



*“Oh, to be in England,
In the summertime,
With my love”*

*Being, the GUFF report
Of Ian Gunn
And Karen Pender-Gunn
To the 1995 Worldcon, Interection,
In Glasgow, Scotland*



Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Introduction

This Guff Report was supposed to be very different to the way it is.

Ian had plans of putting his parts of the diary in information boxes in the text. Due to his passing, this hasn't happened (although there is one that he did below - bless him). Instead I will be placing the entries from his diary in *Italics* in the body of the text.

Ian and I looked at this trip in a different way. You can tell that from the diary entries. During this trip I became very lame in my right foot and some parts of the trip were coloured by this (temporary - I'm glad to say) disability. Ian was the strong one on this trip, carrying the bags and doing the running around when it was needed, while I rested that darn foot of mine. He was my strength for the over 10 years we spent together and I was glad we were able to share this experience together. Ian had traveled before, spending 8 months travelling the world in 1988. This was my first time on a big adventure like this.

We met some amazing people and I hope to see many of them in Australia in 1999 at Aussiecon III here in Melbourne in September. We made some very good friends who have helped me through this difficult time. We planed this trip to stay with as many fans as possible and think we did just that!

This GUFF report is dedicated to Ian Gunn. I'm sure we all miss his humour and friendship. I know I do every day.

Please be warned: I haven't changed Ian's opinions from what he wrote in his trip diary. You may be offended by what he thought of some of you. Tough, get over it. I also left in some of my impressions; double tough.

Karen Pender-Gunn (Mrs)

I wish to thank the following artists for illustrations for this report - I couldn't have done this without you : Darren Reid, Lewis Morley., Marilyn Pride, Teddy Harvia, Joe Mayhew, Phil Wlodarczyk, and of course, Ian Gunn.

Thanks also to Jan Tully and Tracey Oliphant for proof-reading.

"Oh to be in England, in the summer time, with my love..."

This sounds like a quote from somewhere else, but I know it from **The Art of Noise** album "Who's Afraid of the Art of Noise" - track Close (to the Edit)

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Friday 4th August

There's something about travelling. They say that getting there's half the fun, but there's a hell of a lot of waiting involved. You wait for your lift to the airport, you queue to check in your luggage, you wait for the boarding announcement, you line up to get to your seat, you wait to take off and then you wait to get there. Then there's waiting to deplane, customs and passport control, waiting for your luggage, waiting for the bus. I'm sure that when they get around to inventing instantaneous teleport systems, it really won't speed things up that much...

Donna Heenan picked us up about 5:00 in the morning, got us to the airport about 5:45, it was raining. Ansett flight to Sydney - I don't mind flying, it's the taking off and landing I don't like, I just can't seem to get my balance right. They served breakfast on this flight - eggs, bacon, roll and coffee. Saw a short news film. At Sydney, we had to get a bus across the tarmac to the international terminal.

Our flight from Sydney to Japan was late. Ian bought two bottles of wine and some chocolates to take with us. The sun was shining in Sydney. I got a personal organizer in Melbourne duty free - should keep me amused working out how to use it.



An hour's wait for the plane. This is such a roomy plane, in a large seat. Birthday the Bear is out of the bag and enjoying the ride. Have had lunch, which was delicious - noodles, fish and a strange sort of passionfruit blancmange thingy. Unfortunately the wine was French so I had to avoid it (The French Nuclear tests in the Pacific were at this time). Passed on the gifts and toys as well.

I'm starting to get bored and a little hungry. I don't feel like reading anymore. Ian got a pack of cards and is playing patience. We have seen the film - "Jungle Book". Ian put Birthday in my seat while I was in the loo, the hostess thought it was funny.

Well, I have to say, Japan, or should I say Narita, is not what I expected. I'm sorry to say this but this part is shabby, and full of carparks and hotels.

Back to when we landed: Leaving the airport was a bit like walking into a wall of water as it was so humid. Through a misunderstanding we ended up bringing our cases with us off the plane, which ended up being a blessing as we were able to change our clothes into something cooler. Had to catch a bus to the hotel, some very rude people pushed and shoved to be first on the bus, so we

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

caught the next one, which was almost empty.

The Hotel Nikko Narita is just the Southern Cross transplanted to Japan (The Southern Cross was a hotel in Melbourne for a long while before it was converted to flats). We only found out about various charges and taxes when we landed so our spending money is cut in half.

We went for a walk when we settled in. No shops or restaurants around the area, so we ended up buying sushi, noodles and ice cream at the 7-23 a far walk away. A very sad place is Narita, except for the signs it could be any airport in any airport town anywhere! So much for our seeing the sights.



Friday 4th August 1995. Melbourne.

The alarm went off at 4, and even the cats refused to wake up. Donna picked us up at 5. Drizzle. Typical Melbourne weather. After some confusion at check-in, we went to the duty-free. They only sold wine in 3-bottle boxes, which is over the limit for Britain; Karen got a cheap personal organizer thingy.

Waiting for the plane amid that horrible blue stripy airport carpet they have in Ansett terminals.

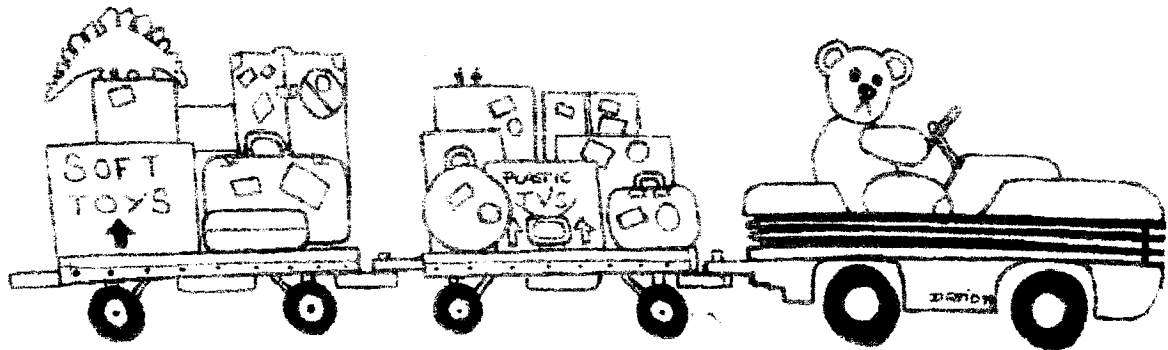
When we took off, Karen almost squeezed the circulation out of my hand. Trouble getting the volume to work on the headset. Bacon and scrambled egg for brekky. I ate the pig; Karen ate the chicken embryos. Watched the news and we were in Sydney before we knew it - though in a holding pattern.

Landed and onto the bus to the International Terminal. Interesting view of the airport with commentary from a cheery Scottish busdriver (ominous???). Got through to the terminal to find boarding had been delayed 40 minutes till 10.00 so did some duty freeing - Corella Ridge chardondy, Sheoah Spring Rhine Riesling and choc-coated macadamias. Sydney is a much bigger airport with hordes of Japanese schoolgirls running amuck. Bought some stickers from the Mambo shop and soon we were aboard. Wonderful, wide, comfortable seats! The stress of last-minute worries, deadlines and running around were over and it suddenly hit me that, yes, the trip was FINALLY beginning. An incredible feeling of euphoria washed over me - I couldn't stop grinning. Magnificent view of Sydney.

Snack was a pack of spicy nuts, rice crackers and dry fried peas, washed down with SkyTime, a curiously green kiwifruits drink. Lunch was "soba" noodles with sauce, Fillet of beef in green pepper sauce (Karen had poached Gemfish Newburg), salad and passionfruit Baravois. Proper Sony headphones instead of plastic tubes. Movie was the "Jungle Book" - watched it in Japanese.

Narita from the air was really weird. I couldn't work out why so many farms had long, wiggly fields

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*



until I realized they were all golf courses. Dozens of 'em! It's a big airport - you catch a shuttle just to get from the terminal to customs. Outside it was 28 degrees and HUMID. Waited for the hotel bus. When the bus driver saw the crowd he radioed for help. Rushy, whinging Poms barged through. We caught the second bus 5 minutes later. Nikho Narita is a huge hotel with lots of shops and not very interesting rooms. No fridge, no coffee. Asked the bell captain for a map of the area so we could go walkies. He was amazed. Narita is mainly big hotels, long term parking facilities, roads and trees. Wandered along the expressway, which had wild animal tiles on the footpath. At the Family Mart (7-23) we bought weird icecreams, dubious softdrinks, sushi (with HOT!! Horseradish) and noodles. Ate at the hotel, showers and so to bed.

Saturday 5th August

Breakfast this morning was great - all sorts of rolls, eggs, spaghetti, even chips. Couldn't guess what the Japanese types of food were so were a little reluctant to try them. We were able to check our baggage in at the hotel, so avoided the crowds at the airport. We didn't have to pay tax at breakfast so we spent the money at the hotel shops. Ian got a little set of the Seven Lucky Gods. I got a couple of keyrings and toy pull-along Japanese Airlines plane.

The New Tokyo airport is massive. Thousands of people, lots of noise and some very nice shops. I didn't set the security alarms off and this was the place I expected to with all my jewellery. Didn't look in the duty free shops.

On the plane to England and back in economy class seats. Next time I will save up and fly business class - I am way too fat to fit into economy class seats.

Okay, so I don't fit into the seats, but we were near the door and I could sit in the pull-down seat in front of us. We have had lunch - some very nice swordfish steaks in teriyaki sauce and some very nice Camembert mousse. They have the nicest rolls - very small and slightly sweet.

We will be flying over St Petersburg - Leningrad. Flying over water at the moment.

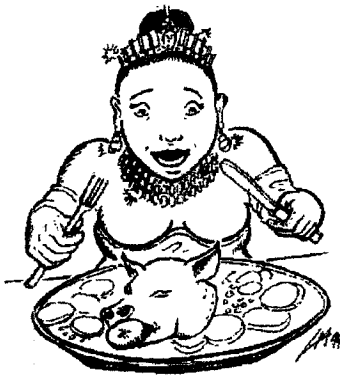
Arrived in London after another meal - ravioli - and many boring hours. Was starting to get very

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

tired. Deplaned. Ian was just able to walk through immigration control as he is on a British passport, I was stuck with many Japanese, a lot of who had some sort of problem with their passports.

Finally got out, got train tickets and phone card, then on our way. Two very rude Swiss girls on the train - it just gives tourists a bad name. When we got to Seven Sisters we didn't realise there were two exits and picked the wrong one to come out of. Judith and Joseph walked down to meet us.

It's very hot in London.



Saturday, 5th August

Musak alarm went off early, we packed and went down to dine. The place looks better in daylight. Brekky was ham, sausage, CHIPS, toast, etc. JAL had a check-in desk at the hotel that was very handy; we had our suitcases with us due to a few shermozzles the day before. Bought souvenirs, strolled gardens, bus to airport - it's HUGE - looked at the shops and worked out how to pay departure tax and waited for boarding. Had terrible seats next to the door, which proves that the nice roomy seats we had yesterday were Executive Class. We'll HAVE to upgrade on the way back or we'll drive each other MAD. Lovely teriyaki swordfish for lunch. Films were "A Long Way from Home" (boy lost in bush with dog) and "Before Sunrise" (two tourists meet in Vienna). Karen was bored. Mad Japanese woman in the next row playing with constantly with her baby. When we landed I shot through "UK and EC Passports" while Karen was delayed behind hordes of Japanese with dodgy visas. I got the luggage, answered a questionnaire, and waited. We went through a completely empty "nothing to declare" hall. Phonocard and Underground pass, caught the tube with two raucous Swiss girls. Came out the wrong exit at Seven Sisters. Eventually Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas arrived and took us home. Lovely neat terrace house, white, light, with a veggie garden. Joseph is an extremely fastidious bloke. Judith called him "Attila the Tidy". Seafood pasta salad, yakking and so to futon at about 11 pm.

Sunday 6th August

About 8:00 at night and still light and still hot. Have spent the day playing tourist and my feet hurt. We started off late after a very restless night for me. Got our weekly travel passes and headed off to Victoria station. Took a bus trip in an open-topped double decker bus. Saw the sights - the horse guards, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, etc. Got a bite to eat and went back to Speaker's Corner, where the loonies all come out on a Sunday to stand on boxes and say their piece. They mostly seemed to be religious nuts this day. Jumped back on the bus but got caught in the traffic after Bosnian protest.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Things you see a lot of in London

Tourists
Beggars
Stairs
Rubbish
Unusual dress
Tourist traps

Things you don't see much of in London

Rubbish bins
Places to sit
Wheelchair access
Baseball hats
Vending machines
Cold drinks

Impressions : London is a dirty place, people dump litter wherever they like (Found out afterwards this was because they had removed the litterbins due to IRA bombings). The people we have met so far have mainly been tourists - speaking French, Italian and German.

