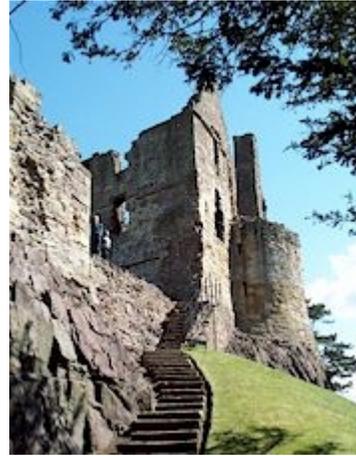
Dinner a block or two away, at a nice restaurant opposite the post office, with Lilian and Ian and Ruta. Back at Lilian's, we discussed hard drugs, and whether they could be safely taken if regulated and price controlled, so the problems of poor (or variable) quality and high cost were factored out. Ruta seemed to find it hard to accept the idea of the hypothetical, which makes me wonder whether Geoffrey Robinson's Hypotheticals are screened in the U.K.

### **Saturday 28 April 2001**

Got up late. Eric read Lilian's chapter on Legal Control of Junk Email. Interesting perspective on the topic. He'd never thought of the law being particularly effective at controlling spam. He ended up reading most of Lilian's book from which this chapter came.

We walked through part of the city, looked at views of Edinburgh Castle (from a distance). A walk mostly through parks took us to the university. Very pretty walk, but cold. It was interesting to note an Australian pub in the student area, and it appeared part of a chain of similar ones.

Ian arrived and drove us all to see real castles. Through Musselburgh. Absolutely wonderful weather, clear blue skies, virtually no cloud. Locals acclaim it.



*Dirleton Castle*

Dirleton Castle, on a small hill and with beautiful grounds, dates from 1100 as a wooden structure, with the original stone version by the de Vaux family in 1200. It was mostly in ruins, with the three towers at the south west corner surviving, along with part of the curtain wall.



*Ian, Jean and Lilian demonstrating differing opinions about the temperature*

We met **Alison Freebairn** there, and stopped for great sandwiches at strange restaurant place (actually a variety of pub) just near the castle.

Jean travelled with Alison to Tantallon, yet another castle. As we drove through North Berwick we located an internet cafe, but didn't test it. They really are almost everywhere, but never when and where you most want them to be.

Tantallon Castle is out on a grassy headland, with a view across the water, and a deep grass-covered ditch surrounding most of it. There is some scaffolding at the front for repair work, but almost all the castle can be visited. It was built in the 1300s,

and abandoned in 1651 after being damaged by Cromwell's army. The parts of the castle standing are impressively high, with spiral staircases to the top, and real dungeon like cells at the bottom, and a mostly intact great hall, or at least the walls.



*Tantallon*

Upon our return through North Berwick we stopped for a walk along the beach. It was remarkably like a beach anywhere, except for the much cooler weather than we are used to.

The much smaller and almost destroyed Hailes Castle was a fortified manor house in the 1200s, destroyed in the 1650s. We passed it on the way back, but didn't walk through it.

### ***Sunday 29 April 2001***

We got away from Edinburgh without problems by around 9:30. Took A71 (except when we lost it) towards the west coast through Strathaven. Many industrial areas, and generally uninteresting countryside until after we crossed the M74. (Jean: my usual technique of choosing a side road rather than the motorway, because the side road is usually more interesting, failed this time, so the extra time taken was mainly wasted.) At Stonehouse we couldn't locate a toilet. Even the garage didn't have any. Iron bladder required to cross the country.

Things went better at the west coast, which seems more attuned to tourism. Bypassed Kilmarnock and went down A77 past Ayr towards Stranraer. After Maybole we turned off the A77, and went looking for a castle on A719, but on seeing the charges, changed our mind about visiting.

Lunch by seaside at Maidens. We continued down the coast through interesting scenery to Stranraer, and then on to Port Patrick, where Jean took photos of the harbour and the town and the rocky beach substitute. Beautiful sunny weather there. There were a weird set of steps with carvings about geological history and these gave a great view of everything.



*Port Patrick*

Further along at Cairnryan, we saw several P&O ferries that travel to Ireland. Indeed, Jean claimed we could see Ireland from several points along the coast.

We backtracked to Stranraer, then east on the A75, passing the walls of Castle Kennedy, which we couldn't see. At Glen Luce we had a minor divergence through the village on account of a bad road sign, then down A747 past Port William along the coast. We couldn't help notice that almost everything was closed. Not just castles and monuments and stone circles, but even laybys and parking areas. Foot and mouth precautions were widespread.

Then it started to rain, so we cut back from the coast towards Wigtown, Newton Stewart where we rejoined the A75, bypassed Dumfries and wandered across to Lockbie through heavier rain and deeper puddles. We joined the M74.

Stopped for night about 6 p.m. at Gretnal Green at a Days Inn under the Welcome Inn name on the motorway at one of the service areas. This chain says they are now putting direct dial phones and modem connectors in each room, but ours didn't have them.

We had spotted another likely looking pub just before turning onto the M74, but our only experience of a room at a pub had soured us on experimenting without local advice. This is in some ways a real pity, as I'm sure we are missing much of the traditional character of U.K. travel by avoiding the pubs for stays and for lunch.

We had mixed dishes for dinner, a main for Jean and a varied starter for me, and traded pieces between us. It was still too much to eat, but what else was there to do?

### ***Monday 30 April 2001***

No food at the Days Inn rest stop at Gretnal Green. At least, no small containers of milk, and orange juice seemingly overpriced at £1.59 for 500 ml. While a substantial breakfast was available, that wasn't what we wanted before a drive. We made

some sandwiches instead, and ate more chocolate biscuits.



*Hadrian's Wall*

M74 south, then the A69 east until we could get onto the B6318 along the edge of the Northumberland National Park. This was the road that seemed to run along Hadrian's Wall. The quest for Hadrian's Wall soon revealed that much of it had been erased over time. There were patches every now and then, looking similar to ordinary stone fences until you could see the greater width.

Most of the tourist sites were closed, as we expected. However Chester's Fort was still open,



*Baths at Chester's Fort*

and that provided a fine view of a large Roman fortified camp along the wall.

On heading towards Wales from the Hexham area we came upon Langley Castle, which was now functioning as a pub. It looked in great shape.

Some rain made driving more difficult, and the day less pleasant from this point. We passed through Alston.

A snow-covered pass at Hartside Height and the highest cafe in England (under 2000 feet) were mildly interesting breaks from some hill scenes.

---

## Wales

An account of our visit to Pete and Anita Presford, and travels around northern Wales.

---

### **Monday 30 April 2001**

At the Penrith area we picked up the M6 and headed off as fast as we could, with little problem reaching the Buckley turnoff from the A55. More interesting was trying to locate the correct road from this point, as instructions over the phone are not always as helpful upon rereading our notes. We got help from the local service station, who also seemed (like Pete) to understand directions via local pubs. No problem from then on.

We chatted with **Pete and Anita Presford** (Anita briefly as she was looking after her autistic patients overnight). Pete produced a magnificent all home-made tuna, olive and artichoke pizza. I enthused about bread making machines for kneading the dough.

Pete talked about visits to Italy, a country and people they both clearly enjoy greatly. Pete, an electrician, is a few years older than us; he hopes to retire soon.



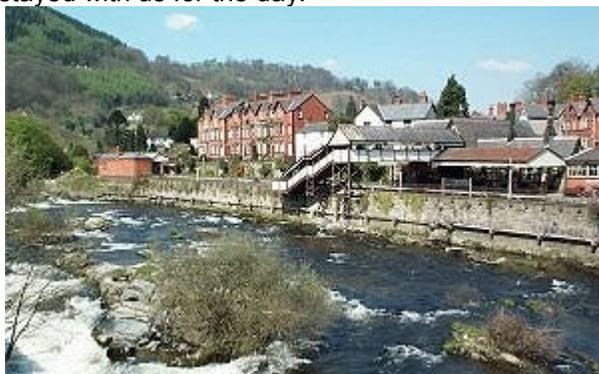
*Pete and Anita Presford*

It has been a fair few years since I saw a fanzine from Pete, but he is in a garden apa and is into castle fanzines, but not conventions. I suspect visiting a castle with him would be a much more educational affair than our own visits.

Jean collected email that evening, and collapsed soon afterwards. Pete and I experimented with Sloe Gin, 1993 mead, grappa, and Australian Bund-berg rum, despite which we talked until 1:15 AM.

## Tuesday 1 May 2001

Awake at 6, almost functioning by 7, taking some notes on computer. Left around 10:40 for a day trip in wonderful weather, with blue skies that stayed with us for the day.



