

THE D.G.ENG BUGLE

Yet another year bites the dust! How did the decorating go this time? Perhaps 2006 will see a few more of these tasks completed (or not) as the case may be. I trust that you all had a successful 12 months and that next year will be even better. We are fortunate to have a different story for inclusion in *THE BUGLE* this time. Clrris Beere has written a splendid article on his recent holiday experience to Australia. He has chosen not to elaborate on his career as such but share his adventure 'down under'. I have however managed to extract one or two salient points from his working life. These are included as an introduction to Iris script.

Chris started his engineering career with a Fitter/Turner apprenticeship at the De Havilland Propeller Company (latterly Hawker Siddely Dynamics) and was subsequently employed in their Metrology department. His Ministry work began in 1968 with AQD Laboratories. In 1974 he was transferred to Rolls Royce East Kilbride, coming south again to Chessington to join Technical Publications in 1979. His engine affiliation continued in 1984 with DQA at Rolls Royce Derby and in 1987 he was accepted at the centre of excellence in DGEng. St Giles Court. With the demise of the London office he went to RAF Wyton where he was unfortunate enough to suffer a serious heart attack in 1996 and was subsequently retired from MoD in 1998. His story:-



CHRIS BEERE **AN ANORAK IN THE ANTIPEDES**

You're what? Yes!, I am going to Australia to look at daffodils and calling in to Japan on the way back to look at Bonsai trees and chrysanthemums!
A conunent like this classes you as an Anorak to lots of people. The trip, however, to Melbourne to the World Daffodil Convention was a good excuse to hang a great many "Must Do's" and by the end of this article you will undoubtedly see that I really am an Anorak par excellence.

Dayt. September the 4th 2004. I left Heathrow for Singapore and a three day stopover.

Day 2 saw me out to the Botanic Gardens to see the Orchids even though I am not an orchid enthusiast. (Those of you who knew me at St Giles will know that I had more than a passing interest in horticulture) As you would expect it was very hunrid and luxuriant 'with quite fantastic blooms.

Day 3. Two of my other interests:-
Firstly the MRT (Mass Rapid Transport) system which is smaller than our tube network but very punctual, clean and air-conditioned. I used it to travel out to the suburbs to see the Chinese Garden. The afternoon was taken up with the almost obligatory tour to a Buddhist temple and the Changi museum. (No! I didn't do the other big tourist thing in taking tea or a Gin-Sling at Raffles hotel)

Day 4. My last day in Singapore with an evening flight out. A visit to the Supermarkets to buy water for my flight and also one of my Anorak actions to see how they do their food demonstrating in the local supermarket. This latter investigation reflects my current retirement job with Sainsbury's doing just this. Their Stands were a lot smaller than urine and they were allowed to cook raw meat and fish which I cannot. Their food hygiene regulations seemed more relaxed and they were also more aggressive in their approach to the customers

One final point is that they do not allow photography as they were worried that their competitors would steal their "Secrets". Business is very cut-throat!

Day 5 - Melbourne - in on the train to the middle of Melbourne, very like ours - well worn. A trip to my travel agent (Trailfinders) to book some hotels and a hire car and the Qantas office to reschedule a flight, then a couple of pints of VB (Victoria Bitter) and a walk round the Royal Botanic Garden.

Day 6 the Daffodil Convention in Melbourne, where delegates from all over the world were present. Topics included: Pest & Diseases, Hybridisation and Quarantining. Yes!, Yes!, the Anorak had arrived!! A tip for the unwary: Don't trust that pretty little Beagle dog at customs, it's not after drugs but the sandwiches and the pork pies brought for your brother. That's why Oz and NZ are so clean!

Day 10 a drive to the north of Victoria to visit Brown Bros. Vineyard at Milawa. Ever since I started in the wine business several years ago I have been impressed by their wines and this was an ideal opportunity to go and look and taste some of their other wines - we only get about four types in the U.K.