We went to the Museum of London this afternoon. We got in free as it was after 4:30. Very impressive place if not the most interesting. Well thought out displays showing London throughout history. We then caught the train back to Oxford Street and took a walk. Gave Tracey Oliphant a call, she didn't realise we were in London yet. Found an American style cafe and had coffee and enormous sundaes. Walked up to Marble Arch station and caught the train, went the wrong way to start with. Back to Seven Sisters about 10:00.

Sunday 6th August : I am writing this on the tube. Omlette for breakfast cooked by Joseph then a guided tour of Tottenham. Bought weekly tube passed and boarded the bouncy train. Got an open-topped scenic bus tour all over town then went back to Hyde Park to see the loonies, eat chicken baps and fend off wasps. Then off to the Museum of London, but a Bosnia demo held up traffic so we caught the tube. Great museum - chronological history of London. We got in for free cos we arrived late. When it closed we headed to Oxford Street, where we traipsed around looking at closed shops. Had an enormous and expensive strawberry sundae. Back to Seven Sisters - sitting talking to Judith on the kitchen floor so as not to disturb Joseph's TV watching.

Monday 7th August

We waited until Joseph had gone to work before getting up. Had breakfast with Judith. Did some washing. Caught the train into Oxford St. Tried to upgrade our plane tickets but no go as they are a special deal. Ian cashed a couple of traveller's cheques. Came into Selfridges and went to the toy department. Not much different from a toy section in department stores in Australia, except for the case of Stieff and Herman bears. Ian let me buy a Dean's special edition bear - a black one. Went into Marks and Spencer but they don't stock fat ladies clothes so we didn't stay long. Had a bite of lunch back in Selfridges. Then made our way, via the tube, to Goode Street where we chanced upon Pollock's Toy Museum, in a three storey terrace house with very narrow staircases. They had some wartime teddies. After this went across the road to the Cyberia Cafe which had loud music and very dirty keyboards. Sent a couple of email messages (which never got through). Decided to wait before catching the train back to Seven Sisters as we had hit the start of the rush hour and I didn't relish standing all the way on the train.

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Monday 7th August

Waited till Joseph went to work then breakkied with Judith. Into Oxford St, Selfridges, Marks and Spencers, Mothercare, traipsing around looking in shops. Lunch in Selfridge's cafeteria with Giles cartoons on the walls. The Pollock's Toy Museum and CYBERIA café - very noisy and grubby, emailed a loc to Thyme. Walked along busy Tottenham Court Road. Traffic noise really stressing me - I was getting a headache and becoming bewildered. Karen got cross, but led me to a fairly quiet café rather than face the horrors of the tube at rush hour. We've gone through 80 pound today including meals and a collector's bear for Karen. Back to Seven Sisters, scrummy dinner, TV docos and Outer Limits.

Beggars : Judith and Joseph warned us that the beggars on Seven Sisters station were not as honest as they could be. We soon noticed that the same women had different children with her each time we went past. There was rumored to be a big beggar's ring operating on the station where the Trans Channel train left. On one train trip to somewhere, we could see an open area beside the tracks, which was completely lined with cardboard shacks. It was odd to us to see, as we don't really have the same sorts of things in Australia.

Tuesday 8th August

Made it home for tea last night, met Joseph coming home from the station. Slept longer but still not enough.

Have been to the British Museum today - a very impressive place taking into account that they plundered the rest of the world to get the collection. The Egyptian collection is massive with over a dozen mummies. Downstairs - yes, lots of stairs - there are pieces of a temple with huge stone heads and such. The Rosetta

Stone isn't impressive, just a piece of black stone with writing on it, but when you think about the probability of finding a broken piece of black basalt and it being the largest contribution to Egyptian archaeology, that is impressive. Had a spot of lunch at the cafe over the road. Then decided to walk to Trafalgar Square, which was quite a way we discovered. Fed the pigeons. Had tea in some place that had nice salads and horrible everything else. Then we took a walk down The Mall to Buckingham Palace, which is quite an ugly structure but with a nice statue of Queen Victoria with a gold angel on top. The Queen wasn't in. Walked back to Green Park and caught the train back to Seven Sisters.

Tuesday, 8th August

Got some stamps for postcards, tossed a coin to the woman on the stairs at the station and off to Russell Street, my old stomping ground. Went all over the British Museum - Elgin Marbles, Rosetta Stone. Went into the British Library with the original manuscripts of "Alice's Adventures Underground", one of the Magna Carta's and "Kubla Khan". There was a security alert while we were looking at the Chinese snuffboxes. Lunch was in Cleopatra's Café, then to Russell Square to write cards, but then I realised I had lost my stamp wallet. How stupid! Walked around, went to Trafalgar Square and had an awful meal at Garfunkel's - they don't know how to cook hamburgers here. Strolled along the Mall, took a photo of Captain Cook and Admiralty Arch, watched squirrels in St James Park and saw Buckingham Palace but the Queen wasn't home so we cut through Green Park to the tube and back to watch Burke and Wills till late.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Travel tip: You will always spend more money than you think you will. Don't miss that great bargain just because you think you will see better - buy things when you see them!

Wednesday 9th August

Well, this has certainly been a busy day. Out late again - it's having to wait for Judith and Joseph to leave. Posted some birthday cards home to Australia. Today we headed off to the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood. Went to the bank first and Ian cashed some traveler's cheques. We have overspent our budget so we will have to be careful for a couple of days. Found a post office and posted off our Saturday night dinner money for Portmericon. Bought some filled rolls and fruit and ate lunch in the actual Bethnal Green. It was very quiet. Walked up to the museum, I didn't realise it was part of the Victoria and Albert.

The museum is three stories tall and looks like an old warehouse. It was strange in that it wasn't crowded with hordes of tourists, must be off the beaten track. First floor is the café, shop and some magnificent dollhouses. Next floor dolls, puppets, games, toy soldiers, some teddies, models and trains. The top floor was being done up so is only half full. Had a cup of coffee in the café.

Went to meet Tracey at Piccadilly Square, Karen Mitchell turned up too. It was so nice to see them both. We had a meal in a cheap place then walked around the West End; my poor feet just ached and ached. Stopped and had a coffee and talked and watched the people and the world go by. Back to Seven Sisters about 11:00.

Wednesday, 9th August

Tube to Bethnal Green, cashed some traveller's cheques (carried this time by Karen, much more comfy for me). We bought rolls and plums and bananas and ate in the park. Got various stationary in Woolworth's, including an "Absolutely Fabulous" pencil tin. Off to the Museum of Childhood, amazing collection with dozens of dollhouses, old toys, coin-in-the-slot Albert and the Lion, What Little Girls are Made of, and Singing Sheep. After coffee and a gingerbread man we traveled to Piccadilly Circus, so many tourists. The Trocadero was packed. Roamed and Karen found the English Teddy Bear Co. and bought a backpack. Tracey Oliphant and Karen Mitchell met us at the Eros fountain - good to see them after so many years. Tracey took us to the cheapest restaurant in London - The Stockpot. Then a walking tour through Leicester Square where a dirty drunk tried to kiss all the girls. We hastily left, strolled through streets lined with bookshops, soaked up the evening atmosphere at Covent Garden, saw part of a Punch and Judy show, wandered around narrow-cobbled lanes and had big cheap cappachios at Pret A Manger. Chatted on all topics until it got too cold, and caught the tube home. House in darkness, so to bed.

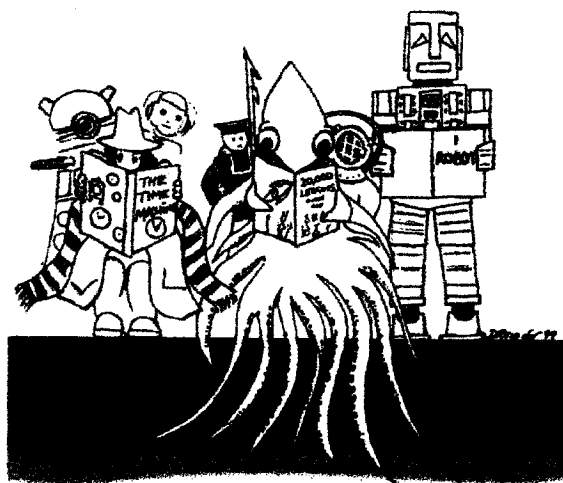
1998 Note - Those of you who know me personally would know I am a just a little obsessed with the Crystal Palace and I have probably bored you about it. I didn't quite realise when we went to the Crystal Palace site what I was seeing and I regret not taking more photos and measurements as when I returned I have thought seriously about writing a book. It would be a great shame if the site was developed into a cinema and car park as is planned. A damn shame.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Thursday 10th August

Very slow getting started this morning, my feet are so sore. (Note: during this trip to the UK I was suffering from trouble with a spur on my right foot which caused a lot of pain). Today we went out to Crystal Palace. Got to go on the British Rail system, as opposed to the Underground, so got to see buildings and trees at last from the train.

The Crystal Palace park is not well signposted so we wandered around a bit until we found the dinosaurs. Great hulking brutes they are, out on an island. So strange to see what people thought they looked like. Wandered around the park and had an ice cream.



Then we stumbled onto the foundations of the Palace itself - what a real thrill. There was an enormous set of marble steps, leading up to a grass field, maybe 100 yards wide. Behind was a colonnade with more marble steps leading up to it. Behind this were two more sets of stairs with a sphinx on either side. Only a couple of statues are left on the colonnade. The ruins stretched across my field of vision. I could almost picture the glass roof stretching overhead. The statues were made of concrete and had metal rods sticking out of the pieces left. It must have been a truly magnificent building. I was just 60 years too late to see it as

it burnt down in the 1930's.

Came back into town, stopped at Leicester Square and went to the BBC shop. Walked back through Covent Garden, too many people doing stupid things there. Did drop in at a Hamley's outlet. Crowded train coming back to Seven Sisters. Stopped off at Tesco's to check out the weird and strange food products (at least to us) and buy some cordial.

Thursday 10th August

A hot day. Rang Aunty Lilly (Aunty Doris answered) as well as John Dallman's answering machine. Tube to Victoria where we caught a British Rail train to Crystal Palace. The whole park was a swarm with kids but at first we couldn't find any signposts. Eventually we discovered the Prehistoric Monsters - concrete dinosaurs nearly 150 years old but in pretty good condition. Lots of ducks, geese, crows and hawks. We wandered up to the ruins of the Crystal Palace itself - must have been an incredible place in its day. Bits of statuary still remain. Train back to BBC shop at Bush House - bought Wallace and Grommit fridge magnets and some cards to auction for GUFF. Wandered around Covent Garden, Karen had an anxiety attack so we had a cool drink in a quiet café; the heat and crowds were too much. Back on rush hour tube, picked up a few things at Tesco's. Joseph arrived home and was being pedantic, going on how we'd put the futon-couch six inches away from the wall. Over dinner he calmed down and he was quite human, almost jolly.

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Friday 11th August 1995

I'm in the Natural History Museum at the moment, which is a huge gothic style building in South Kensington. Ian has just gone off to get us some afternoon tea.

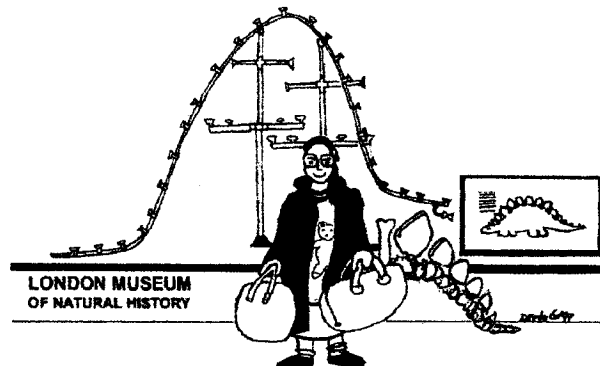
Karen on Stairs : well, yes, I do have difficulty getting up stairs, and London is not designed for the disabled in many ways. All the tube stations had escalators, but were approached by stairs. Most of the B&B's were two-three story buildings and we were usually on the top floor. Maybe in previous times the disabled just stayed at home.

Started off this morning after a train ride to South Kensington, at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The building is a rambling mess with bits cut off with plastic wrap and boards. The jewellery section has some magnificent stuff but as access is by a narrow turnstile, no-one that is disabled is going to get a look at it. The collection seems eclectic with a range from religious icons to a copy of William Gibson's *Agrippa*. It was just too much to take in at one time. After a couple of hours we wandered across the road to the Natural History Museum. In the grounds is a large wire cage with a stegosaur model inside. There is an enormous entrance hall with a huge model dinosaur in it. First place we went was the dinosaur gallery. Lots of interactive screens and models. Bought a couple of dinosaur-related bits and pieces. After quite a few hours at the museum, taking in birds and ecology and such, we walked down to Knightsbridge to see the Albert Memorial (He has a copy of the 1851 Exhibition Catalogue

in his hand) but it was covered in scaffolding. Had a short rest in Hyde Park then walked down to Harrods, which had just shut. Feeling very tired and footsore so was glad to get back to lodgings.