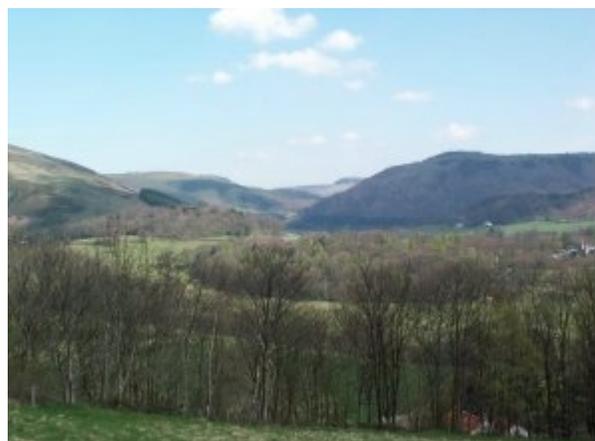
*Llangollen*

Our first stop was at Llangollen. We didn't check the Dr Who exhibit with costumes from the BBC series nor the model trains. We did look at the little historical museum, and at the canal and the narrowboat that takes people to the Telford aqueduct. The 19th Century engineer Telford seemed to have produced half the roads, bridges and canal works in the area. You can also take a train trip through the Dee Valley. The town is known internationally for the musical Eisteddfod held each year.



*Llangollen*

We stopped for scones and to buy handmade chocolates at the little continental style Riverside Chocolate House and Tea Room at the small village of Pentrefoelas, on the A5, six miles from Betws-Y-Coed in North Wales. You can watch the chocolates being created while you wait. The maker was a stout man wearing an outrageous red outfit, almost a clown costume. Wonderful place to stop. The price of chocolates was the only thing that kept us from indulging in too many.



*Dee Valley*

Slate mining was obviously a major industry deeper into north Wales. Not only were the stone fences made of slate, but it seemed everywhere there was a mountain of slate looming above the road, which passed through some major slate mining areas.

Eric was interested in touring Portmeirion, a resort town near Portmadog. It was in this area that Patrick McGoohan's 1960's cult TV show *The Prisoner* was filmed. The village was designed "to demonstrate how a naturally beautiful place could be developed without defiling it" and opened in Easter 1926 by Clough Williams-Ellis, but was not completed until 1972, and the hotel and cottages are a major tourist attraction. The family still runs many of the attractions there. It is a thoroughly fascinating place.



*Portmeirion*

We didn't get to Harlech on the way back, so military songs were out, but did pass Bangor, so Eric told Jean of that tune before we returned to the Presfords' home.



*Portmeirion*

I failed to mention how nicely themed the Presford house was, with antique furniture and ornaments adorning the walls and ceilings and making a very consistent theme to the place. Something I can't manage due to an oversupply of books on every wall.

### **Wednesday 2 May 2001**

We set out from Buckley around 10 a.m. without much of a clear aim as to where we were stopping during the day. We did not have to reach Bristol until 6 p.m. Doug Bell had advised Jean the previous evening that he might not be home until that time.

We retraced our initial course of the previous day, through the countryside past Wrexham, and then onto the A5 past Oswestry towards Shrewsbury.

We took the A49 towards Hereford, stopping at Church Stretton for some sightseeing. I was interested to see an internet cafe and coffee shop tucked down a tiny alley. As the public parking was just opposite a small supermarket we did some shopping for bread rolls and fillings for lunch, and a few tins of ale for later when we rejoined fandom.

We entered Ludlow. This turned out to be a terrible mistake. Too crowded, badly signposted, and a generally impossible town. There seemed to be some market fair due for the next three days, so everything was crowded and confused, especially me. We left as rapidly as we could find our way out, with several wrong turns to confuse me.

Stopped at Leominster for sightseeing. There were strange back streets that finally lead us to a free parking area near the town square. Lots of interesting shops here, and we did check a bookshop but didn't see any fiction in it.

(Jean: Several people, including the Presfords, had encouraged us to stop at Hay-on-Wye, which has lots of bookshops; fans make pilgrimages there, apparently. We didn't go, as it sounded far too dangerous. We're not book collectors, don't have any place to put more books, and are reeling from the prices, given the state of the Australian dollar.)

We thought the A466 past Monmouth sounded interesting, as it wandered along the banks of the River Wye. We seemed to go in and out of Wales and England, as our path took us along the border. We also noted problems finding a toilet along this stretch, as every place that had one signposted either had it totally hidden, or it was closed and locked, or in the case of a service station, it seemed to have been abandoned.

Half way along the road we stopped at Tintern, a pretty little town with good (although not always apparent) parking, several pottery shops, several pubs, a coffee shop. Alas, I didn't find the type of pottery I was seeking, but it was an interesting place to stop. It even had public toilets, although these were not apparent until you actually had stopped to walk around.

We made a spectacle of ourselves here, sitting in the car and hiding our heads under Eric's coat, while we tried to read the Psion 7 display and generate a path to Christina Lake's home. We did work it out eventually, but this would work a lot better if we could subsequently print out the directions with a portable printer.

Our path went through Cherstow and across the Severn towards Bristol. The traffic in Bristol was horrible, hardly moving at all, as well as being notable for incidents of mad moves by some motorists. We missed our turn, as it was one of many streets that were badly signposted, but recovered a block later and went in the back way. The little street planning software for the Psion has been really helpful on this trip, although a better daylight display would help a lot.

We had arrived a few minutes before 6PM, parked precariously in too small a space, and wondered what to do next. Doug Bell was already home, and opened the door so we could finally relax. (Christina Lake was away at a course and would get back the next day.)

First item was to cool a few of the beers I had brought, so we could sample them. Jean soon declared she was hungry, so we wandered down the street to the Goose pub, where the meals were at good prices and featured large helpings.

# Southwestern England

An account of our travels in southwestern England.

---

## Thursday 3 May 2001

Up late for a very relaxed day in Bristol while Doug Bell was at work. The overcast weather helped this decision.

Eric went food shopping for breakfast things. We both got through the weekend papers he had bought earlier for comparison with Australian papers. He was impressed by the *Financial Times*, less so by the *Independent*, but this is a sample of one, and we simply ignored newspapers, radio and TV the entire time we were travelling.

We eventually even got much needed laundry done, and Eric forgot to have lunch. We took an hour walk in the afternoon, just along the main street. Butcher shops abounded. Eric was somewhat surprised, as he'd been thinking that the supermarket meat displays may have displaced them except in small villages. There were a number of stores that appeared to us to sell general clutter. The one called Bilko's Emporium seemed to have a particularly appropriate range of products.

Maplin. For thirty years or more Eric has seen Maplin (an electronics component store) advertisements in U.K. electronics magazines. There was one on the street, so he couldn't resist going in to check it out. This relatively small one wasn't unlike a Dick Smith store back in Australia. He was slightly disappointed by the size of the store, however the catalog was four or five times the size of the Dick Smith catalog.



*Christina Lake and Doug Bell*

We talked with Doug of universities and their similarities, jobs and travel plans. I was amazed to find Doug (and Christina) often brave the traffic in this area by bicycle to get to their respective work places. We collapsed for the night soon after we returned.

Christina arrived, having survived her conference and the return trip. We drank wine and chatted. Dinner was frozen pizza selected by Doug, one of them thick crust, own brand from a local supermarket. We speculated as to why the equivalent items we had encountered in the USA were so much less satisfactory. Jean thinks it is because when we get them normally they are overcooked, and lack a sufficient variety of toppings. Given how good these ones were, we think we might experiment with one or two other brands at home or while travelling. Of course, we're not supposed to be eating pizza, so finding a good one may not be the best idea.

We took the bus into town to attend the Bristol SF meeting, held at the Brewery Tap pub. Two of the sometime attendees write Dr Who books, so Dr Who is often a topic of conversation. This seemed a very typical pub meeting, with fewer than a dozen attendees, and much conversation on mutual acquaintances not present. Several of the attendees claimed they weren't in fandom, as they had given up fanzines, or hadn't been to a convention for years.

## Friday 4 May 2001

We had a beautiful day, so Jean said we should hurry and get away from Bristol for a drive. South through Somerset down the M5, into Devon, onto the A30 at Exeter, after some of my usual problems with roundabout signs. Past Dartmoor national park, Launceston and the Bodmin Moor into Cornwall.

Penzance had a pirate ship in harbour, as well as a fort on an island. Naturally I had failed to pack appropriate music (and the cassette player in the hire car didn't work anyway).

Land's End was windswept but had beautiful cliffs and sea scenery. We walked for a while where we could. The cliff path was closed to the south but open to the north. We drove back via narrow lanes through St Just and St Ives, to see a little more of the coast. At one spot we could see along the coast back to Lands End, several miles away.

Drove past the turnoff to Eden Experimental Station, where Christina had been a few days previously. We didn't realise at the time that the Eden Project had opened to the public in March; probably just as well, or we would have wanted to try to visit. (Christina may have mentioned it was open, but we failed to process this information.)



*Cliffs at Land's End*

The major roads were crowded going in the opposite direction, not helped by traffic stopped by an accident, but our side ran smoothly. It's the start of a three-day weekend, so we expected that traffic going out of major population centres would be heavy.