Day 13 over to Hobart for another daffodil show followed by a reception given by the City's Lord Mayor for all the foreign visitors. And then a trip to the south of Tasmania to visit the biggest daffodil nursery on the island, via the Air Walk (a walkway suspended high in the eucalyptus forest). Not for those with vertigo!

Day 17. Up to the north of Tasmania to visit Pipers Brook Vineyard. I knew nothing of it when I left the U'K, except it was marked in my wine atlas - again look, see and taste, very good. Like all vineyards I visited in Australia and N.z. they add value to their base products with tours, tastings and excellent restaurants.

Day 20. Hobart to Christchurch N.Z. My flight schedule didn't quite match so I ended up spending nine hours in Sydney. So I caught the train in from the airport (I was still domestic) had couple of schooners of Guinness at Circular Quay (the ferry terminal in Sydney), a walk in the Botanic Garden and the obligatory photo taken by the Opera House. A spot of lunch then back to the airport. Arrived Christchurch midnight - all good anorak stuff.



ONE OBLIGATORY PHOTOGRAPH.

Day 21 a walk in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Christchurch then a drive down to Timaru for another daffodil show; more daffodil nurseries and another formal dinner. Now it is time to put the yellow anorak away and send the suit back to the UK.

Day 24 saw the end of the daffodil soiree with a short drive down NZ's South Island to Oamaru to visit the gardens there, beautifully kept only surpassed, I think, by the Valley Gardens in Harrogate. From here it was inland to the mountains of Central Otago and the Pinot Noir vineyards. Pinot Noir from N.Z. is beginning to get a cult following, mainly because it is a fantastic wine, well produced but unfortunately rather expensive, even in N.Z.

Day 27. A drive to the Marlborough wine region in the north of South Island and a visit to another "must do" Cloudy Bay Vineyard; possibly the world's finest producer of Sauvignon Blanc wines.



CHRIS AT CLOUDY BAY VINEYARD

Day 32. Staying with "her indoors" brother at Palmerston North, a minor earthquake and the creek about to flood from the incessant rain just added to the anorak "ticks".

Day 34 visiting the Geysers (no not the great and good of DG Eng) in the Waimangu volcanic valley - a fantastic experience - I had seen it before and had to re-visit. A real anorak experience. The original European settlers must have been completely mesmerized when they came across it. It would have been a completely new encounter to them.

Day 35. Hamilton Botanic Garden. Here a whole series of small gardens have been made in national styles e.g. English, Chinese, etc. but by far the best was the American - very minimalist complete with swimming pool and Marilyn Monroe mural. The Italian garden which was almost like a set from a Romeo and Juliet film. A real must if ever you go to N.z. Sorry, another anorak.

Day 39. Two anoraks in one day in Auckland. Firstly the N.z. Maritime Museum next door to the Americas Cup dock but the anorak of all anoraks was finding the 'Robert Burns' statue. I had become a Burns' fan during my five year posting to East Kilbride. Apparently every capital city has a Burns statue. Question: Where is the RB statue in London? Answer: on a five pound note to the undersigned.

Day 42. Back in Australia in Adelaide and more gardens: a Japanese and a Royal Botanic which contain the most fantastic rose garden I have ever seen considering that, climate wise, this was equivalent to our April and the roses in this three-acre site were in full bloom. Next door to the garden was the Australian National Wine Centre. Here you could taste a range of Australian wines - possibly the best the Australian wine industry could produce. It's the sun, soil and technique that do it.

Day 44 and another full Anorak day. For forty years, ever since reading the Last Grain Race by Eric Newby, I had longed to visit Port Victoria on the Spencer Gulf. This port which was, and still is, just a protected anchorage with a jetty was one of the main arteries for exporting grain to Europe under sail up to the outbreak of the second world war. Another "must" crossed off.