Friday 11th August

Two museums in one day - the Victoria and Albert was large, rambling and with several areas blocked off for rebuilding. I was sneered at when I didn't offer the full "suggested donation" of 4 pound 50 pence a head. An enormous collection of bits and pieces from around the world. My favourites were the intricately carved Japanese decorations for personal carry boxes. Two rooms were full of enormous plaster casts of famous statues. I liked the 20th century design section, which included software, a tinkertoy and William Gibson's "Agrippa". The jewelry room was under strict security. We then went to the Natural History museum - beautiful, airy, light neo-gothic thing. The dinosaurs were great - lots of toys for Karen and a slide "camera" viewer for me. Creepy crawlies, an enormous whale, a strange elephant ancestor, meteorites from Cranbourne (a small town here in Victoria), all sorts of things. We climbed the hill to Hyde Park but the Albert Memorial was covered in scaffolding so we lay on the dry, drought-stricken grass then ambled down Knightsbridge towards Harrods. It closed at 7. Back to J&J's for chat, cheese, bread and Monty Python.



Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Saturday 12th August

Slept in, went shopping for party food at Tesco's then just lazed around writing postcards. Then the party started. Lots of friendly fans. Dave Langford proved to be a tall, amiable Bruce Gillespie type, Avedon Carol a looming American, M.J. "Simo" Simpson more bouncy than I remembered him; a real comedian. Bridgette Hardcastle turned up in a "Rocky Horror" T-shirt with yummy Surprise™ chocolate, Bridgette Wilkinson all serious. Chrisitna Lake with a big, toothy grin handing out music zines, John and Eva Harvey an affable, slightly-older-than-the-rest couple, Tracey Oliphant and Karen Mitchell a little out of their depth. Pam Wells cuddly like Miss Jane Tisell at her best. Martin "Bloody" Smith from Croydon was a very funny drunk, as was Joseph Nicholas who eventually fell asleep in a chair with a sign "I died in the war for people like you: Please give generously". Surprise guests were Benoit and Giselle Girard from Quebec, Ben in an Ian Gunn "Frozen Frog" T-shirt. Abi Frost proved camera shy. Mike Abbot was a tall, wild-haired bespectacled guy. I really felt comfortable among Britfans - I felt like I'd know some of them for years. The party was great fun. Jokes flew. Joseph was doing the dishes when his eyes suddenly glazed. Calmly he finished drying the glass in his hand, neatly hung the scrubbing brush, slowly wiped his hands, walked steadily towards the toilet and yodeled loudly.

The party viewed through the mists of time: for some reason I have no diary entry of the party on the day it occurred. Ian was the party animal and enjoyed talking and being the centre of attention. Parties bring me into myself and I get very shy. I now wish I had spoken to more fans at party, but I was just too darn shy!

Sunday 13th August

Sitting in the "Deep Pan" pizza bar in Cambridge, we are getting two meals for the price of one.

Well, yesterday was the GUFF party at Judith and Joseph's house. Slept in yesterday, then went shopping at Tesco's - so many foods that we don't have and I would like to take back. The party was good - met some nice people and Karen and Tracey turned up. Joseph got drunk and fell asleep. Finally got to meet Canadian fan, Benoit Girard. Some people slept over, including Pam Wells and Simo. This morning packed our cases and went off to have Dim-sum (Yum cha) lunch with other fans in London. Firstly had to put our cases in the left-luggage lockers at Kings Cross station, Michael Ford kindly donated the cost of this - 5 pounds - which seems a bit steep to me. Met up with John Dallman at Leicester Square. By the time lunchtime came around I was getting a bad stomachache. After a very nice meal, it was much worse. Stopped at Chinatown to buy a fan. We stopped at a pub for a drink. By this time the pain was coming in waves and the painkillers weren't helping at all. We didn't stay long, as I wanted to walk to try and relieve the pain. Got back to Kings Cross and collected our cases and got the train to Cambridge. Trip took about an hour and was very pleasant. Countryside was very brown, strangely contrasted with the green trees. Staying with Michael Abbot in Cambridge, his flat is on the second floor. Dropped our bags and went for a walk. Cambridge is a town of bicycles - they are everywhere. The streets are reasonably narrow with tall houses on either side, with turrets and spires.

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*



Sunday 13th September

Slept in a little. Breakfasted on leftover chocolate, helped tidy up a little then packed. Pam, Martin Bloody Smith, Simo and Mike Ford took us to the station, then to King's Cross (we couldn't have got there otherwise). Mike showed us how to use the hi-tech luggage locker and shouted us the 5 pound fee (we owe him a drink). Then off to Leicester

Square Chinatown for DumSum at the New World restaurant. Alan Harris, Martin Bloody Smith, Simo, Pam Wells, Donya White and Allen Baum and us ate there. John Dalman left for food he could identify. Yummy meal. Showed off some Aussie plasticash and Fannish Diary to much enthusiasm. Found a pub with strict rules, much at John Dallman's irritation - he seems unsure of himself in alien situations. Karen was worn out and had a guts ache so we returned to King's Cross, retrieved the luggage and caught the first train to Cambridge. Uncomfortable seats and dusty windows, it zipped through dry, yellow fields.

At Cambridge, we dragged our cases over an amazing suspension bridge to Mike Abbot's flat, which was much more fannishly messy than J&J's. Walked around beautiful Cambridge till dusk then had a slap-up feast at Pizzaland (where the half-price vouchers helped) and where the meringue sundaes are Sugar City. Back to the flat. Mike turned up and we sat around till midnight chatting and eating chocolate. Much softer bed.

Monday 14th August

Slept in this morning, the bed was so much better than the futon. Up about 10:00. Went on the Cambridge Tour - open topped double decker bus for only 6 pounds 50 p. - cheaper than the one in London. Met Michael at lunchtime and he took us into Trinity College, the richest of the colleges. It has a library designed by Wren and contains the original manuscript of Winnie the Pooh. Beautiful place started during the reign of Henry the Eighth. Saw people punting on the river and saw someone lose his pole. Went into the Mitre (pub) for a ploughman's lunch. Jumped back on the bus and went round the rest of the circuit out to the American Cemetery, past more colleges and back into town. Did some shopping, Ian got some rubber stamps. I had a good look through Boots - I love a good chemist. Got back on the bus and went back to the train station. Sat at Michael's reading Ramna 1/2 and Tank Girl comics. Walked into Cambridge with Michael and had dinner at Tatties (a potato restaurant if you were wondering) with Rhodri James, who also lives in Cambridge. Both Michael and Rhodri are computer programmers. Back to Michael's for coffee. The meal was lovely - potato with cheese, tuna and egg mayonnaise.

Travel tip : Any restaurant in a tourist centre does not have to rely on repeat customers. The quality of the transport café food was good when we were there. It was on the train station at Cambridge that we discovered Chicken Tikka sandwiches.

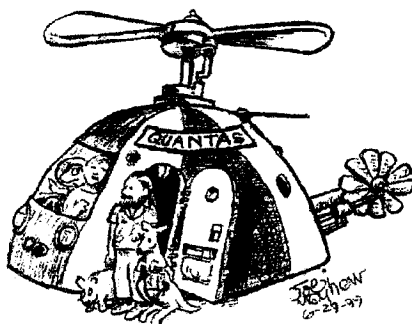
Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Monday 14th August

Slept in and didn't hear Mike's morning ablutions. Off to the station for brunch, travel enquires and B&B bookings. We caught another double-decker bus tour around Cambridge. A fine beautiful, old city. At lunchtime, Mike got us in free to his old college, home of such famous folk as A.A. Milne, Sir Issac Newton and Dan Dare. Henry VIII founded Trinity but his statue over the gate does not hold a septre, but a chair leg. Student pranksters exchanged it so often, the college simply gave up and left it. When someone changed the chairleg for a bicycle pump, they were made to put the chairleg back. Saw the Wren Library, the college square and punting on the river. We shared a large ploughman's lunch (but the ploughman didn't mind) in an old pub called the Mitre which had documents dating from 1669 plastered into the wall. "A Truce with Thirst and Hunger" continued our bus journey. On the way to the American Military Cemetery, the wind was so strong that Karen had to hold her ear rings down.

That night, we strolled back into town and Rhodri James at Tatties potato restaurant. I had the Baked Beans, cheese and sausage, plus the most enormous banana split I have ever seen. Mike shouted us, what a guy! On the way back I bought a "NOT" 1983 calendar for 15p. We sat around eating Terry's Chocolate Orange until late, gossiping about fandom and such.

Tuesday 15th August



Managed to get up earlier this morning, as we have to catch the train to Shrewsberry via Birmingham. Had a good long chat with Michael Abbot so he was probably late to work. Had a very awkward bathshower. Packed our cases and walked down to the station.

The train is two carriages with double seats with a table between. The countryside is very flat; it's all reclaimed fens (a sort of bog or marsh). The train is very clean. It was very hot when we changed trains at Birmingham and lot more stairs to climb. This time the train was a little more crowded but we only had to go three stops.

I wanted to go to Shrewsberry as I am a big fan of the Ellis Peters Cadfael books. It represents England as I see it in my mind and as influenced by years to TV and books.

Shrewsberry is very hilly. Well, that's really an understatement. It's all hills. I should have realised that from the maps in the Cadfael books, my research was a little slack in this regard. Got very hot and bothered pulling the cases up and down hills. If we had been thinking clearly we would have taken a taxi. Ian had to ring the Bed and Breakfast we had booked into as we couldn't find the place. It was across the loop in the river, across the bridge on the east of the town, out towards St Giles way for those who have read Cadfael. The B&B was delightful and we have a nice room with a washbasin in the corner, up on the first floor. We asked the lady owner where we could do some washing and she took pity on us as we didn't have a car and it was back up the hills so she did our washing for us. We watched the Final episode of season 2 Babylon 5, so we found out about Kosh before a lot of fans in Australia. Interesting but not a real cliffhanger.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Have been out for a walk to spy out the lay of the land. It was so hot we found it was better to get to a place where we were staying and have a scout around in the evenings when it was cooler. It's nice walking around at night when the crowds have died down. Got to see the Abbey of St Peter and St Paul, it was actually just across the road from the B&B, gave it hug. Also saw St Winifred Convent. Now eating tea at the Deep Pan Pizza Co, a sort of chain with shops around England.

Tuesday 15th August

Awoke and continued talking to Mr Abbot on all sorts of subjects - climate, geology, privatization - eventually we said he really should get to work. Plastic spacemanned his flat and got aboard the Birmingham train. Changed to the Shrewsbury train among numerous E and F demographic persons. I had to change sides when seats became available - it was too hot. Booking of tickets and getting of info at the station, then much struggling through hot streets to find Glynndeene B&B. People

From a pamphlet: "Welcome to the Abbey of St Peter and St Paul in the Parish of the Holy Cross Shrewsbury within the Diocese of Lichfield : The Benedictine Abbey was founded in 1083 by Roger de Montgomery and was built on the site of a wooden Saxon church. The rule of St Benedict was followed by the community of monks for 457 years with the church at the centre of a daily round of prayer, study and manual work. From a very early date local people have been allowed to worship at the altar of the Holy Cross in the nave and following the Dissolution of the monastery in 1540 the nave was left as a parish church"

got in the way of our suitcases. We got lost. Eventually found the place. Soft bed. Clean. Laura Ashley décor, friendly proprietor Chris (and her ancient dog, Reagan) offered to do our laundry. Watched the second season finale of Babylon 5. Walked around Shrewsbury, beautiful old architecture, and lots of half-timbered Tudor buildings. Ate too much at Deep Pan Pizza.

Wednesday 16th August

It's been a lovely day today. Up at 7:00 this morning after a slightly disturbed night's sleep, just not used to sleeping in a double bed. Down to an enormous cooked breakfast egg, sausage, bacon, baked beans, tomato and

fried bread. It's very easy to get used to having breakfast cooked for us, usually I don't eat breakfast but if someone else cooks it for me I have no trouble eating it.

First thing today was across the road to the Abbey Church, formerly of St Peter and St Paul. What a beautiful place. You can still see some of the original church and where the transepts (the rooms out to the side which form the cross shape of the building) were. A lot of the work on the church was done in the 19th century and they want to now do a lot more work on the building. There are guides around to tell you more about the building and reconstruction. The original chapter house pulpit is in a fenced off area across the road in what is now a car park.

After a good look around the Abbey, it was across the road to the Shrewsbury Quest ; a totally tourist orientated place, designed around the Cadfael series. It was only £3.75 to get in and it was good for a tourist place. We had to solve a puzzle with clues left around the area. Actors were wandering around dressed in costume. There was a sleeping room, eating hall, gatehouse, a Cadfael

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

style workroom and an herb garden. On the first floor of a small building there was a scriptorium where we could do some brass rubbing, some stamping and colouring in, it was fun. Had some lunch in the nice café. Also got some nice souvenirs.