We didn't get back to Bristol until nearly 8, as we hadn't really realised just how far away Land's End was. Christina was off playing ghooldminton or maybe badminton, and returned shortly after us. We had a delicious chicken casserole for dinner. More talk about work. Up till late, as usual.

### **Saturday 5 May 2001**

We travelled via minor roads (attractive and interesting this time) rather than along the motorways this time, as we didn't have far to travel.



*Some of the standing stones at Avebury*

Our first destination was Avebury village in Wiltshire, to look at the giant 347 metre stone circle dating from 2600-2400 BC that encloses the entire

village. The Keiller Museum and National Trust shop are outside the massive 1.3 km long ditch (up to 9 metres deep) and bank (up to 6.7 metres) structure of the circles, which were dug with antler picks and rakes.



*Jean at Avebury, with stone*

Many of the 98 natural uncut stones inside the circle have fallen, or were removed as building material later. Those remaining are of impressive size for something moved by manual labour.

The village was built from around the 11th century. Most of the stones of the previously well preserved circle were destroyed and incorporated into village homes around 1700.

We also stopped nearby to look at Silbury Hill (2700 BC), the largest man made mound (39.5 metres) in Europe, the size of some of the smaller pyramids in Egypt. It was an impressive site, containing 250,000 cubic metres of chalk and soil moved by hand, and another 100,000 cubic metres of natural terracing. It is estimated that 18 million man hours would have been required to build the hill. Like most everything else around (except for Avebury itself), this hill was closed.

On towards Wantage, where we diverted to try to find the chalk White Horse on a hillside. We could see a bit of it from the road, just enough to be frustrating because the path to it was closed.

In the town of Wantage, **Derrick and Pamela Boal** greeted us, and we talked about charities for disabled people, and lots of other stuff, and stayed up till midnight.

### **Sunday 6 May 2001**

Up late. Our special treat this day was a visit to the Boals' canal boat on the Thames near Oxford. We had been hearing about this boat for ages in letters, so naturally we wanted to see it, if possible. River conditions still made it impossible to take a cruise, but we had known this.

The interior had more space than we expected, as with most boats. They stay out on the river for up to six weeks. Unfortunately getting a photo of

the interior of the boat was nearly impossible; as there's no space to manoeuvre.



*The Boals' canal boat*



*Thames lock area where the boat is moored*



*Derek and Pamela Boal*

Lunch was at the Perch pub on the Thames, where as usual we overate.

Back at the house, Jean showed Pamela how to do some computer stuff. Pamela soon got the idea and set out to learn to do it herself. Mostly changing sizes of stuff on screen. I certainly hope

this encouragement was of some help, as we know how difficult it can sometimes be to come to grips with what a computer can do.

Fish and chips and peas for dinner. Jean is defeated by food for the day, after the large lunch. A most unusual situation!

More talk about disabled charity that evening, and interesting visits to different places by Pamela. She got addressed as Her Ladyship in the House of Lords, by an attendant taking her places the public are not permitted into. More computer fixes achieved, mostly through Pamela's own efforts with some help by Jean.

### **Monday 7 May 2001**

Up latish, and more conversation with Pamela and Derek. We headed for Reading and the Plokta cabal editorial gathering at **Steve Davies'** and **Giulia De Cesare's** home. I don't want to talk about the navigation. Luckily Jean managed to read yet another unreadable street sign, just in the nick of time. Parking was easy, for once.

**Sue Mason** was all ready to leave when we arrived around 3 PM, so we only had a brief chat. **Alison Scott, Stephen Cain, and Mike Scott** were in full creative flow, and just about to do the proofreading of the latest issue of *Plokta*. We should have taken more photos, in a futile attempt to outdo them.



*Sue Mason*

The chaos level at a *Plokta* editorial meeting was considerably increased by a hungry and probably bored Marianne, but was similar in kind to what we expected. It didn't surprise us to find that the proofreading and the printing master did indeed get done before evening.

Eric had an interesting talk with Stephen about mapping technologies and the possibility of the cycling groups doing their own cycling path maps as a computer based system.

Giulia rapidly turned the chaos remaining from the meeting into an organised and calm home, complete with pleasant conversation, substantial afternoon snacks and a fine Italian dinner. It was an inspiring performance, and one I'd be totally incapable of accomplishing myself. Takes note: See about home delivered catering when fans visit me.

### ***Tuesday 8 May 2001***

Up early to do laundry, a decent walk for once, and some minor food shopping. Then into updating my trip notes while Jean used Steve's computer to work on her digital photos from the trip.

I'm not going to mention the superfluous technology in this Plokta household, since these days almost anyone can have home networks and NT servers. The gadget that really impressed me was the folding laundry crate in colourful plastic!

We had a very relaxed day, and got one trip report segment and many photographs closer to having more material for the GUFF website.

When they returned from work, Steve introduced me to his favourite Bluebird Bitter, a bottle-conditioned ale he gets from the Waitrose market, brewed to a recipe from Coniston Brewing

Company. This had a fine bitter taste with lots of hops, and made a great sipping beer. I'm not sure it would work where we live where you tend to toss a beer down somewhat quicker, but it made a very nice pre-dinner or after-work drink.

Giulia made a pork and garlic and broccoli Italian dish with lots of olive oil. Yum.

### ***Wednesday 9 May 2001***

We managed to walk into Reading faster than the bus travelled due to road disruption and repair.

Jean searched many bookshops for a book for a US friend. The book eluded all attempts to locate a copy, although Friars bookshop on Friar Street helpfully offered to get a copy in.

The Oracle shopping centre looked very like a USA shopping center, and had more bookstores plus a Gadget store that was very American. Lots of space, but no seats, or at least they were well hidden. By the time we had walked back we were pretty tired of walking.

Shopping before dinner at Waitrose with Steve and Giulia. Impressed once again by upmarket products and reasonable (for UK) prices.

---

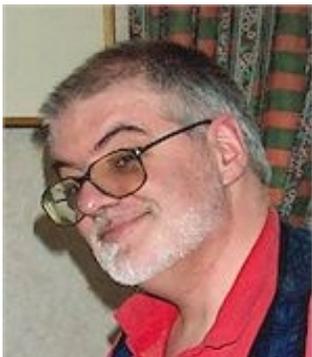
## **Southeastern England**

An account of our visit with Paul Kincaid and Maureen Kincaid Speller in Folkstone, then leaving the UK.

### ***Thursday 10 May 2001***

Around 11 we drove into Reading to look for envelopes in an office store. Finding the store was a challenge. (Jean: I didn't think so. I was navigating, and the store was right where I thought it would be, reached by the expected turnoff. Eric never believes me. Just because I make a mistake every 40 or 50 times, he thinks I'm unreliable. Hmph.)

By midday, we had completed the stationery search. We then drove to Folkestone to visit **Paul Kincaid** and **Maureen Kincaid Speller**.



*Paul Kincaid*

All the service areas were just a few miles after our turnoff from one motorway to another. The castiron bladder comes into play again.

Jean took over driving when we finally located a service area most of the way there.

Maureen greeted us at the door, as did several cats. Other cats emerged later.

We talked about floods in the area. It doesn't look like it would be a problem, but Maureen showed us dips further down the street where there were problems.



*Maureen Kincaid Speller*

Chicken for a meal, with lots of fending off of cats, many of whom pressed their noses to the windows and stared in.

### **Friday 11 May 2001**

We walked along The Leas (the road at the top of the cliff area) from around 10:45 until about 1 PM, with good weather, but the horizon was cloudy or hazy, unlike the sharply-defined sea horizon (most of the time) where we live. Jean could imagine the invading boats sneaking up to shore, hidden by the mist, that you read about in history books and bad fantasy.

There were a lot of hotel and holiday units along The Leas. However there had been a lot of landslips along the slope down to the sea, and several paths down were closed. We could look down through the trees to the road and parking areas along the deserted shore below. There were lots of places to sit and admire the view (or read a book), and a couple of buildings (restaurants ?), not in use at the time.

Coming back through the shopping district, we found lots of bookshops, none of which had the book Jean was looking for. We decided we should have gone to Hay-on-Wye after all.



*Hotels along The Leas, Folkestone*

Paul turned out a marvelous salad and cold cuts lunch, with lots of really nice cheese as well. Afterwards we sat around reading books and disputing with cats over who got to sit where. These disputes were usually amicably settled by the cat sleeping on the person who was occupying the space the cat wanted. Since we were still feeling cat-deprived, this arrangement suited us just fine. We were mildly surprised and impressed by how well-behaved the cats were, except for their meal-time demands of course.

Paul and Maureen are renovating their house, so Jean (a recovering renovator) was very interested in what they were doing and how they were doing it.

At the top of the house, under the eaves, are their two offices, each with a big window in the roof, letting in lots of light. Very nice.

Dinner was at Paul and Maureen's favourite restaurant, which is also a Bed and Breakfast. It's the Tanner of Wingham, 44 High Street, Wingham, not too far from Canterbury, and run by Dawna and Richard Martin. This brick building dates from around 1620, although parts may be even earlier. It is being restored using the old techniques. The food was wonderful and the service excellent. We like the sort of restaurant where the hosts come out and gossip with you; reminds us of our favourite (now closed) restaurant back in Faulconbridge.

### **Saturday 12 May 2001**

Jean stayed at the house, but I walked into Folkestone with Paul, who pointed out the narrow bricked Old High Street to me. I wandered down it through the town and the old town centre, past the port and fishing areas and the amusement park, and finally emerged on the pebbled beach.

It was a beautiful sunny day, with the sky clear almost to the horizon, and the locals often in T shirts and shorts. Eventually I got tired of walking and made my way back past the hotels and restaurants to the town centre. I couldn't resist checking some of the four or so bookshops in the centre of the shopping area. On the way back, some visitors stopped to ask me the way to another street. This seems a constant.

Later we both walked to The Mariner pub down by the harbour for lunch with Paul and Maureen. This pub served pretty good food, we thought.

After lunch we wandered along the seafront to a small beach where people in swimming costumes were rapidly turning from pasty-white to lobster-red in the sun. We walked to the end of the concrete path, stood around chatting for awhile and looking at the channel ferry terminal in the distance.



*One of the beach areas at Folkestone*

We expressed interest in seeing the famous "white cliffs" of Dover, and Paul explained that they were usually "grey cliffs" except after a landslide that exposed some fresh chalk (which is when postcard photos are taken). He pointed out the cliffs above us and said the Dover cliffs looked just like where we were.

When we wandered back along the beach, we discovered that in the short time we'd been gone, the tide had come in quite a ways. People were rushing madly about picking up their belongings and heading for higher ground, something of a reverse lemming effect. The small patch of remaining beach was getting extremely crowded.

We found yet another few bookshops on the way back through the town. I (just) resisted temptation, but Maureen yielded.

Read more of my book, since I seemed travelled out, while Jean was going through a George R R Martin fantasy at a great rate. She needed it read in time to return it to Steve and Guilia.

Paul and I figured we (and Jean) had covered all the outstanding GUFF business, although the precise tactics for getting additional publicity were still not too clear. I'd thought we might have to take more time for discussing it.

For dinner, Paul and Maureen cooked parsnips in lime and honey, pork chops with roast apple slices, followed by Viennetta ice cream. Wow.

### ***Sunday 13 May 2001***

Paul and Maureen and I walked across to the park and checked out the car boot fair. This also offered a fair range of books, but luckily most of the SF was already gone. Maureen did manage to find more plants for their backyard reconstruction.

After lunch, Jean drove the two of us to Reading, arriving before 4PM, somewhat earlier than we really expected. We were staying overnight at Steve and Guilia's again, so we could get an easy run to the airport in the morning (easier than from Folkestone, anyway). We spent most of the time that afternoon and evening reading, instead of updating our notes. Jean finished the GRR Martin book.

### ***Monday 14 May 2001***

We were up at 5 and away by 5:45 for a horror drive to Heathrow. The M4 was okay, but for the insane drivers and trucks that competed to block all lanes. The last 2 or 3 miles into Heathrow, traffic was at a standstill, and the traffic directions were totally inadequate. Fortunately, the slow traffic gave us plenty of time to study the signs and debate (argue about) their meaning.

Luckily Jean made the right decisions on which roads to take (unlike Eric) and he listened to her. Then we went through Budget car return real quickly, after a bad moment with a key scratch discovered on the passenger side of the car. (The helpful checkin person wrote it down as pre-existing, so we wouldn't have to pay.)

After taking the shuttle bus to the correct terminal, we had our boarding passes before 8 a.m. for an 11 a.m. flight. After sitting around until 10:30 waiting for a boarding announcement, we got suspicious about our flight to Chicago, so Eric minded the bags while Jean went to find a departure monitor that had more information than the singularly uninformative (and sometimes faulty) boarding gate ones.

She rushed back, having found that the flight had been cancelled. Off to the transit desk via a circuitous path and in great haste, where we joined the early part of what eventually became a gigantic queue. After about 30 minutes of the queue not changing much, except to get much larger, the airline began syphoning off the first and business class passengers, followed by the San Francisco and then the Chicago only passengers. We continued to wait in the queue.

Not too much later they began telling Premier Executive members they could go to the Red Carpet Club to get their flights changed. Since Jean had reached that level, by 11:40 we could at least sit down in reasonably comfortable chairs and have a snack or a drink while we waited to be called.

We eventually got new boarding passes for a Chicago flight at 1:55, which makes us almost 3 hours late into Chicago. We originally had around a 5 hour stopover, so we still theoretically had a reasonable chance of getting through to Seattle on our flight.

(Jean: The really bad news was that we again didn't have seats together, though at least we both had aisle seats. Of course, we were in Economy class again this flight.

When I got to my seat, the man across the aisle asked if I'd mind switching with him because the two people next to my seat were his wife and child, and he wanted to sit with them. So I changed seats, to find myself next to a fidgety child. Oh, no! Fortunately the child was exhausted and fell asleep not long after takeoff, and slept for most of the flight.

The food was surprisingly not awful, though nowhere near as good as in business class. At least the drinks were free! I entertained myself by thinking of all the ways the trip could be worse. I eventually came up with quite an impressive list of horror things that did not happen, which made me much happier. I did not manage to get much sleep, partly because it was daytime and partly because

there was no room to stretch out. Oh well, after years of 14-hour transPacific flights, this 8-hour trip seemed realtively short.)

Eric again. Unfortunately the very full flight from Heathrow was an hour late taking off, and despite a tailwind, we had only an hour left when we reached Chicago. Naturally customs and immigration were real slow for me, as I had ended up with the slowest queue. Jean shot through the US citizens' line and was waiting for me when I finally emerged.

Turned out that it didn't matter, as our flight to Seattle was also running very late. We finally changed to a later (but on time, thus earlier) flight, however our luggage came later, on our original flight. (Are you following this? There will be a quiz later.)

Thus we missed the 11 PM bus to Jean's mother's place. Jean phoned to say we'd be very late. We finally got the midnight bus, arriving around 1 AM (9 AM UK time, having been up all night at a very dull party).

---

## Wiscon

An account of our activities after leaving the UK.

---

### **14–23 May 2001**

We spent 10 days at Jean's mother's place in Lacey, Washington (a suburb of Olympia, about an hour's drive southwest of Seattle). During this visit her sister Barb and Barb's husband Ted came up from California for 5 days, so we could all celebrate Mother's 80th birthday. A fine time was had by all, and it was nice to catch up with Barb and Ted, whom we don't see very often.

### **Thursday 24 May 2001**

Since we were in the USA so close to the Wiscon dates, it seemed a great shame not to attend, even though it meant backtracking from Seattle to Chicago again, so we went.

Today was another long travelling day. We got up around 3:30 AM to catch the 4 AM express bus to SeaTac. Fortunately the service we use picks up at your door (for an extra charge). We could have taken the 5:30 AM bus, which theoretically would have got us to the airport in plenty of time for our flight, but we tend to assume that if something can delay us, it will, so we opted for the earlier bus.

So we got there in record time and were wandering around the airport looking for breakfast at 5 AM. We found cereal and fruit and hot tea for Jean, and got some exercise walking up and down past the (closed) shops.

We got the 7:50 AM plane to Chicago, this time checking to make sure we had seats together. Lots of people were waiting for upgrades and standby seats.

At the last minute, we saw Allen Baum and Donya White get on the same flight. "What are you doing here?" we exclaimed. "You're coming from the wrong city!" (They live in the San Francisco Bay area.) Turns out Allen had a business conference in Seattle the day before, so Donya had come along

with him. They were, of course, also headed for Madison, but they were flying on from Chicago.

We had found the Chicago-Madison airfare just a bit high for our budget, so we took the 2:30 PM Van Galder bus (\$20 per person one-way) from O'Hare to the Students' Union at the University of Wisconsin, about a mile from the convention hotel.

We had some difficulty finding the bus, as the map we'd got off the website was a bit vague if you weren't familiar with the ground transportation pickup areas at the airport (we're not; usually we're just in transit and never go outside the airport buildings). The instructions on the notice boards in the baggage collection area were even more vague and in fact downright misleading, but eventually we asked someone who pointed us to the right place (across the road from the baggage claim) and we arrived with about 5 minutes to spare.

The bus didn't depart until 2:30, but it started boarding around 2:10 and rapidly ran out of seats. We did manage to get seats together, and later spotted **Maureen Kincaid Speller** on the same bus, looking tired and sleepy after the flight from London.

When we arrived in Madison (around 5:45), the three of us shared a taxi to the Concourse Hotel, as the walk was a bit long for dragging suitcases. After checking in, we looked for the conbag-stuffing party, which was just finishing. We managed to collect our badges and conbags, and reconfirmed our willingness to help with registration setup in the morning, or do anything else that needed to be done.