We then walked into town, stopping to do a bit of shopping and have a drink at a pub. Walked up to Shrewsbury Castle. This has the most excellent military museum; they had a vast array of items. Got some pictures from Laura's Tower, across the way from the castle it's supposed to be where the original castle was. Walked around the riverbank to get back to the B&B, it was much further than we thought and we were very, very tired when we got back.

Tea was kebabs, eaten down by the river in the Abbey gardens. Walked back past the B&B and found Mad O'Rourke's pub and I had some very nice chocolate cake. Going to try and get to bed early.

Wednesday 16th August

Enormous fried breakfast. Toured what's left of the old Abbey - such history! Cashed several traveller's cheques, then on the the Shrewsbury Quest. A good recreation of the old Monastery, with clues of a Brother Cadfael adventure. Karen couldn't handle being talked to by the costumed monks who stayed in character. The place even had a scriptorium where you could do your own brass rubbings and illuminated manuscripts. Also an extensive herb garden. We had a late morning coffee and cake in the refectory, then wandered through town, buying tacky toys at Pound-Stretchers and cold drinks at a pub. Via toyshops to the Castle. Climbed the tower for a good view of Shrewsbury. Saw the Shropshire Regimental Museum then we followed the river around to the B&B (long walk). Then kebabs on the riverbank, feeding ducks and bought Karen a chocolate cake at the Dun Cow Pie Shop (really a pub owned by Mad O'Rourke).

Thursday 17th August

In Porthmadog tonight, having a drink of lemonade in the little pub that is on the railway line.

After another big English breakfast this morning, and a chat with the landlady Chris, we staggered off up the hill with our cases to the train station. The train was separated at some strange Welsh station and our carriage and another continued up the coast. It's holiday season and groups of people on the stations along the beach joined and left the train, some with kids, some with dogs and a couple of mad old baggages thrown in for good measure. The train smelt of sand and suntan lotion. As has been the case this entire trip, it was very hot and the train was crowded.

At the station, Ian went off to find Mrs Jones B&B (recommended to us by Tim Richards and Narrelle Harris), then came back to collect me. The room is a little overdone with a padded bedhead and drawers on the bedside cabinet.

Went for a walk into the shopping centre, which was packed with tourists. Lots of shops filled with beach balls and blowup toys. Bought a little dragon for our Ghod-daughter Jessica Tilley (and one for myself). Had cod and chips for tea. Feeling very tired.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Thursday 17th August

Another hearty breakfast and after a long chat with Chris, we slowly wended stationward. A crowded train full of holidaymakers, daft old biddies with flip-up sunglasses, screaming kids and a bloke with a scythe. Oh, and three people brought their dogs. We went past a series of seaside resorts, caravan parks, fat-tailed sheep, drystone walls in various states of repair, horses and cows. Porthmadog was a bit confusing at first, as there didn't seem to any street signs. Finally found Mrs Jones' B&B, then walked the High Street, buying souvenirs, ate deep fried cod'n'chips/chock'n'chips, brought some fruits and a drink at the station pub. Back to the B&B to watch telly. The room was decorated in the Kitsch style, working on the theory that it's best to get as much furniture in the room as possible, and to hell with whether it matches. I thought the finishing touch was the 3-D picture of the Last Supper with the hand-lettered piece of cardboard that read "No Cheques Please". Karen made a funny: "No Cheques Please, we're British".

Friday 18th August

DIM YSM YGU = No smoking (in Welsh)

Had a restless night. Very hot and a bit noisy outside. Chatted to an American couple over breakfast, the usual cooked English (OK, Welsh) breakfast. Then off to do some washing at the Laundromat, they are such soulless places with never enough seats. Walked up to the shops again, got some Welsh cakes, had an ice cream and caught the bus to Porteirion. There are only 4 buses a day and first one isn't till 11:00 o'clock.

Approaching the village is different to what I imagined; it was trees with a little gatehouse, which leads into the top of the Village. Having our badges for the convention, we got a bit off the entry price.

The Village is a lot smaller than I ever imagined but a very pretty place with a lovely mix of styles and architecture. You can picture the camera angles they must have used during the filming of "The Prisoner" to make the area look bigger. Lots and lots of stairs. Walked down to the waterfront, and saw the boat. Some places are blocked off as people were staying in the buildings. Birthday in his Prisoner inspired suit was hit, with one lady saying she would copy the idea. The buildings look mostly Mediterranean or European with bits of statues here and there. There is a Buddha in a little alcove. The "Six of One" people are starting to set up. There are some activities tonight.

Adventures in plumbing. In general, here in Australia, you can turn on the shower and lots of lovely hot water streams out of the showerhead. We found it a little different in England. Mainly the showers were over the bath and in some cases, like at Ian's aunt's house, was a rubber hose sort of arrangement. In the B&B in Wales, firstly, you turned on a switch, then you adjusted a knob for water cold, warm or hot, then further adjustment was with a knob that was turned (the water was cold anyway). At the B&B in Oxford, there was a knob that was designed to be turned to get the desired water temperature and pressure (the water was cold). At the B&B in York, it was delightful to have a real shower stall with a good pressure of water. I suppose we are iust spoilt out here.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

From the flyer: "Portmerion was built by architect Sir Clough William Ellis from 1925 to 1972. It had always been his dream to build his own private village on some romantic shore. He wanted to demonstrate that it was possible to develop a naturally beautiful site without defiling it. Portmerion was given listed buildings status in 1973. Sir Clough died in 1978 at the age of 95."

Friday 18th August

Another bowl of quivering cholesterol chatted with an American couple who were hitching their way back from Ireland to Amsterdam to catch their stand-by flight. Found the launderette, washed our smalls then waited ages, and several coins, for the tumble drier to dry it.

Waited in the hot sun for the bus outside the Australia Inn to go to Portmeirion, only 4 buses a day and only three passengers: an American Prisoner Fan and us.

What a wonderful village! Little details everywhere. Met up with Danny Heap, Beky Tully and Sharon Mosley and a English/Welsh women called Jo. A long opening ceremony in the evening with much incoherent ramblings, technical hitches and a silly video. It was cooler outside and the Village looked lovely at night. The Trio gave us a lift back to the B&B and we went to a late night supermarket and a busy chippie where a boy in an Aussie T-shirt sold us some god-awful deep-fried chicken and veggie burgers.

Saturday 19th August

Portmeirion. Another big cooked breakfast, met the other people staying in the B&B who are also going to the convention. Picked up by Sharon Mosley, Beky Tully and Danny Heap who have hired a car, to go to the convention Portmeirion: The Prisoner convention. We were in time to see the Election Parade from the series but couldn't hear much as the speaker system wasn't too good. Sat down on the lawn to watch the boxing match and chess game, must have been all very strange to the tourist that were just visiting the area. Ate cheese sandwiches that we had brought with us, we bought the fixings last night when we got the horrible hamburgers. Watched some Prisoner related videos and slides in the very hot Hercules Hall.

Dinner was in a pub outside Porthmadog in the hills. Reasonably small meal and we couldn't get into the room to hear the speeches. On to the Colosseum cinema in Porthmadog to see the big screen versions of *The General* and *Checkmate*. Very good to see them on the big screen and it made the chess game we had seen that afternoon makes sense. Back to the B&B after midnight.

Saturday 19th August

The Trio picked us up and we were returned to the Village. Just a few random thoughts: the Prisoner club does well because of this terrific base. They tend towards reenactments - saw the election parade, the boxing match and the chess game, complete with Rover. Wandered through the woods, saw various video snippets from different translations of the series.

In the evening, we went to a caravan park pub for a meal, then to the Colliseum for the episodes

FISSION FRYDAY

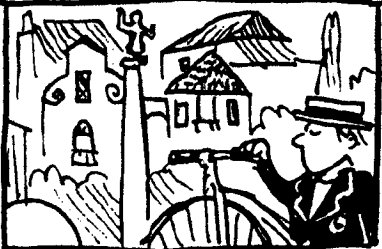
FRIDAY 18TH
AUGUST 1995

~ a true story ~

by *Ian Gunn* 297

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

PORTMEIRION, WALES:
FIRST DAY OF 'THE PRISONER' CONVENTION. WE HAD A MARVELLOUS TIME ENJOYING THE WEIRD ARCHITECTURE AND THE SPECTACLE OF FANS AT PLAY...



DANNY, BEKY AND SHARON GAVE US A LIFT BACK TO OUR BED + BREAKFAST, BUT WE DECIDED TO OPT FOR A LATE NIGHT SNACK. A LOCAL CHIP SHOP WAS DOING A ROARING TRADE. WE CRAVED SOMETHING SLIGHTLY HEALTHY SO WE ORDERED A CHICKEN BURGER AND A VEGGIE BURGER.

MENU
(IN WELSH AND ENGLISH)



THE BOY BEHIND THE COUNTER - WHO WAS WEARING AN AUSTRALIAN T-SHIRT (WE DIDN'T ASK) - THEN PROCEEDED TO REMOVE TWO HOCKEY PUCKS FROM THE FREEZER AND DEEP-FRY THEM.



THE RESULT WAS TWO VERY GREASY BLOBS IN BUNS WITH NO ADDITIONAL TRIMMING. WE FOUND A PARK BENCH ON AN EMPTY LOT - IN THE DARK - AND BEGAN OUR TASTY REPAST...

YOU KNOW, I THINK I CAN SAY WITHOUT CONTRADICTION, THAT THIS IS THE SECOND WORST HAMBURGER I'VE EVER HAD.



I TOLD HER THE TALE OF A TAKEAWAY IN TOORADIN, A SMALL COASTAL TOWN IN VICTORIA. I STOPPED FOR A HAMBURGER. AFTER A LONG WAIT A FEMALE TROLL EMERGED FROM THE BACK ROOM.

YES!?! ER... CAN I HAVE A CHEESEBURGER, PLEASE. WE DON'T DO CHEESEBURGERS. OH.

BUT OUR HAMBURGERS ALL HAVE CHEESE ON 'EM.



SHE FIXED ME WITH HER GOOD EYE AND SNAPPED: I'LL HAVE TO LIGHT THE GRILL.

I CONCURRED THAT THIS WOULD BE THE BEST PROCEDURE AND WAITED. AND WAITED. OTHER CUSTOMERS ENTERED THE SHOP, WAITED, GOT SICK OF WAITING AND LEFT.



AFTER A FEW BRIEF EPOCHS MY HAMBURGER ARRIVED. IT WAS QUITE REMARKABLE.



YUMMO!
PIÈCE DE RÉSTANCE! CARROT!! NOT GRATED CARROT, OH, NO. TOUGH CHUNKS OF HARD, WOODY, OLD MAN BEEN-IN-THE-GROUND-TWO-YEARS CARROT (WITH ROOTS!)
THE NEXT TIME I PASSED, THE SHOP HAD BECOME A CHINESE RESTAURANT

HA! HA! HA! I CAN'T EAT THIS. HA! HA!

IT IS PRETTY BAD... NO, YOU BASTARD. YOU MADE ME LAUGH SO MUCH MY SIDES HURT.

YOU'RE A WONDERFUL AUDIENCE.



Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

"The General" and "Checkmate". Before that was a fascinating tour of the Village by Dace Barrie telling the history of where all the bits and pieces came from, statuary, columns and whole buildings scavenged from all over the place.

Sunday 20th August

Picked up at the cinema just after 9:00 by Jo, a lady we had met. Very quiet when we got out to Portmeirion. We went for a walk up to the dog cemetery, where there were some recent graves. Came back to watch the audiovisual show narrated by Sir Clough, the builder and architect who developed Portmeirion. Watched a couple of Prisoner episodes. Went on the Prisoner tour of the Village with episode reenactments. Saw a really terrible play by the Lester Prisoner group. Had a drink and got a lift back with the Trio.

Sunday 20th August

More of the same. Saw the audio-visual display showing the history of Portmeirion and wandered through the woods until we finally found the Dog Cemetery, fantastic place. Reenactments whilst touring the village.

Monday 21st August

Well, this has been a day and a half. Up early again for another big cooked breakfast. Mrs Jones gave us a lift to the station, which was very welcome, as I wasn't looking forward to lugging the suitcase down there.

Our first trip today was on the Ffestiniog railway, a steam railway up the centre of Wales. It was great, wonderful scenery, big hills. Had a terrible cup of coffee and filled in a survey.

As we pulled into the station at Blaenau Ffestiniog station we could see our Brit Rail connecting service train pulling away on the other platform over the bridge. The result: a four-hour wait in the heat. No left luggage facilities at the station so they advised us to go to the café down the street. Had a spot of lunch there, a really strange tuna salad - just tuna, tomato and lettuce. Did the sights of the town and still had time to spare. Blaenau Ffestiniog is the slate capital of Wales, it's everywhere including in the shops to buy. Ian bought me a ring and Welsh love spoon.