We went out exploring nearby streets, looking for places to buy breakfast food, then returned to buy dinner in the bar. The small deep-dish pizza and bowl of chili went down quite nicely. We didn't see anyone we knew, so Jean collapsed soon afterwards.

Eric went out again to a pre-con event, and later hung around the hotel bar talking with, among others, **Nancy Kress** and **Karen Joy Fowler**.

### **Friday 25 May 2001**

Eric went out early and grabbed breakfast materials at a small grocery store. The room had a coffee-maker which Jean used to boil water for her essential cup of tea. Like most coffee-makers, it needed to process several jugs of plain water before the coffee taste had been washed out, but after that it worked fine.

Thus fortified, we went down to work on Registration from about 10 AM. We helped set up the area, and put up a display of our Australian and GUFF stuff, including a large wall map with Airlie Beach marked on it. Later we found someone else had added a marker for the town near Sydney that they were from. Eric worked Registration almost all day, while Jean went off to help in the Green Room for awhile. Everything seemed to be going well.

We checked the dealers' room around 4 PM, soon after it opened. **George Elgin (Suzette Haden Elgin's husband)** was selling a Toshiba laptop computer at his bookstall. It's quite similar to the laptop Jean has, but with more memory (81MB), a larger hard drive (4GB) and a bit more speed (still slow compared with today's machines). We dithered about buying it, and decided to sleep on the idea.

The con suite supplied pizza and hotdogs, not great but not bad either. There was also plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit as well as copious supplies of tea, coffee and soft drinks. We saw, amongst many others, **Allen Baum**, **Donya White**, and **Spike Parsons**.

We enjoyed the great opening ceremony at 7:30, which was done as a Cinderella reading, with many fannish jokes. Later, **Joyce Scrivner** arrived, so we talked for awhile. (She was sharing a room with us.) Eric partied until 1:30 a.m. Jean gave up around midnight.

### **Saturday 26 May 2001**

Eric went to the farmers' market in the capitol square a block from the hotel, where he bought a cinnamon bun the size of a dinner plate. Jean dashed off to the Lands' End shop and returned with two pairs of the shorts she wanted, at almost half price. Jean also visited the farmers' market but found the crowds too much to cope with, so she bought a huge cranberry-orange bread loaf which she nibbled on for the next 2 days.

Some of the panels Eric attended during the weekend were:

David Emerson's *Psychohistory 101*, about William Strauss and Neil Howe books *Generations*,

*The Fourth Turning*, *13th Gen* and *Millennia Rising*. Not convinced but could be interesting as a basis for devising social paths.

Crisis, Highs, Awakening, Unravelling as eras in US history. Who thought of that, why and how come it's so popular? Bunkum.

Hard SF panel absolutely wonderful.

The Feminist Cabalist Guide to XML with Bill Humphries at Internet cafe. Music interferes late. Ask Bill about the URL for more details of the presentation of XML.

Why is Biotech so scary?

Memetics and viral marketing. Books mentioned *Thought Contagion* by Aaron Lynch and the best one *The Meme Machine* by Susan Blackmore Oxford University Press. *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell is superficial but is popular.

What Remains to be Fictionalised?

Jean talked at some length with **Elisabeth Vonarberg** and **Kristine Smith** during a quiet time at the book-signing table. She's been a fan of Elisabeth's fiction (translated into English) for years, but had never previously heard of Kristine. After this conversation, Jean rushed down to the dealers' room and bought all of Kristine's books she could find. (And enjoyed them greatly when she read them.)

Eric bought several books by **Sarah Zettel**, after talking to her awhile. We were most impressed with her work (when we got a chance to read the books).

In the dealers' room, Jean admired some wooden puzzle sculptures, but managed to restrain herself from buying any, knowing there is \*no\* place to put them at home. However, she did buy the Toshiba laptop computer from George Elgin. Jean thought it would be fine for word-processing (which it is), but later decided it was inadequate for the increasing amount of graphics work she's doing, so she sold it to Eric.

Eric spotted Don, the designer of his blinking badge, and they talked about old electronics and computers. We both foraged in the con suite on pizza and hotdogs.

**Jeanne Mealy** organised a photo of ANZAPA members. We grabbed a passer-by to take the photos using several of our cameras, then we all sat around nattering for awhile. It was particularly good to meet **David Cummer** for the first time.

Tiptree auction was most entertaining, with lots of in-jokes. Ellen came on stage wearing a beard and a plaid shirt and said Ellen had been delayed. Then did strip of several layer of clothing, at one point wearing a skirt. Apparently Ellen in a skirt is almost as rare a sight as Jean in a skirt.



Seated, left to right: David Cummer, Lyn McConchie, Jeanne Mealy, Maureen Kincaid Speller. On floor in front: Jean Weber, Eric Lindsay.

Eventually Ellen removed the beard, and someone offered to buy it, but bidding didn't raise the \$17 it had cost.

Ellen holds up little box of No-Doze signed by Nancy Kress. Voice from back, "What's No-Doze?" Ellen explain it's a caffeine pill, popular with students cramming for final exams, and the Kress connection is with her series of books about Sleepless people. It sold for something like \$60.

Ellen sells psychology text book that had belonged to Alice Sheldon, with marginal notes. Someone asks "Who is Alice Sheldon?" Ellen explains that's James Tiptree Jr's real name. Bidding improved only slightly.

A jar of Tiptree jelly or jam from Britain was for sale. Supposed to be source of Sheldon's inspiration for her pen name.

Jean was annoyed that silly stuff often went for far more money than things like Freddie Baer's jewelry, which hardly covered the probable cost of the materials, much less Freddie's time of making it. Mixed feelings: it's good to raise money by auctioning whatever sells, but almost offensive for trivia and junk to go for so much more than good stuff.

Tor party is very active and good place to be. Found a bunch of book titles to check at the dealers' room. Eric stayed up to 2:30 AM. As usual, Jean dropped out a bit earlier.

## Sunday 27 May 2001

Lunch in hotel restaurant with **Henry ("Knarley") and Letha Welch**, and their three children, **Joyce Scrivner, Don Selzig Jr., Mary ?** Showed photos.

Sunday evening's highlight was the dessert banquet (great concept), followed by the GoH, Tiptree award and other speeches. Minor scandal at banquet when people discovered the whipped cream in the desserts was fake. In Wisconsin, the dairy state! Presumably concom will Have Words with the caterers over this. Ellen's comment later: "It was sweet and it was soft, but it was *not* whipped cream."

Some statistics: 621 memberships received, including some duplicates, 587 actually here. Badge says year is 2000, not 2001. The Wiscon 26 flyers said 2001, and were then changed to 2003 (should have been 2002). Tiptree auction raised just over \$5000, bake sale just under \$400.

**Victor Gonzales** turned up, briefly. Jean: "What the f\*\*\* are you doing here?" Victor: "I'm moving to Boston." We all spent a few minutes catching up on what we'd been doing since Eastercon.

Four women turning 50 held a Cronecon party one evening. Jean wondered, "is 50 old enough for cronedom? \*I\* certainly don't feel like a crone, and I'm closer to 60 than 50." Some discussion of Ursula Le Guin's GoH speech from *Wiscon 20*, in which she talks about some of the social and personal problems of ageing.

Jean says: Wiscon is my favorite convention (other than Corflus), even though I've only been to two of them. This is mainly because everybody there shares an interest in some aspect of feminism in science fiction and fantasy. Those interests range quite widely, which is a valuable diversity, but the con doesn't fragment into what appear to be completely separate interest groups, as so many other large or medium-sized cons do. Wiscon is also the only con of its size that has a large number of program items that actually interest me. I didn't manage to attend very many items, but not from lack of interest; somehow I always seemed to spot someone I really, really wanted to talk with, just before I was due to go to a program item. Knowing that I might not get another chance, I always chose to sit down \*right then\* and talk.

## **Monday 28 May 2001**

Breakfast with **Jeanne Mealy, John Stanley, David Cummer**; met Jeanne's mother and youngest sister later. Over the weekend Jean had been giving Jeanne long pep talks about using visualisation to help her find the right job, using Eric's and Jean's experiences as an example. Remarkably, Jeanne did not seem to find these harangues as tedious as some people do. ("I get carried away in my enthusiasm," explains Jean.)

Jean spent some time catching up with **Lyn McConchie** and her friend **Sharman**. Another woman came up to the table and asked if any of us knew anyone making money selling e-books over the Internet. Jean said yes, she sold her books that way.

We discussed self-publishing and other issues. That topic (e-books and Internet sales) had been a theme in several conversations over the weekend.

We also talked with **Tom Becker** and **Spike Parsons** before they left for home, including some ideas Tom has for boating activities at our relaxacon in Airlie Beach in June 2002.

Dinner at Gino's Italian restaurant with Jean's friend **Susan Reitz** (from Las Vegas) and her daughter **Kat**, ex Intel. Enjoyed it thoroughly. On the way back Jean and Susan were accosted by a male passer-by who started telling them that his mother is a space alien. Jean yelled for Eric, who took over the conversation while the rest of us walked ahead a bit.

Eventually we got to a corner store where we were planning to buy some supplies for the evening, so Kat yelled to Eric, "Stop lollygagging and get in here! We have shopping to do!" Eric said to the

pest, in a wonderfully apologetic tone, "Sorry, I've got to go," and the guy immediately wandered off, apparently used to the idea that women order men around. We managed to refrain from laughing out loud until we got into the store.

## **Tuesday 29 May 2001**

Walked to lake, with some obstacles, mainly buildings between road and lake, with no public access. Walked to other lake (in opposite direction), passing through capitol square. As the area we were in is on a ridge between the lakes, it's a steep hike (though short) up and down. We pretended this was a useful part of our fitness program.

**Diane Martin** collected us from the hotel, where we were chatting with **Jane Hawkins** and **Jeanne Gomoll**.

**Diane Martin** and **Jim Hudson** kindly gave us crash space after the con. Eric went with them to a great health food store near their home, expensive but really good, where they got lunch makings.

We enjoyed the company of their cats, though preparing a meal was something of a challenge. At least one person had to stand guard to toss cats off the countertops while another person cooked. Fortunately we don't have a cleanliness fetish where cats are concerned, so we found this all quite amusing.

In the evening we all went to a party at **Jae Leslie Adam's** home. Many of the Wiscon committee were there. Some of the entertainment involved readings from the local apa. It was great to meet so many of the con committee in less stressful circumstances.

---

## **Return to Australia**

An account of our return trips to Australia.

---

### **Wednesday 30 May 2001**

Awake at 5:30. Very unfortunate timing, given the very long day Eric has ahead of him. He thinks, "I'm going to be real glad to get access to a waterbed again when I get home."

Diane kindly drove us to the bus stop to catch the Van Galder bus, where Jean demonstrated her organising skills by directing Eric to oversee loading our luggage onto the bus while she grabbed a good seat on board.

The bus left Madison at 11:30 AM (2:30 AM Thursday in Airlie Beach) and arrived at Chicago O'Hare airport around 2:30 PM. As usual, we'd

taken an earlier bus than strictly necessary, just in case of traffic problems, so all went well.

After we checked in, we wandered about looking at the shops, then sat waiting for Eric's 6:35 PM flight to Sydney (change planes in LA).

(Meanwhile Jean caught a 7:40 PM flight back to Seattle to spend another 3 weeks with her mother. We were both in first class, thanks to our upgraded tickets. Jean's trip continues on the next page.)

## ***Eric's return trip***

On the Chicago-LA flight (United Airlines 815, flight time about 3.5 hours), the choices on the dinner menu were chicken, fish or meat. Except they had no chicken, and the guy next to me got the last of the fish. Still, the meat was pretty good, and I expected to be fed far too much before I got home. The flight was on time, but I took forever to find the Red Carpet Club.

The late evening LA to Sydney flight was reasonably comfortable in business class, but 14 hours is a long time on a plane. Australian Customs were pretty quick, but with a noticeable increase in questions about foot and mouth exposure for travellers from Britain.

There had been a turnaround on inward duty free, with the Duty Free store saying you can take two bottles through (they used to say just one bottle), and Customs saying you can't. Customs are correct, but since the duty payable is below their trigger point for duty, they ignore it unless you are carrying other dutiable materials. Can you guess I had two bottles?

Sydney to Brisbane is only an hour, but the plane was over an hour late taking off. Also, Brisbane was the last point to which my tickets took me, as I hadn't been able to get a reasonably priced return ticket before leaving Australia. Advance purchase doesn't work if you are away longer than 60 days.

I ran around Brisbane airport a lot, chasing tickets. You can't actually make a connection to Proserpine or Hamilton Island via Brisbane from an international flight, as the daily flights leave early in the morning.

Jean had checked alternatives, and ever since Virgin Blue had started running flights to Townsville, both Virgin Blue and Ansett had \$118 flights. I soon found that was the Internet price, and over the counter at the airport was twice as much. Also, the Ansett flight was leaving in a matter of minutes, while the Virgin Blue was a few hours later. Through security, try one of the two Internet kiosks, only to find not only does it fail to work, it also stole my coin (typical web result, if you ask me). Back down to Ansett, where I begged them to find me a way to get the flight. They did (and it was charged at the Internet price), but understandably the Ansett people wouldn't guarantee me a meal was on board. (Turns out that Internet bookings couldn't be made on the day of travel.)

Brisbane to Townsville was another two hours. They even had plenty of spare meals. My bag had caught the flight (I wasn't at all certain there was time to load it). Taxi to the bus station, with not a real lot of spare time (the Virgin flight would have missed that 4 PM bus). Bus to Airlie, which itself is

almost a four hour ride to cover the 300 kilometres. No taxi at the Airlie bus stop, but one pulled up outside one of the pubs before I could reach the taxi rank. And so to home.

Elapsed time (mostly) awake 46.5 hours.  
Elapsed travel time 41 hours. Actual time travelling in vehicles 28 hours.

The snail mail upon my return consisted of five parcels weighing 4 kg, plus 7.6 kg of large envelopes, and a further 4.5 kg of small envelopes. It took me two trips to get them all back home, and I didn't get back from the second trip until midday. Jean received 21 large envelopes, I received 22 large envelopes, and we jointly received 12. Some of them, but not many, were actual physical fanzines. Most were commercial magazines.

Jean received 72 small envelopes, I received 49, we jointly received 28, plus there were 4 Asimovs or Analogs and three envelopes for someone who isn't us. Oh yes, and 10 pieces of junk householder mail. It took me until 4 PM just to open my own and the joint envelopes.

The stuff outstanding on the Internet wasn't as bad as I expected. Many of the fans we visited had Internet access, and although Jean is much more likely to attempt to keep up to date than I am, I had logged in two or three times while we were travelling. I'd used the web interface to the e-mail on this very, very irregular basis to dump some obvious junk e-mail. I'd also unsubscribed to most bulk items like Memory Hole. I still had about 500 items and 4 MB when I returned. I wasn't sure how much material WebCentral let you store as e-mail, so I wanted to keep the volume down. Luckily hardly anyone sends me attachments, and I generally strongly discourage attachments in my e-mail. Turned out it wasn't too much. The remaining news feeds ran more like 10 MB and 3000 items, which also isn't too bad.

## ***Jean's return trip***

My flight to Seattle featured the same food choices as on Eric's flight to LA; I assume that was the first-class menu on United out of Chicago that day. I didn't take notes on that trip, and now don't recall much about it, though I'm fairly sure it left more-or-less on time (in contrast to our flight from Chicago to Seattle, two weeks earlier), and I caught the bus to Mother's and arrived before midnight. At least this time I knew where the (new) bus stop was at Seattle airport, and having no checked luggage assisted in getting there on time.

As usual, my stay at Mother's was pleasant. My main duties this trip were to give her lessons on how to use her computer, and just keep her company. The computer lessons went slowly, as expected. I loaded software onto the laptop I'd

bought at Wiscon and got a reasonable amount of my own work done, including the first online version of this GUFF report.

Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal drove down from Seattle one day to visit, do a bit of walking with me, and go out to dinner with Mother and me, but I didn't manage to catch up with any of my other friends in the Seattle area. I could have done so, but I really couldn't face the bus ride to and from Seattle, despite the temptation of some Clarion West parties.

Preparations for my trip back to Australia included booking a flight from Seattle to LA (to connect with my trans-Pacific flight) and a flight from Brisbane to somewhere closer to home (Townsville, the cheapest choice). I managed to make both bookings using the Internet, but the contrast between my experiences using United's website and Ansett Australia's website could not have been more dramatic. Booking a United flight went flawlessly, though I had to phone to arrange my upgrade to first class since I had a special coupon that couldn't be handled online. No problem there.

Ansett's site, on the other hand, twice refused to give me an acknowledgement when I booked using their special cheap Internet-only fare. I had a lengthy e-mail correspondence with their technical support people who kept telling me that it was a problem at my end, which it most definitely wasn't. I also kept sending emails to Eric to phone up Ansett and check whether my reservation had in fact got into their system but just didn't return an acknowledgement to me. My first two tries didn't get into their system, and I was certainly hoping that meant my credit card wasn't charged (it wasn't). I was a bit reluctant to try a third time, but I did, at a different time of day, and that time it all worked as it was supposed to. Sighs of relief all around! I most definitely did not want to have to change airlines in Brisbane, or pay twice the price to have Eric book over the phone. So, with printouts of my e-tickets in hand, I was finally ready to go. [Ansett went out of business in mid-September 2001, and has since been bought and revived.]

Monday, June 25th was the day for my 36-hour trip home. I was surprised how not-awful it turned out to be. After catching a mid-morning bus from Mother's to SeaTac airport, I checked in my suitcase and a large cardboard carton of goodies. Fortunately I was able to check them all the way to Townsville, because the two items were theoretically above my limit on the internal flights in Australia, where I was in economy class. (I've never had a problem with excess luggage, but I definitely didn't want this time to be the exception.) I had a couple of hours to wander around and eat lunch before

catching my flight (the next bus would have got me to the airport with no time to spare).