We made sure we were in plenty of time for the train. It was full and some of the most horrible kids imaginable were sitting opposite. I hope for the sake of the human race they don't breed. Very hot. More horrible kids after we changed trains. Finally got to Chester about 5:00 in the evening. Mike Scott was there to meet us at the station. After a rest we went for a walk along the city walls. The town has Roman ruins you could touch and the walls were about 900 years old in parts. I know it probably doesn't mean much to others but I have never been close to anything man made that old and I was impressed. Walked right around the city walls, the church bells were being rung in the cathedral, which was a very ugly building. It took over an hour to walk around. Had dinner in the local Spud U Like, which was tasty. Found an ice cream parlour and had very expensive but very nice ice cream.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Monday 21st August

Mrs Jones kindly gave us a lift to the station where we caught the steam train to Bleanau Ffestiniog. Amazing scenery of rugged hills, valleys and stone walls. At B.F. the British Rail connection left before we could get our cases over the bridge. Great. Stuck in Slate City for 4 hours. No left luggage office at the tourist info place, but we were recommended a Café which stored our cases while we saw the sights: the churchyard, the seedy Merion Cellars pub where the barmaid was trying to change the curtains but the pelmet fell off. Everything's slate here. The mountains are slate, the souvenirs are slate, the bus shelter is slate with a slate roof, the gravestones are slate.

"What we need," said a member of the town council " is a fountain that reflects the nature of our community."

"I know. Let's build it out of slate!"

Eventually another train arrived. As we journeyed through pleasant mountain scenery, the trip was spoiled by the family of inbreds at the next table with their badly behaved monkey who wouldn't stop screaming. A fine argument in favour of retrospective abortion. Changed at Llandudno junction where I saw a seagull for the first time and was startled by how much larger they are than their Aussie cousins. Got into Chester about 5 and was picked up by Michael Scott, a nice guy who does indeed resemble Rowan Atkinson. He took us on an interesting walk along the city walls - best time of the day to do it: not too crowded, cooling off and accompanied by peeling cathedral bells. We looked at old Tudor buildings, both real and fake, the racecourse, barges, the salmon race (full of kayakers), beautiful city. Dined in strange style at the Spud-U-Like then on the Haagen Dars for unusual, expensive, sticky and delicious ice-cream cones served by one of the most stunningly beautiful women I've ever seen.

Tuesday 22nd August

Got to sleep in this morning but still very tired. Had a nice breakfast with Port Wine jelly on my toast. Michael took us for an explore in town. We walked some of the time along a canal and I saw my first canal boats. Went to the toy museum, which was hot and quite small. Back in time to pick up our cases and get to the station to catch the train to Crewe.

The train from Crewe was cancelled and we had to wait an hour for the next one, which left 15 minutes late as well. It was a very hot trip and we were both falling asleep. At Nottingham I recognized Aunty Lily by the dress as it was an old one of Dot's (Ian's Mum). She drove us back to her little house and I met Aunty Doris and Ben the dog. Had some tea. Aunty Lily washed our clothes.

Tuesday, 22nd August

Into Chester again, on foot, to cash Traveller's Cheques, check out the toy museum - heaps of Dinky,/Matchbox toys, a huge range of Brittan's farmyard figures (including the village idiot) and old coin-in-the-slot machines. A little shopping then back to Michael's for part of the final episode of Prisoner, before rushing to the station. Changed at Crewe only to learn that our train had been

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

cancelled and we had an hour to wait. Had a drink, a chicken salad baguette and a chocolate donut that was interesting in the Chinese sense.

Eventually we arrived at Nottingham. Aunty Lilly (Ian's mother's sister) met us at the station; Karen spotted her first as she recognised one of mum's old dresses. Drove us to her home to meet Doris and Ben the dog. Strange being fussed over by relatives. Always trying to feed you. Beddy-byes in a soft bed near a busy road. Very tired.

Wednesday 23rd August

Aunty Lilly lives on a very noisy street so I didn't get much sleep. After Aunty Lilly had collected the two children she minds, Adam and David, she drove us into the town and dropped us off at the Castle. This had a surprisingly good museum. Also a very good shop where I bought some very small items of Nottingham lace. The museum had an exhibition of items representing the stages from birth to death. Also a good collection of silverware and glass and some items from the local regiment. By this time it was raining, the first rain we have seen on the trip. Went to the "Trip to



Jerusalem" which is the oldest pub in England and which is a poky little place with very low ceilings. Saw the statue of Robin Hood. Walked into town proper and found the Cyberpub but they didn't have email access. I managed to knock a drink into the keyboard, the first time anyone in the place had done so, so I went to put some films into be processed. Had a ploughman's lunch of sorts in a noisy, smoky pub. Collected the photos. Caught a bus into Arnold and went to see Ian's Aunty Nell and Uncle Ron. A whole brood of cousins dropped in, I never did get them all sorted out, and we didn't leave till after 6:00. Caught the bus back. The two boys and their mum were still there when we got back so I played with them for a while. Had a roast chicken dinner. Talked for a while. Ben did all his tricks. Had a shower in the strange bath shower arrangement that the English seem to favour and went to bed.

Wednesday 23rd August

Up for a non-fried breaky, then Karen trimmed my hair with the bacon scissors. Aunty Lilly drove us to the castle. The museum was actually FREE and it actually RAINED. (England had the hottest summer for a hundred years during the time we were there). A strange display on sociology - Polynesian statues and Ken and Barbie dolls representing ideals of beauty. Jewish and silk regalia and training bras representing coming-of-age. Interesting. Silversmithing, glass blowing, jewelry, Notts and Derby regiment, etc. Called in to Trip to Jerusalem - oldest pub in England, yellowed walls, autographed photos of forgotten film stars, gently ticking clock, coins and notes of all nations stuck on beams. Had our usual: lemonade and lime, and tried pork crackling - strange. Walked across town to find a cheap photo place, couldn't, so had to settle for an expensive one. Finally found the Cyberpub, no email service available, but I got a half hour of net-surfing and a*

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

microwaved chilli nan. Karen became the first person in the pub's history to spill a drink on the terminal - so embarrassed. Had a huge ploughman's lunch at the Dog and Pheasant and then caught the bus to Uncle Ron's. Spoilt rotten, loads of cousins: Ron, Nell, David, Cath, Simon, etc. Yakking away. Bus back to Lilly's. Karen played with Adam and David (and Ben). Showed off photos and had tea. Packed, showered and fell into bed.

* Karen here: I have no recollection of this event at all. Why would I have cut Ian's hair with the bacon scissors?

Thursday 24th August

Had to get up early to be on the 9.15 train out of Nottingham to make our connection to Glasgow. Aunty Lily and Aunty Doris waved us goodbye at the station. Back to Crewe where we had a sandwich while waiting for the Glasgow train. I'm glad we booked as the train was packed. An uneventful trip, just a few noisy yobbo's playing cards and more terrible coffee.

My first impression of Glasgow was grey. It had been raining and the city was dark and grey. We are very close to the train station, actually you can walk off the end of the station into the hotel. Bit of a mixup with the room payment but it was sorted out easily. Put the bags in the rooms and started off walking to the Scottish Convention centre. It was a lot further than we thought but found it in the end. There was supposed to be a train line running to the centre but it was flooded so they had arranged buses so we used those after the first walk. The centre is a big place and a few people were milling about inside.



Got through registration with no troubles and got our badges and special GUFF ribbons. I also found out I was on two panels. Just missed the opening ceremony. Started meeting people to connect to names. Alison Scott helped us with the accommodation problem, Alexander from the Ukraine was there with his wife and sister, Rex Thompson from New Zealand was there. Found Pam Wells and a group; also found Kathy Kerrigan, who I didn't even know was in Britain. A group of us went out for tea to have Chinese food. Got rained on. Back at the Central Hotel (which was one of

the venues for the Intersection) we watched a very boring panel. I was so tired I just wanted to get to bed.

Thursday 24th August

Lilly drove us to the station, hugs goodbye and train to Crewe. Played spot the fan and read Sherlock Holmes stories until we reached Glasgow. Finding the Central Hotel was no problem, it's right in the station, but problems occurred with a vapourised deposit and no sign of Intersection footing the bill. Checked into a room with no place to store cases and a romantic view of the railway station. Having missed the hourly shuttle we hoofed it to the SECC. The weather was

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

getting brisk and we thought we would never get there. Big place.

Registered, got our special ribbons (GUFF, programme participant), went to the info desk where Alison Scott sorted out the hotel problems. In rapid succession we met Mike Abbot, Mike Scott, Martin Smith, Dave Langford, Bridgette Hardcastle, Dan Steffan, Alexander Vasilkovsky and his drunk family, the trio, Steven Boucher, John 'Grandad' Philpot, Noel 'Nolly' Collyer, Simo, and Cathy Kerrigan. A bunch of us (Cath K, Pam Wells, etc) went to a Chinese restaurant where I had a very hot stuffed chilli in oyster sauce (cured my sore throat) and a DELICIOUS Peking Duck in pancakes with plum sauce. Back to the Central for a widely disorganised "Do fanzines need an attitude" panel dominated by the microphone-grabbing Greg Pickersgill. Stayed for the Minneapolis in '73 party, then crashed.

Travel tip: book your accommodation at the booking centres, which are usually at the train stations. There is a fee for this but they do all the work and you get what you want.

Friday 25th August

"Karen, give the platypus back. Karen, no you can't have the platypus! Karen! Karen! No! Back! Back, I say! We'll bring it back with us in '99"
Diana Thayer.

What a day! It's been so good! Got up a little late this morning, had a great breakfast down in the restaurant room including some strange but tasty potato cake thingies. Had to wait a short while for the bus. Had a look at the dealer's room, some nice stuff. Finally got the money from Intersection to pay for the hotel, we are going to pay the hotel by Visa and keep the money to spend. Got a convention T shirt. Had some really horrible lunch. Ian had his first panel. **Teddy Harvia** and **Diana Thayer** turned up so I talked to them for most of the panel. They have the most amazing puppet/toy platypus.

We did our stint on the information desk from 4:00 till 7:00, it was fun and I found out a lot of things I didn't previously know about the convention. Mostly the main question was "where are the toilets?" and they were opposite the information desk. Serving on the desk meant we also get some points that gets us discount food, not that the food was edible. Met Diana and Teddy again and we caught a cab to have tea at the Belfry, which was an odd name as the restaurant is in the basement. Had a lovely meal seafood in puff pastry and sticky date pudding. Caught a cab back to the Moathouse Hotel (which was attached to the convention centre) so the Harvia's could get changed, then back to the Forte Crest hotel to attend a couple of bid parties -Boston and

Baltimore. Had some nice rum punch and Ian invented a game called "Flip the plastic fish" which was inspired by the fact that the tables had lots of plastic seafood as decoration. I took a couple of pink fish and lobsters to make ear-rings out of. Walked back to the Central Hotel (the one near the station) about 1 pm. Had a shower and collapsed into bed.

Friday 25th August

Wandered around the con, but didn't get to see any panel items. I was on the Fundraising panel, which was Not Very

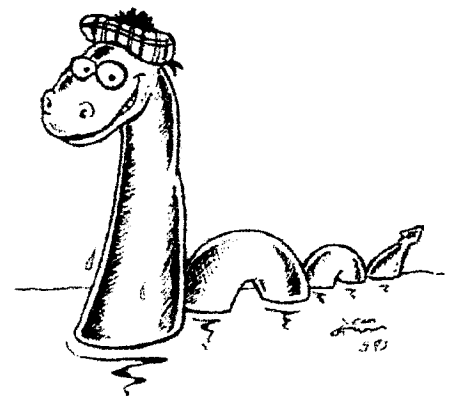


Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Well Attended, as soon became the norm for anything on the fannish programme. While this was going on Teddy Harvia and Diana Thayer arrived. Nice people. Teddy is a long, tall Texan (well, he's roughly the same height as me but he just seems taller). We all had dinner at the Belfrey, nice food, but the service was a tad slow especially when we were waiting for the bill. We waited for a taxi; eventually one arrived and went cruising the parties at the Forte Crest, where I invented the game of Tiddly Fish.

Saturday 26th August

The day was a blur, so much has happened. Tonight was the Australia in '99 bid party it went well, spent some time giving out stickers, then taking the pre supporting memberships until about 1:00 in the morning. Didn't get any dinner as we had been watching the masquerade. This had acts ranging from total crap to brilliant. There was Henry the Eighth and his wives, and a group from Julian May where the costumes lit up with lots of little lights in a different colour for each costume.



Tried to start the day off earlier. The breakfast wasn't very good. It was raining and wet. Spent some time on the Australia in '99 table advertising the party and fan fund auction. The fan fund auction was a lot slower than those in Australia. After a great deal of messing about we made about £150. Got rid of a lot of stuff.