The flight to LA left on time and arrived only a bit late, so I had several hours in LA between planes. As usual, I had allowed lots of time for the connection, to compensate for the expected delays out of Seattle. I got some exercise by wandering all around LA airport, before settling down in United's Red Carpet Club to await the Sydney flight. I'd been in this Red Carpet Club last year, so I knew they didn't have much in the way of food, especially of a variety I can eat, but I managed to forage enough snacks to tide me over until the flight.

The wait was further enlivened by a second passport check. I could hear the inspector's questions to the people ahead of me: "Do you hold a passport issued by any other country?" "Do you have that passport with you?" "May I see it?" I began to wonder what the right answer might be, but as several people had said they had more than one passport with them, I decided I was safe in admitting to having two. The inspector told me they were looking for expired or nearly-expired passports, and had caught quite a few people since they started doing this not long before. I wasn't quite sure what happened to the people they caught—were they kept off the plane, or did they have to do something to get a temporary extension, or what?

Again, the flight left on time. The guy sitting beside me was quite interesting. He had sleep apnea, so he had a mask attached by an air hose to an air blower (his own) at his feet to use while sleeping. He had made prior arrangements with United to have an extension cord run from an outlet nearby to his seat. The cord was taped to the wall, and he plugged his machine into it. The machine had to be approved in advance by United for use on their planes. He's apparently had his machine for many years; he said it was one of the first to ever be approved.

He also had Parkinson's, and was telling me about a digital camera he'd bought that had a movement compensation feature which enabled him to take clear photos, even with a telephoto lens. We had a most interesting chat on various topics and I suspect he would have told me lots of other interesting stuff if I had been willing to stay awake and listen.

Arrived in Sydney, where I thought for awhile that I'd have to be inspected by the quarantine people since I'd been in the UK, but they let me through. (I'd left my old shoes, the ones I'd worn in the UK, in the USA, and was wearing some new shoes I'd picked up at a sale in the USA.) Then my cardboard carton was looked at suspiciously, but after questioning me about the contents, the

inspector decided not to open it. So I made my connection to the next flight (to Brisbane) without any problem.

By now I was convinced that things had been going too well, and that something was due to go dramatically wrong. But, no, although I had to wait a couple of hours in Brisbane for my next flight, that one left on time too. So I finally arrived in Townsville, totally exhausted, to find Eric waiting, all my luggage arrived intact, and the shopping I'd asked him to do successfully completed. We then drove home, or more accurately Eric drove home while I mostly slept.

***The End***

### ***Note for intending visitors to Airlie Beach***

Don't be put off by the hassles we had in getting to our place from Brisbane. Much more convenient flights (to nearby airports) can be had, at quite reasonable prices, if you get them in association with an overseas fare, or as a return (round-trip) flight from somewhere in Australia, or on one of the new Internet fares. Much has changed in the Australian airline scene since our trip. None of these were choices for us at the time we travelled (return fares were good only for 2 months, and we were gone longer than that).

# Reflections

Six months after our GUFF trip, and having taken another trip in outback Australia, we reflect on the differences and similarities between travel in the two countries.

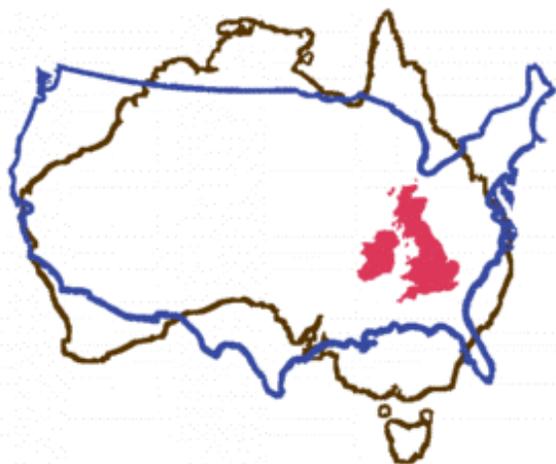
---

## **Sizes and Distances**

The land area of the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales *and* Northern Ireland) is 241,590 sq km; the land area of Australia is 7,617,930 sq km, or 31.5 times as big. Travelling around the two countries in a motor vehicle makes this difference very apparent.

Even flying gives you some idea of the difference in distances. Our flight inside Australia from Sydney to Brisbane (746 km) and then on to Townsville (another 1114 km; total 1860 km), was actually longer than flying from London to many places in Europe (Rome, for example, is only 1442 km from London).

Below is a diagram comparing the sizes of the UK, USA and Australia.



## **Population**

The population of Australia is about 20 million; the UK has about 60 million people – three times as many.

Oddly enough, I (Jean) didn't notice this difference nearly as much as I expected. London seemed a bit more crowded than Sydney, but not vastly so, and the rest of the countryside had a lot more open space than I had expected – despite looking at lots of photos before we left on the trip. This spaciousness was a pleasant surprise.

This lack of obvious difference is no doubt because the vast majority of people in Australia live in a relatively small area, mostly in the southeast corner, and both of us had spent most of our time in that part of the country.

The second map gives an idea of the population distribution in Australia. It shows the main roads, which connect the towns and cities. Wonder where “the Outback” is? It's all the parts of the country that aren't black with roads.

As you can see, once you get outside the populated areas, the number of towns and the number of people drop off dramatically, and the distance between towns increases just as dramatically.



## **Fannish population**

Population differences are also obvious in fandom. The largest convention in Australia (other than the Aussiecons, which attracted large numbers of overseas visitors) was around 500 people; a typical NatCon has half that number, or less.

This is partly a matter of the number of fans, but also a matter of distance. Perth, for example, has a thriving fandom, but few fans from Perth are able to attend 'eastern' conventions, and few 'eastern' fans get to Perth.

So turning up to an Eastercon with an attendance around the size of an Australian-based worldcon was quite different! We have both been to enough conventions in the USA that the size of the Eastercon wasn't a shock, but it's still nothing like the coziness of an Australian NatCon.

The fan lounge reminded me (Jean) of a small Australian con, where most everybody knows (or knows of) each other. I liked that.

## ***Terrain and driving***

One thing these maps don't show is the topography. Australia is really quite flat by comparison with a lot of the world. Both of us have travelled in places that have real mountains, so we weren't overawed by the Scottish Highlands, but we really did like them! Tall, snow-capped mountains reflected in lakes are not a feature of Australia.

Another topographic feature of the UK is variety within a relatively short distance. Australia is big and has a fair amount of scenic variety, but there's a lot more of any one thing than in the UK. You can take a nap for several hours on a trip across many parts of Australia, wake up and look around, and wonder if you've actually gone anywhere. Not so in the UK. Blink and it's different. Well, not quite, but by comparison. That was a pleasant novelty for us.

Because we drive on the left in Australia, we didn't get the shock that driving in the UK might be to the TAFF delegates. However, the narrow roads were a shock to Eric. Not because they are narrow as such, as many Australian country roads are also a one-car-wide strip of bitumen. Australian roads also tend to have wide dirt or gravel bits at the sides, not stone walls! So we expect to have lots of visibility, so we can see an approaching vehicle a long way away, and plenty of space to dodge off to the side if necessary. In Britain Eric always felt that he could only see a few metres down the road and had nowhere to escape to.

Also, British roads twisted and turned all over the place. We're used to a road having a turn every few kilometres, if then, not every 50 metres. Eric felt he was on a salaam track in the UK.

## ***History and artefacts***

The UK has a lot more and older artefacts than Australia does! Even though the Aboriginal people of Australia have been here a very long time, they haven't left much in the way of artefacts other than some wonderful artwork (carvings and paintings on stone). No wonder the Europeans (wrongly) thought the Aborigines had no culture, for there was nothing for the newcomers to see.

The UK is, of course, full of fine old buildings, standing stones, walls and forts and artwork, and is reeking with history (much of it bloody). We were more interested in the older stuff (Romans and before), much of which we couldn't go see because it was closed, than in the cathedrals and museums and stately houses and whatnot, excellent though they are. Jean had been dragged through Europe as a teenager by her parents and has never really recovered an interest in post-Roman historical stuff.

The other thing we're keen on is countryside, scenery, wild(er) stuff. Not surprisingly, we really, really liked the Scottish highlands and areas in the west of Scotland. So we drove too much (since in most places we weren't allowed to walk around).

## ***Sports***

Not our area of interest, but Australia and the UK share several sports that are less-known or nearly non-existent in the USA, such as cricket and soccer and other forms of "football" that are not US-style gridiron football. Other Australian fans would probably be a lot more interested in the cricket rivalries between Australian and the UK, or they might appreciate the football matches.

We were impressed with the number of UK fans who were into bicycling (or had been in their younger days), especially given the traffic and (in some places) the hilly terrain.