Saturday 26th August

Did some gophering on the info table which was confusing but fun - it certainly helped us get our bearings around the con. Mainly we were answering questions, but I also rewrote the Party board. Toured the art show with the Harvias - not much fan stuff, but a huge array of pro art. The fan funds auction attracted a small crowd but not as high prices as I had hoped. Some idiot kept bidding in loose change amounts. While Karen was helping add up the amounts, I trotted off to see the masquerade. Small by Worldcon standards - 21 acts - the presentations ranging from very good to dumb and included a few lighting glitches and a halt to proceedings while the flouters of the No Flash Photography rule were ejected from the auditorium. Then we went to the Australia in 99 party. We contributed lolly bananas and Cherry Ripes, which were met with dubious looks. The party was quite crowded and there was a lot of pro-Oz feeling. I commandeered the white board and wrote a long list of reasons why you'd want to go to Oz. We looked in on the other bid parties including Zagreb, Antarctica, Chicago 2000 and Cryonics. A in '99 ran out of food and drink, but it about the same time that all the other parties did too. It was announced that Baltimore had won the '98 bid.



Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Fanimals

A BONNY WEE WORLDCON WI' A FEW BRAW PALS...

BY Ian Gunn 1095

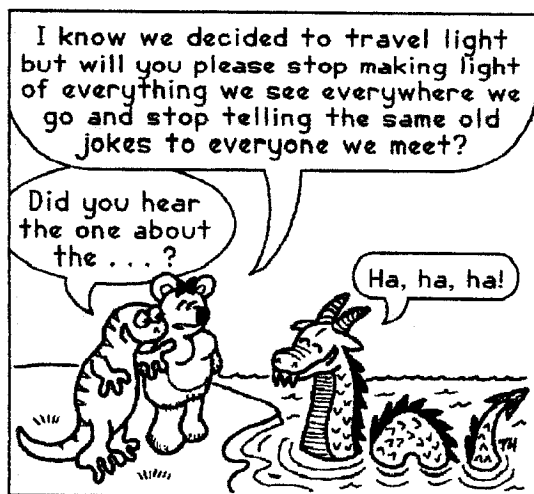


Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Sunday 27th August

A whole lot of stuff I can't remember (I'm writing this on Thursday the 31st) (Note from Karen: it's a lot more than I remembered, I don't even have an entry until the next Wednesday!)

My predications for the Hugos came true: Dave Langford won best writer and best zine. Teddy Harvia was right chuffed when he won best Fan Artist and carried his rocket around for the next



24 hours. After the ceremony we went to see the fireworks - very spectacular, but no music except that supplied by the humming Americans. Partied till late with the Harvias.

Monday, 28th August

Bought a Discworld Death figure and a few other bits and bobs. Unsuccessful panel items. Last look at art show. Bought a Real Hitch Hikers Guide for 50p. Closing ceremony involved a lot of jiggery pokery with the lighting grid. Dinner with the Harvias and the Lynch's. On the Fannish Questions Time panel (missed Moose TV), then the Dead Dog parties. Suggestion for the Good Fairies went down well.

Tuesday 29th August

Checked out of the Central and Jenny Glover got our suitcases loaded into the van. Met the Harvias and had a coffee. Saw them onto the train to Edinburgh, then decided we'd rather travel with them than spend the day in Glasgow, so we jumped on the train at the last minute. Yakked and joked all the way to Edinburgh. It's amazing to meet a couple that we get along with so well with - we're on the same wavelength. They went off to a B&B while we walked up to the castle where we met up again. Toured castle, etc. Visited the Camera Obscura: good view of the city, guide doing the tricks with optical illusions. Lots of holograms on display. Hit my head on the handrail. Bought a history of the Gunn clan. Said farewell at the bus stop and missed the bus. Darrol Schweitzer was

at the Glovers, he talked to us. A lot. Heard Maddie (surname unknown) went out on a ghost walk, while Jenny, Chris, Tara and Robert took us to the launderette. Dined on a street picnic of fish'n'chips and Haagon Daz - Jenny's shout. Drawing and talking until late.

The Camera Obscura - The Edinburgh Camera Obscura has a rooftop mirror that can be both tilted and rotated to give a constantly changing live image of the city. The mirror reflects light down through three sets of lens onto a white concave viewing table 28 feet below. The guide slowly rotates the mirror through 360 degree to show a panoramic view of the city while telling the story of the city's historical past. (From the leaflet on the Camera Obscura)

Wednesday 30th August

It's been a few days now since I have had the time to write up this diary.

It's now 4:30 in the afternoon in a cafe in Edinburgh. We have just been to see the Museum of Childhood, which was free. Also had a chance to do some shopping,

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

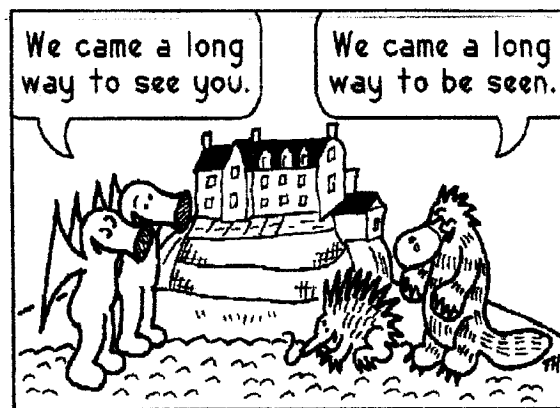
including going a little wild on ear-rings that were only 99p each

We are staying with **Jenny** and **Steve Glover** and their very intelligent children, **Tara** and **Robert**. They also have a couple of Americans staying with them. They also had **Chris Terran** the current publisher of *Matrix*. We are staying in Tara's room up in the attic, I have banged my head on the roof a couple of times already. So quiet I was able to sleep in this morning. When we got here last night, the whole family and us went off to the laundry to wash our clothes, eat fish and chips, then eat ice cream in the park on the way home.

On Tuesday we arranged for Jenny to collect our cases from the Central hotel about 10 as they had a truck going back to Edinburgh. That left us free for the day. We met Diana and Teddy at the station in Glasgow as they were going to Edinburgh and at the last minute we decided to jump on the train and go as well. The train trip took about one and half-hours. The Harvia's took a cab to their B&B and we met them at Edinburgh castle. Had a good walk around there. Went down to the Camera Obscura, which was a wonderful and such a simple idea. Left our new friends about 7:00 to catch the bus back to the Glover's house.

The last two days of the convention went quickly. I bought some T-shirts and many pairs of ear rings in the dealers room as they dropped the prices to get rid of stock. Ian bought a Death figurine (From Terry Pratchett's books) which is going to be very interesting to pack. Spent a lot of time with Teddy and Diana, I really like them both. Fireworks display on Sunday night. Went to lots of good parties. Saw Teddy win a Hugo for best fan artist, he bounced around all night, we are all so proud of him. Had dinner with **Dick** and **Nicki Lynch** and Diana and Teddy on Monday night.

Intersection is the most enjoyable convention I have ever been to. So we didn't do a great deal with the Brit fans, we met a lot of very nice people and it was delightful to be treated so special. Now just need to catch up on sleep.



Met Steve and Chris in the evening in Edinburgh had a drink at a nice pub and then had some dinner in a small restaurant.

Wednesday, 30th August

We were in Tara's bedroom in the attic and Karen kept hitting her head on the sloping roof. I was feeling knackered so sat in the park in Edinburgh while Karen went shopping. Visited the Museum of Childhood - quite good, but we've seen quite a lot of them lately. After writing a heap of postcards, and a long time trying to get through on the phone to Jenny and Lilian Edwards, we eventually met up with Steve and Chris Terran at the Drew Nicholls Pub; a local fan hang-out. Mooched around and found a cheap pancake restaurant, talked long about fandom, who's who, gossip, etc. Taxi home. Packed for the morning.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Thursday 31st August

We are in York, in a wonderful B&B. Got a taxi to the station with Chris. I got a couple of bits and pieces at the Edinburgh Tattoo shop. Ian posted off a parcel to Australia Sea mail, which cost about £30. Travelled here by train today from Edinburgh, about a 2 and a half-hour trip. When we got to York, there was a lady who helped us find the accommodation. Had a nice taxi driver who brought us to the B&B. The place has lots of steps, we were on the second floor in a lovely sloping roofed room. We had our own bathroom with a decent shower at long last hot and a good pressure. Nice beds and bedtime cocoa.

York (from the Town Crier's guide).

York Minster - stands 185 feet high. There are 275 steps to the top. It took 252 years to build - 1220-1472. The last fire was in July 1984 when the roof of the south transept was destroyed. Great Peter is the 11 ton bell that hangs in the north west tower and can be heard at noon each day.

The city walls are 2 and half miles long.

Guy Fawkes was born in Young's Hotel in 1605.

Dick Turpin (or John Palmer) was hanged in York in 1739 and is buried in St George's churchyard.

The Viking called the city Jorvik and designed the layout of the streets.

The Shambles is the oldest street in York, and is mentioned in the Doomsday Book in 1086. It is reputed that William the Conqueror's half brother, Robert, was among the stallholders at the time.

We went for a walk when we had unpacked. Firstly we found the Tyne television shop and got some stuff from "Heartbeat". Next climbed a big hill to get to Clifford's Tower, the only remaining part of the original castle, I got to the top of the tower. Bought a teddy bear there - who I have called Clifford York - who commemorates the English Heritage association. Went to the Yorvick Viking centre, which for a tourist place was quite good. It was based on an archaeological dig that took place and you travel on little cars around a Viking village and a model dig. Had some dinner, cottage pie with delicious gravy.

York Minster is the most massive church I have ever seen. It was in a fire in the 80's and still has some damage, which is being repaired. The commemorative stones along the side walls date from 1200 or so. It is enormous and very

beautiful. Found some of the city wall and walked along it. By this time I was overtired so just made it back to the B&B.

Thursday, 31st August

Taxi into town with Chris. Karen popped off for more shopping at the Military Tattoo shop. We all caught the York train, watched the scenery, munched on sandwiches and talked fandom. When we got off at York, the announcements Lady seems to be doing a Gregorian Chant. Chris went off for his Leeds connection, we booked a B&B. There was a booking fee of 2.50 pound, but it sure beats traipsing round the streets with heavy suitcases. We got a really nice smoke-free place in Bishopsthorpe Rd, though when the taxi dropped us off we found a long, winding path to the door and a long winding staircase to the 2nd floor. We were in the attic again, but it was a nice room with ensuite shower. Strolled into town where we roamed the streets, climbed to the top of Clifford's Tower, rode through the Jorvick Centre - a bit hokey in a Disney style tourist sort of

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

way; going back in time in a little timecar - but the research and presentation was excellent. Good thing we came late and didn't have to stand in the queue with hundreds of tourists. Crossed paths with Darroll and Maddie, visited the Shambles, ate Gammon at a nice café, toured the York Minster (with organ music) walked along the city walls then headed back to the B&B for showers and comedy TV.

Friday 1st September

Had a bad night's sleep, don't know why as the bed was comfortable. Had a very nice breakfast of scrambled eggs. Left our cases downstairs and walked into York.

Stopped first at the Museum of Automata, where we saw some very unusual mechanical puppets. Then I went to buy a bright coloured bag while Ian was in the bank. We then went to the York Museum. It was a great museum mainly filled with items of everyday life: shoes, clothes, toys, glassware, etc. Took about 2 hours to get through. Stopped off to have a cream tea which was basically a Devonshire tea with the scones cut up and spread with jam and cream in layers.

Walked to the National Railway Museum. Oh my aching feet! Two huge sheds with the most amazing trains. Realised we were running out of time so got to the station to get a cab, go back to the B&B, grab the cases and get the train to Leeds, a distance of only about 20 miles.

Chris Terran, who we had met in Edinburgh, met us at the train station with a friend of his called Julie, who was a nanny. Went to a pub called the Adelphi where Leeds fandom meets. Didn't have that good a time, too smoky. Ended up having a pizza up the road. Went back to Chris' where he apologized most of the time. Slept in the lounge on a foldout lounge.

Friday 1st September

Yummy, big breakky, left our luggage behind the couch and into the Lloyd's bank (via the Museum of Automata - an unusual collection of machines, music boxes, etc.) Traipsed around the Castle Museum - one of the best in the country. Even fed ducks, geese and pigeons outside near the mill. Lots in the museum including period rooms, re-created streets and displays of everyday objects. One gallery followed the development of a simple hearth into the modern kitchen. We had a cream tea at a café then hiked over the river to the National Railway Museum - heaps of big engines including the Mallard, a 50th anniversary Thomas the Tank Engine display, the Royal train and heaps of other stuff. Had a ride (standing up) in a (replica) Stephenson's Rocket. Very quiet. Realised it was getting late, went to the station and got a taxi to pick up our luggage then caught the train to Leeds. Chris and Julie Rigby picked us up and drove us to the Adelphi for a Leeds Group meeting. Chris later apologised for the Leeds Mafia living up to their snobbish reputation. I didn't mind much, though they weren't too welcoming. Maybe they lack social skills outside their own group. Did manage to talk to D. West and Simon Ounsley and a few others. What did annoy me was all the smoke: most of them seem to chain smoke roll-your-owns. Lee (surname unknown) of Interzone was smoking DEATH cigarettes. My eyes were itchy and I was coughing. Smoke everywhere. Using the (true) excuse that we were hungry, we excused ourselves and Chris and Jim Trash took us up the street to a pizza bar called The Halian Job (?) They had coffee, we had pizza.

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Then back to the Adelphi for last drinks. Julie took us back to Chris's, much talking. Chris is such a nice guy. Said he was honoured to have us stay. Aw, shucks. Eventually to bed.

Saturday 2nd September

Slept well last night, woke up with a sore back. Caught the train into Leeds, started our journey into Reading. We should have booked as both the train to and from Birmingham was crowded, didn't think about it being Saturday. Arrived in Reading about 3:00, got a taxi to Dave and Hazel Langford's. The party there was already underway. Nice house full of books. Met lots of people who I never really knew who they were and talked a lot about GUFF and Australia in 99.

While we were on the train this morning something came through the outside safety window of the train, shattering it. Had to stop longer at one of the stations to have the pieces taken out.

Saturday 2nd September

Up, washed, coffeed, spacemanned. Chris took us to the station, right outside the door and saw us on to the local train. The train to Birmingham was packed, a weekend seaside special bound for Torquay. Managed to get some seats that were booked from Derby, but their owners never turned up. Changed at Birmingham, almost as crowded. Finally got my diary up to date - this is now. On the train to Birmingham there was a sudden crack and the outside of one window crazed. At the next station workman tore out the shattered glass, crossed the remaining pane with masking tape and removed the cushions from the neighbouring seats, after moving the people to first class. On the

Reading - according to Jerome K. Jerome from "Three men in a boat" (1889). The river is dirty and dismal here. One does not linger in the neighbourhood of Reading. The town itself is a famous old place, dating from the dim days of King Ethelred, when the Danes anchored their warships in the Kennet, and started from reading to ravage all the land of Wessex; and here Ethelred and his brother Alfred fought and defeated them, Ethelred doing all the praying and Alfred the fighting.

In later years, Reading seems to have been regarded as a handy place to run down to, when matters were becoming unpleasant in London. Parliament generally rushed off to Reading whenever there was a plague on at Westminster; and in 1625, the Law followed suit, and all the courts were held in Reading. It must have been worth while having a mere ordinary plague now and then in London to get rid of both the lawyers and the Parliament.

Henry I lies buried at Reading, in the Benedictine abbey founded by him there, the ruins of which may still be seen.

train from Birmingham to Reading, a bloke with dried blood on his face was taken away by two ticket inspectors - when we were at Reading an announcement called for a member of the Transport Police to go to Platform Nine. We got a taxi to the Langford's house where the party was in full swing - the Neilson-Haden's, Avedon Carrol and Abi Frost were present. Talking till late, SMOFing etc.

Sunday 3rd September

Slept on an airbed in Dave's library, woke up early this morning as the muscles in my back were spasming. The Langfords have a wonderful house cellar, first floor with bathroom and main bedroom, next half floor up Dave's study (with at least 5 computers) and the library. Next half

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

floor had Hazel's study. There are books everywhere, on shelves, on the sides of stairwells, everywhere! We had a quiet morning, had lunch at a pub near the canal. Spent the afternoon having a nap. Washed some clothes. Had lovely Indian take away for dinner. Saw the first episode of the new series of "Heartbeat". Ian and Dave went to the local pub to meet someone for a drink.

Sunday 3rd September

A lazy day, slept in, said farewell to the Neilsen-Hayden's, talked and had ploughman's lunch at the Fisherman's Cottage pub where we fed leftover Illchester to the ducks. Relaxed, explored the Langford Manor, watched "Heartbeat", had an enormous take-away Indian dinner and went to another pub to play bar billiards with Martin Hoare.

Monday 4th September

Didn't sleep that well which was odd as we had the spare bed. Took the bus into town carrying our overnight things in the backpack and caught the train to Oxford. The train was crowded so we couldn't get a seat, luckily it was only a half-hour to Oxford. Booked a B&B through a service at the train station. Had quite a walk to get there. Luckily we didn't have the cases. They didn't exactly make us welcome at the Falcon Crest Hotel. It was like it was an imposition we had turned up. Our room was on the top floor.

Oxford is not a great place, as nice as Cambridge. It seems to lack something. It was very crowded, lots of E F's about. We wandered about today, saw Christ College, where Lewis Carroll was a student. Wandered around a bit more and went to Balliol College (this is a connection with Dorothy L. Sayers and the Lord Peter Wimsey stories). Had dinner in Fatty Arbuckle's where we had a waiter from Canberra, stuffed ourselves on burgers and banana splits.

Monday 4th September

After a slow start, we caught the train to Oxford. The Guide Friday office found us a B&B - at 45 pounds the most expensive of the trip, but cheapish by Oxford Standards. A fair hike from the station. The Falcon Guest House proved to be two houses knocked together to form a Escheresque labyrinth of stairways. We were (eventually) greeted by a grumpy young woman who told us that our room was on the top floor. The place was decorated with pictures, plates and framed tea-towels informing the reader how good God and the Irish were. A ferocious dog guarded the staff only areas. We caught a bus into town and disembarked amid an unexpected bustling chaos.

Seeking peace and quiet, we eventually found a student café - crowded and slightly noisy - upstairs in the covered market. Ploughman's platter was the fare for us. Wandered through the crowds till we found Christchurch College. Watched a short video, saw the Alice window in the dining hall. Looked in the Sheep Shop. Got lost among the thumping noise of St Giles Fair - sideshows, rides and balloon sellers. One mirror maze was decorated with Josh Kirby rip-offs from Terry Pratchett books. We found Balliol College and admired the gargoyles. While we were sitting in the quad, near the chapel, we had a vision. Looking up I saw a hole in the clouds of the sort you only see in religious pictures, beams of light streamed out. I pointed it out to Karen and she said, "this is where Jesus ascends into Heaven". Just then a stray balloon from St Giles fair drifted over the

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

rooftops. "Maybe that's the Holly Ghost," I said. Immediately another balloon, shaped like Casper the Friendly Ghost, appeared. "One more makes the Holy Trinity" I said. Another appeared. After much meandering we had a huge meal at Fatty Arbuckles - chilli burger and banana split. Back to B&B, TV and so to bed.

Tuesday 5th September

Well, this horrible hotel has horrible beds and a horrible shower. Breakfast was very lean -only a small spoonful of baked beans. Didn't stop long, just put our bags in a left luggage locker at the station and took a taxi to the museum. They weren't open yet so we wandered down to the Bodlian Library. What a place, for anyone with a love of books, this is the place to see. We took a tour; the guide must have been 80 as he came up in 1931. The Duke Humphries Library is full of the most wonderful books we weren't allowed to touch because of their great age. Bought a bear in the gift shop, going to call him Bodley. Had some lunch at a coffeeshop in an old church. Walked back to the University museum. This is in a very old building with gas light fittings. The columns along the inside wall are of various types of stone. They have a collection of dinosaurs including an iguanodon.

Behind the University Museum is the Pitt Rivers Museum, which is totally brilliant. It's a massive collection of everyday and cultural items; looms, musical instruments, clothing, models, weapons, jewellery, pottery, magical items. All crammed together in cases. We took the guided tour on tape. Had very sore feet. Walked back to the station and caught the train back to Reading. Back to the Langford's, had macaroni cheese for tea and left over jam roll.

Tuesday, 5th September

After sullen service, a meager breakfast and a big bill, we dropped our excess luggage at the station lockers and caught a taxi to the University Museum. It wasn't open until 12, so we walked down to see the Bridge of Sighs and the Radcliffe camera and the Sheldonian Theatre. Had a guided tour of the Bodlian Library - the examinations hall, the Hall of Convocation and the Duke Humphrey's Library. An elderly gent who said he studied at the college in 1931 gave the tour. He wore a battered old, green corduroy jacket and braces; he wheezed and rambled as he climbed the stairs. A dear old codger. The library was full of ancient books - the smell was amazing. Really enjoyed the visit.

We ate in St Mary's church coffee shop, then back to the museum. Fine old Victorian structure with steel arches, stone-sample pillars and the original gas-lighting rings. A lot of dead animals birds and bugs. A few cases featured fossils from the Pyrocene - remains of printed circuits, McDonald's spoons and a Masters of the Universe comic persevered in Amber. Eventually the Pitt Rivers museum opened - we hired audio tours narrated by Sir Richard Attenborough and the Museum's curator. Very interesting anthropology exhibits grouped together on themes: transport, magic, and weaponry. The shields cabinet featured Zulu shields, Viking shields and a police riot shield in transparent plastic.

Caught the train back to Reading for macaroni cheese and soggy garlic bread.

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Wednesday 6th September

Dave had to go to a funeral today so John Harvey drove Hazel, Ian and myself into Reading. Went to the Reading Museum to see the Silcester Eagle, or the Eagle of the Ninth (this was in a book I had to study for Children's literature in college and I was intrigued to see it). It was smaller and greyer than I had thought. The Roman floor was great. There was a copy of the Bayeux Tapestry on the next floor, done in the 1880's. Had some lunch in the cafe in the Town Hall. Walked down to what was left of Reading Abbey, which is just the inner walls of stone, it was pulled down in the 1500's.



Next came the battle of the trains. Got an express train to Paddington. Lugged the cases onto the Underground. Had to change at Victoria. Lumped the cases from Seven Sisters station back to Judith and Joseph's. The Underground trip took longer than the trip from Reading. Judith and Joseph came home about 7:00, Judith's brother from Australia, who is also staying, came home soon after. Walked up to

Tesco's for some groceries. I really like going to supermarkets in other places, it gives me a feel sense of the differences in places and you can get some really amazing things.

Wednesday 6th September

We packed and when John Harvey called the take Dave to John Brunner's funeral he dropped our cases at the station's left luggage bay - hard to find - then back to the Langford's (they'd been spacemanned) to take us back into town, dropping us and Hazel off. We explored the old church and the Reading Museum. The Eagle of the Ninth looked like a chicken. Re-created Bayeux Tapestry, Huntley and Palmer stuff (biscuit factory that makes great tins). "Summer Is Icumen In" on tape - it was written in Reading. Very good museum. Lunch in the Town Hall Cafeteria - goulash and roast potato. On to see the war memorial (giant lion) and amazing ruins of the Abbey. On to the train, struggling through Underground (anti-nuclear busker riding the Circle Line playing Beatles, Bowie and "I've got a bike") with cases and back to J&J's. Met Judith's country-boy brother, Julian. Shopping. Eating ordinary spaghetti, post-con reporting and divvying up GUFF funds.

Thursday 7th September

Woke up early with a backache, just not able to get used to sleeping on a futon. Didn't get organised till late and were late going out.

Went to the Museum of Moving Images, a collection of various items associated with cinema and film, including some Dr Who props, some Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet, a Gremlin and Tic Toc from the Wizard of Oz. They didn't have many props but a great deal of imagination. They did have a copy of Maria from Metropolis. Couldn't find anywhere to eat so came back to Westminster and put some films in to be processed. Ate at a truly awful café called Café Churchill in Parliament Street, don't go there.

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Walked up to Westminster Abbey. It's an enormous place, with some very important people buried there (a bit of an understatement really), it was odd walking across the headstones in the floor. It used to be a Benedictine monastery a long time ago that seems to be a common feature of a lot of religious buildings around England. I sat in the quieter cloister while Ian went to pick up the photos. We had a cup of coffee there. Caught the train back to Waterloo to go to the Wellington pub meeting. It was smoky, crowded and noisy and I couldn't hear what anyone was saying. Don't actually remember being introduced to anyone. Tracey Oliphant and Karen Mitchell came for a while. Went home with Joseph on the train.

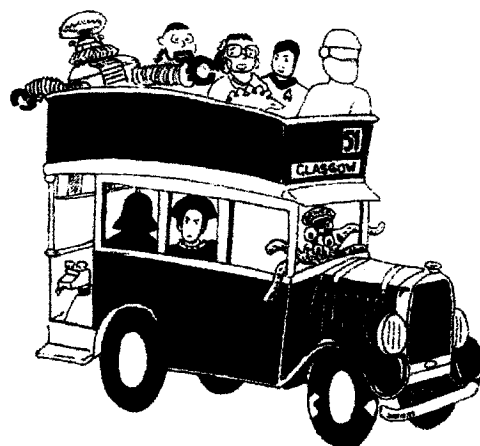
Thursday 7th September

After a slow start repacking and tidying up our luggage, so as not to offend the retentive eye of Mr Nicholas, we sallied forth to South Bank. We noticed that the hungry child clutched by the beggar-woman on the Underground had mysteriously changed gender while we were away. We eventually found the Museum of the Moving Image. Great, meandering display on the history of film and television in chronological order. Saw bits of the Lumiere films, King Kong, Battleship Potemkin and Nanook of the North. The strolling players pretending to be actors of the silent screen, ushers, etc intimidated Karen. Good fun. Then off to Waterloo - saw the Eurostar Channel Tunnel, then to Westminster Abbey. Got films developed and had a very late, very poor lunch at Churchill's café. Westminster Abbey was very impressive, as was the high quality of the Coffee Club - actual choice of coffees and real milk, cream, etc.