One pseudo-sport we do indulge in is walking, and we did a fair bit of that around London, but circumstances conspired to restrict our walking in the countryside. This was a disappointment, though given the state of Jean's leg through most of the trip, it's probably just as well.

## ***Arriving in the country***

When we returned to Australia, we landed at Sydney airport, one of the main international airports. One difference to London was that passengers have to collect all their luggage from the baggage carousel, and take it through customs and immigration. Outside customs, you can hand it back to the airlines if you're connecting with a domestic flight. (Then you get on the airline's shuttle bus which takes you to the domestic terminal.)

We were most impressed that people flying from the USA to Glasgow via London would not have to bother with their luggage again until they reached their final airport destination. (Wonder if that's changed since the events in September?)

## ***Laundry***

Automatic washing machines were amazingly slow in the UK. Many were dryers also. Jean had wondered why our hosts would suggest putting the laundry in the machine overnight, until she realised it would take half the night to do a load (but then it would come out dry). What a contrast to the fast Australian and US machines that take about 20 minutes to wash a load. (Though you then have to either hang the clothes on the line, or put them in a separate dryer, which often takes over an hour to do its job.)

## **Food and drink**

Expensive in the UK, at least for us, with a lousy exchange rate. Mostly very good eating!. In contrast to the stereotype of boring, bland, over-cooked British food, we enjoyed tasty dishes, crisp vegetables (both cooked and in salads), and good beer and wine – both eating out and at fans' homes.

When eating out, we ate a lot of steak pies (partly because they were often the cheapest thing on the menu except sometimes for fish-and-chips, partly because Jean knew they were safe for her to eat, and partly because we just like them) and we marvelled at how many variations we found. Almost all of them were yummy, too. We didn't eat Indian or Thai or other ethnic foods, which are quite popular and relatively cheap, because Jean's allergies made that too dangerous.

The wine we chose was often imported from Chile, something we don't get much at home.

## **Public toilets**

Hard to find! And in London at least, mostly you had to pay to use them, one reason (we assume) why people spend so much time in pubs. Get a drink and use the loo.

In the countryside, toilets were especially hard to find, except near major tourist attractions (most of which we avoided). Perhaps we never learned the secret, but when we asked fans, they all said to go to the pubs. Of course, you're really not supposed to just use the pubs' loos without buying something. See paragraph above.

Our search for loos was not helped by many places being closed because of the foot and mouth disease, but even so the contrast with both Australia and the USA was stark.

In the USA, people seem to use the loos at service stations a lot (while driving in the countryside), or you look in the shopping malls. In Australia, you can find well-marked public toilets in most towns; in more built-up areas, we go to the shopping malls. The exterior of public toilets in country towns (at least in Queensland) are often decorated with murals which makes them more attractive and easier to spot!

## **Tourist accommodation**

Luckily for our budget, we mostly stayed with fans, an arrangement that has other advantages of getting to know people and having a "native guide". Part of the time when we were driving around on our own, we had to stay in tourist accommodation.

We had known that B&B (bed & breakfast) places – both pub style and converted-home style – were popular in the UK, but we hadn't realised that other choices seemed rather lacking, at least in the countryside and smaller towns. We saw very few

motel-style places, and those were mostly at service areas along the major motorways. Perhaps they were there; but if so, we missed them. And of course we stayed in no city hotels.

One thing the B&B's have in common with accommodation in smaller Australian towns is the lack of a telephone in the rooms. Want to get your e-mail by dialling up a local number on your room phone and downloading to your computer? You'd better stay somewhere frequented by business travellers, presumably costing rather more than we were prepared to pay. This wasn't a problem for us since we hadn't brought a computer with us this time, but we always pay attention to the possible arrangements.

## **Friendly people – fans and others**

No real difference; we found most people in the UK to be very friendly and helpful, whether or not they were fans or in tourist-related jobs. We had many enjoyable conversations with people we met along the way, as well as with the fans.

Last year, travelling around outback Queensland, we had met several equally friendly British backpackers working as bar staff in tiny towns. Now we know they were not anomalies.

The fans we visited were great! Helpful, friendly, interesting, excellent cooks (an unexpected bonus), and with fascinating libraries to snoop through. We could easily be persuaded to inflict ourselves on them again, if we ever get the chance.

Even though we were under no obligation to do more than attend Eastercon, we had hoped to visit more fannish groups around the country. But the meetings we knew about (gleaned from following links from Dave Langford's website) always seemed to be on when we were at the opposite end of the country. So in that respect we didn't do as much fannish stuff as we wanted to.

As we mentioned in the previous chapters, quite a bit of our trip ended up being an "Old Pharts" tour, visiting fans who haven't been seen for years by most con-goers. People would ask "where are you going next?" or "Who have you seen?" and be astonished when we named names. For us, meeting the old pharts was definitely one of the high points of the trip. (Actually we had some other others on our list, but were unable to visit them for various reasons.)

## **Overall**

We're sure there is more we could say, but to sum up – we had a great time and very much appreciated all the assistance everyone gave us. We'd love to reciprocate, so we encourage UK fans to take advantage of the exchange rate and visit us in Australia. And support GUFF!

# Background of GUFF

GUFF is the **Get Up-and-over Fan Fund** or the **Going Under Fan Fund**, depending on which way you're going.

---

GUFF assists fans from Europe and Australasia to form closer links, by providing funds for well-known fans from one part of the world to attend a major science fiction convention in the other.

Formed by Leigh Edmonds and Dave Langford in 1979, on an idea by Chris Priest, GUFF was modelled on DUFF (the Down Under Fan Fund) and TAFF (the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund).

The GUFF winners are selected by popular vote amongst fans, after a nomination process. Winners are required to attend a specified convention in the host country, and become administrators until the next winner from their area takes over.

Although GUFF is often thought of as being for residents of Australian and the UK, people from other European countries and New Zealand are eligible to nominate and be candidates.

GUFF winners are expected (but not required) to travel as widely as they can in the host area, meeting as many fans as possible, but purely personal sight-seeing costs are not covered by the Fund. Winners are also expected to report on their trip in fanzines and by producing a trip report in some form.

GUFF, like the other fan funds, is supported by donations from fans. Like other administrators before us, we will be organising auctions and other fund raising, in the hope of providing a sound basis for the next GUFF trip.

Many administrators (and also some who have not been winners) continue to widely support the fan funds both before and after their period as administrator. For example, Leigh Edmonds (1979), David Langford (1979), and Rob Jackson (1981), have acted as administrator without ever winning the Fund, while Joseph Nicholas (1995-99) has acted as administrator in addition to the time called upon as a winner.

## ***Previous Administrators***

Many previous administrators have material relating to GUFF available on their web sites, or online in copies of their fanzines.

### **John Foyster, 1979**

Seacon, Brighton, Worldcon  
John has his recent fanzines available online at [efnac.virtualave.net](http://efnac.virtualave.net)

### **Joseph Nicholas, 1981**

Advention '81, Adelaide, NatCon

### **Justin Ackroyd, 1984**

Seacon 84, Brighton, British Eastercon/Eurocon

### **Eve Harvey, 1985**

Aussiecon Two, Melbourne, Worldcon

### **Irwin Hirsh, 1987**

Conspiracy '87, Brighton, Worldcon. Irwin has an extensive site on fan funds, with links to most of the trip reports, plus fan fund trivia, at [www.users.bigpond.net.au/hirsh/fanfunds.html](http://www.users.bigpond.net.au/hirsh/fanfunds.html)

### **Roelof Goudriaan, 1989**

Swancon 14, Perth, NatCon

### **Roman Orszanski, 1990**

Confiction, The Hague, Netherlands, Worldcon

### **Eva Hauser, 1992**

Syncon '92, Sydney, NatCon

### **Ian Gunn and Karen Pender-Gunn, 1995**

Intersection, Glasgow, Worldcon

### **Paul Kincaid, 1999 [Current Administrator]**

Aussiecon Three, Melbourne, Worldcon

### **Jean Weber and Eric Lindsay, 2001 [Current Administrators]**

Paragon, British Eastercon

## ***The Nominees***

### **John Foyster, 1979**

John Alderson, Eric Lindsay

### **Joseph Nicholas, 1981**

Malcolm Edwards

### **Justin Ackroyd, 1984**

Jean Weber, Roger Weddall, Shayne McCormack

### **Eve Harvey, 1985**

John Jarrold

### **Irwin Hirsh, 1987**

Valma Brown, Jean Weber

### **Roelof Goudriaan, 1989**

Linda Pickersgill

### **Roman Orszanski, 1990**

Larry Dunning, Mark Loney & Michelle Muijsert

### **Eva Hauser, 1992**

Bridget Wilkinson

### **Ian Gunn and Karen Pender-Gunn, 1995**

LynC, Kim Huett

### **Paul Kincaid, 1999**

Steve Davies, Julian Headlong

### **Jean Weber and Eric Lindsay, 2001**

Damien Warman and Juliette Woods