Then back to the Wellington. Lots of fans. A few yuppies and too much noise. Flirted with the lovely Karen Mitchell, yacked with all and sundry (over the noise). Back with a tipsy Joseph, reading Ansible.

Friday 8th September

Today was shopping day. First stop was a shoe shop called Shelley's just outside Oxford Circus railway station. After deliberation I chose a pair of flower pattern Doc Martens. Decided to wear these for a while. Wandered around for a while trying to find a baseball cap with the London Underground system printed on it. Found Hamley's and spent some time buying bits and pieces including a badge with teddies on it. Had some lunch in the basement eating area. There were lots of dodgy street vendors selling perfume, shirts and videotapes off the sort of trays that bread is delivered to shops on. At a moments notice they could disappear and this happened when a policeman was sighted, as soon as he was gone, there they were back again. Caught the train to Knightsbridge and went into Harrods. Getting very sore of feet by this time. Went up to the toy department. Ian found an Asterix soft toy, I found a stegosaur. Had a



Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

quick look at the food hall and I bought a Harrods's bag to replace the mysteriously vanished other one I once had. Judith had asked Ian for us not to come home early (they had things to do) so we had a drink in Pizzaland. Went for a walk and came back to Pizzaland for tea. Had to walk a bit to find an Underground entrance and got back to Seven Sisters about 9:30.

Friday 8th September

Another late start, then a day of shopping. Karen got floral Doc Martens in Oxford Street. I got Thomas toys in Hamleys (nice lunch, high security) and then we explored Harrods, Karen got a bag and a steg, I got an Astertix doll. Wrote postcards and dined at Pizzaland. Back to Seven Sisters. Joseph had enough Superplonk in him to be relaxed, witty and fun. He read my Lonely Planet Guide to Britain and widely disagreed with comments on queues and plumbing.

Saturday 9th September

After a disgraceful exhibition of temper from Joseph about toast crumbs, we left the house as early as we could to catch the train to Canterbury. Changed trains at Victoria. Nice big seats on the South West line with the largest toilets we have ever seen, the rolling stock is older. Nice station at Canterbury, saw a bit of the wall on the way. Booked a guesthouse at the Tourist Centre, and no surprise, we were on the top floor. Back out into the thick of things. Tried to find the Canterbury Teddy Bear shop but it was an unsuccessful quest, we hunted all over the town and only saw one bear which was much too expensive. We did visit the museum, which had a Rupert Bear room as the creator came from Canterbury. Came back to look at the Cathedral but there was a concert on so we walked around the outside, Roman ruins dot the outside.

We then spent a very long hour and a half walking the town trying to find a non smoking restaurant, we went into about 10 places and most didn't even attempt to provide a non smoking section, one only had it open during the day. We ended up in the Pizza Hut, which was all non-smoking, and it was crowded. Back to the guesthouse to battle with another strange shower system that kept delivering cold water at odd moments.

Saturday 9th September

Joseph had sobered up and reverted to a foul, belligerent pig, yelling at Julian for getting crumbs on the kitchen floor. Julian left and so did we. Off to Victoria Station where we caught the next train to Canterbury East, chomping on biscuits and watching the hop fields and oast houses go by. At Canterbury we walked past the Castle Court Guest House, dithered, but decided to go to the Tourist Information Centre. They took all our details, rang around and eventually booked us a room at the Castle Court Guest House. A room at the top. Spartan with pictures of kittens on the walls. Walked around town, Karen in search of a mythical Canterbury Bear shop. Saw the ancient Hospital of St Thomas - made largely from lumps of flint with roughhewn oak beams, and the West Gate. There was an afternoon service on in the Cathedral, so we got a cup of coffee and went to the Canterbury Heritage Museum. The entire history of the town from Roman Times, the story behind Thomas A'Beckett (the monks were delighted to discover, on his death, that he wore a hair shirt - so devout! He's one of us!-infested with lice). By the time we got back to the Cathedral was closed for a concert by the Grenadier Guards - blokes in busbies everywhere. Toured the cloisters and

Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

old ruins, then started looking for a place to eat. Everything was either widely expensive or didn't have a **SMOKE FREE SECTION**. We couldn't believe it! This is the 20th Century is it not? We thought we had passed into some bizarre alternative universe. Eventually found Pizza Hut, which was entirely smoke free. Filled in the comment card thanking them. They must have read the bit about the music being too loud, for it was turned down. Back to the guest house for a piddly shower and bed.

Canterbury (from the Lonely Planet Guidebook, 1995) Canterbury's greatest treasure is its magnificent cathedral, the successor to the church St Augustine built there after he began converting the English to Christianity in 597. After the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas a Becket in 1170, the cathedral became the centre of one of the most important medieval pilgrimages in Europe, immortalised in the Canterbury Tales.

Sunday 11th September

Both Ian and I had a restless night. Breakfast we didn't get the option of cereals we wanted and no beans in the cooked breakfast. Did the Canterbury Tales tour just up the road from the B&B, which was quite cute but not as elaborate as I expected. Had some time to wait before we could get into the cathedral so we had a drink and wrote final postcards.

The cathedral doesn't have guided tours on Sunday and it was packed with tourists who didn't really care about its history or its contents. It is a beautiful building. Saw where poor Thomas A'Beckett was stabbed by four knights. Many beautiful windows and coffins, effigies of past Archbishops on the lids.

Bought a couple more bits and pieces at the Cathedral shop. Had an enormous ice cream sundae which Ian and I shared. Had a look at the Roman Museum, which has a piece of corridor with the mosaics still intact and a bit of the heated room. Most of the ruins are under the modern buildings and they would like to get their hands on it.

Canterbury was chock full of French tourists. It is unfortunate that the people who should never leave France as they are the rudest and most arrogant, do leave and come across to Canterbury on weekend trips. It was a further uncomfortable situation for us as the French government at the time was also exploding nuclear bombs in the Pacific and we weren't too happy about that.



Picked up the cases we had left at the B&B. Had to take a bus at the station as they were doing track work. Back to Victoria station. Rang Tracey Oliphant to get instructions to get to their place as we were having dinner there. Caught the train to the end of the line, then caught a bus. It was no surprise to me that Karen and Tracey had rooms right at the top of the building. They cooked us chicken and vegetables and a bread and butter pudding. Watched some second season Babylon 5. About 1:30 when we left, catching a minicab back to Seven Sisters. Last time we have to sleep on the futon.

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Sunday 10th September

A plain breakfast after a short wait (more guests than tables) then we left Karen's backpack with the landlord and paid our bill and wandered off to see the Canterbury Tales attraction. A strange thing using dummies, spotlights, slide shows and wooden flats to tell some of the Canterbury Tales. Not bad, but could have been better. The knight's tale was projected onto banners and windows. The miller's tale was medieval-style cut-outs poking out from windows. The Wife of Bath's tale gradually formed a stained glass window. The strange, intense old couple who were travelling through with us kept wandering out through the emergency exits - mad bastards. Had a drink at an ice cream parlour near the Cathedral gate then wandered in the Cathedral. It seems to mostly consist of small chapels. The tomb and the shrine of Thomas A'Beckett no longer exist (courtesy of Henry VIII). The gloves, helm and jerkin hung over the Black Prince's tomb are copies of the more weather-worn originals which are now on display in a glass case. We both wrote out prayers on post-it-notes for the peoples of the South Pacific currently under threat of nuclear fallout. They might've annoyed any of the swarms of French tourists who might read them. We were amazed at the occasional bits of graffiti scratched into the pillars. We're not Christians but we have a respect for the building, its history and what it represents. After more food at the ice cream parlour - ice cream floats, bacon and cheese in a sort of croissant shell and an evil sundae with chocolate sauce, banana, and walnuts called, oddly, a Brazil. We then went to the remains of a Roman bath-house, discovered after WWII bombings. Not a great deal to see, but pretty good.

Picked up the backpack and headed to the station where we were told that due to engineering works, no trains would run. Instead a comfy coach to Faversham where we boarded a Victoria train in platform 1 and waited and waited. Eventually, another train arrived on platform 2. This was an express, so we stayed on our train until it had gone then discovered that we were on a stopping all stations train. Oh well. This trip made exactly 15 train trips on our Flexipass counting the two times it was never checked - and seeing how it only has 15 trips in it, that was a good guesstimation.

Got to Victoria, caught the tube to Walthamstow Central, then followed the complex instructions to get to Karen and Tracey's by bus. Much talking and showing of photos. The girls cooked us a roast chicken dinner followed by bread and butter pudding with ice cream. They live on the top floor (surprise!!!) of a share-house. The kitchen was reasonably tidy, but a thin film of grease covered all the furniture. We then retired to Tracey's bedsit to watch several episodes of Babylon 5, which we hadn't seen. Decided to catch a taxi home - it was 2am - but K&T explained that London taxis were quite, quite pricey but minicabs were cheaper. Bizarre concept - they looked like ordinary cars. Quietly assembled the futon from Hell for the last time and off to the Land of Nod.



Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.

Monday 11th September

Our last day in England. Had to post some papers back home and find a Lloyd's bank. Walked the other direction from Judith and Joseph's and found more shops and had some lunch. Got a minicab to take us the Finsbury Park Station, it was almost hit by a truck, and we didn't have to change trains by going there. Staggered along with our cases. At the JAL counter at Heathrow one of the staff noticed I was limping and arranged for us to have 3 seats in a row on the plane which made the trip a whole lot easier. The plane wasn't crowded. Had quite tasteless salmon for dinner. Had seen or didn't want to see the films. Tried to sleep.

Breakfast was a tasteless omelette and something that looked like a finger. Fruit salad and Peach Melba yogurt was nice. Time got a little confused here, as we will go through two nights and one day and several time zones.

Osaka airport is a clean airy place. We had about 5 hours to spend there. We had a very expensive cup of coffee about A\$4. Couldn't afford to have a shower, so just got changed. Spent the last of our yen in the shops and got 50 yen pieces in change so I could make ear rings from them (they have holes in the middle). There was nothing to buy in the shops under ¥200. Had to catch a little shuttle train to the terminal from the main terminal. Had seats on the plane next to the door so could stretch out. Only about 6 hours from Osaka to Cairns so didn't really get settled. At Cairns at 5:30 in the morning

Monday 11th September

No chance of sleeping in as we went through the usual morning ritual. Said goodbye to Joseph, washed, and packed then trooped off to the Post Office with £20 worth of small packets full of zines. The Post Office guy told us how to find Lloyd's Bank, though it proved to be quite a hike to get there. Cashed my second to last Traveller's cheque to cover the fare to Heathrow and departure tax. Ate at a bakery with green decor and orange chairs and a grumpy old women behind the counter - ah, British service, I'll miss it. Karen wasn't feeling well and I was worried about her. Back to the house, gave Judith a frog and said goodbye. Called a minicab to Finsbury Park. The black guy driving thought I was American. Tube to Heathrow.



Karen limped up to the counter and one of the staff asked if she needed special help, then booked us through to Sydney with three seats between us. Had some food then went into the departure lounge where we discovered that the departure tax had been paid when we bought the tickets. Karen was thrilled to discover that Harrod's ran a Duty Free shop, and surprise, bought a bear. She also bought scarves from the Tie Rack where I bought a pair of red socks to replace the gone-at-the-toe ones I was wearing. Eventually on to the plane. Teriaki salmon fillet

for dinner, with cold Pork Wellington. The was again "The Jungle Book" so dozed fitfully across the former Soviet Union until it was suddenly...

*Oh, to be in England in the summertime, with my love...
GUFF Diary of Ian and Karen, 1995.*

Tuesday 12th September

Another film - "Rob Roy", not too bad. Noticed that the language was cut. Breakfast - Karen opined that the sausage wrapped in bacon looked like a finger. Fantastic views over Japan as we arrived in Osaka.

Stuck in the transit lounge for over 5 hours. Kansai Airport is a huge, modern airport of mighty beams and graceful curves in toned shades of grey and blue. We sat. We went to the toilet. We watched a few hordes of schoolgirls pass by. We got our diaries up to date. We bought very small, very bitter cups of coffee that worked out to be about \$4 each. We played high-score Cosmic Whimpout (Karen reached 2000 points first). We lugged our overweight cabin baggage. We spent the last of our Japanese money on Duty Free tat! We changed out of our dirty, smelly clothes into clean, wrinkly ones. We took photos. For it's size (at least 70 gates) this is a remarkably quiet airport - obviously built with the future in mind, or maybe this is just an off day.



Final note: For some reason neither Ian or myself wrote anything after this. I know we must have got home somehow and safe and sound. Hopefully the rest of the report will be enough for you.

You see, I can't remember, I have a memory, like....one of those things with holes in it...

I would like to thank all those people in England who were kind to us, those who supplied us with a bed and food, and all those who made us feel welcome. This was a trip of a lifetime for me and is now one that I can't repeat with Ian. We shared a love of travel, as well as many others things in life. - KPG