> Days 45 - 48. Four Anorak days in the Barrosa Valley just wine tasting. No driving apart from the three-hour each way journey to and from Hardy's Banrock station vineyard on the Murray river (this is Hardy's environmentally friendly vineyard) with Wetlands black swans and pelicans. We get wine from this yard in the D.K.

Day 52. Brisbane, then a journey by coach to Grafton, south of Brisbane, this was my first encounter with Back Packers. We seemed to be picking them up all the way along the route which was overnight to Sydney. I was glad it wasn't me doing that! The stop in Grafton was to visit friends and see the Jacaranda trees in bloom. Magnificent!

Day 55. Back to Brisbane. Arrived at midnight a very dodgy hotel but I did get some sleep. Up at 05.00 hrs. taxi to airport. Next stop Japan (via Cairns).

Day 56. Travelling, Brisbane- Cairns- Cairns- Osaka, Osaka to Kyoto on a coach. This was a tourist bit. I was met at the airport by an English speaking guide who was very worried that it took me so long to get through immigration. I was behind a contingent of Phillipino maids who did not have the correct documentation.

Day 57 & 58 Kyoto. I had been to Japan before but not here. The easiest way to see places of interest is, by what is an anathema to the independent traveller by coach trips I saw everything from castles to the Golden Temple, the Great Buddha and sacred deer at Nara and numerous gardens but after two days of this you get a little 'templated' out. The tours however give you a good basis of what to revisit and also etiquette which as a visitor you should try to observe. It was all Look, Listen and Learn which had been one of my watch words throughout the trip.

Day 59 a double Anorak day. Destination Hiroshima on the Bullet train was an experience far more utilitarian than I expected but fast, clean and punctual it certainly was. The visit to the city was almost a pilgrimage, being a child of the bomb and working in the war game for most of my career. Quite a sobering experience but on the same trip I made a visit to the island of Miyajima. It is the one with the shrine gate in the middle of the water that appears in Japanese tourist shots. (Have you ever seen an abacus used in anger, I have, it was used to add up the bill for my lunch.).

Day 60. First sighting of a chrysanthemum as I was on a sort of commission from one of my local societies. It was a god send. It was in a temple where there was a display of them completely different from our D.K. blooms which have been hybridized down a size and floral perfection route, whereas the Japanese have gone down a decorative route. Unfortunately, the Monks didn't know why the display was there.

Day 61. Kyoto to Tokyo another Bullet train trip. I managed to find my way round Tokyo to Ikebuko where my hotel was on the underground but took the wrong turning out of the subway and got lost. Not the best thing to do in a very foreign city but thankfully a couple of very helpful Japanese put me back on the right track.

Day 62. A day trip to Omiya Koen about twenty miles to the north of Tokyo. This was on a normal suburban train. The village of Omiya is a Mecca for all Bonsai enthusiasts where there must be about ten Bonsai nurseries/show gardens with trees up to 400 years old. Strange, however, that you cannot take photos as the trees are protected by Intellectual Property Rights. A sushi take-away for lunch and that was another "must do" ticked. On the way back to my hotel I came across another display of chrysanthemums, this time at the Ikebuko railway station. They were the same decorative style as those seen in Kyoto. The Surrey Aficionados were not impressed when they saw the photos.

Day 65. Going home day. One of my "must do's" in Japan was to look at cascade chrysanthemums - this is where you grow sprays of hundreds of tumbling flowers. Despite asking around I couldn't find out where to see them. By sod's law I was reading the free magazine on the shuttle out to the airport and there was an article on Cascade chrysanthemums and where the shows were. Now if I had flown from Kyoto to Tokyo instead of using the train I wouldn't have got lost and would have seen my Cascades.

Some thoughts. I travelled on my own. My flights, car hire and first night hotel were booked through Trailfinders. I was away for a shade over nine weeks, taken 50 cassettes of film, slept in 30 different beds, driven over 4000 miles and flown a total of 27000+ miles on 11 aircraft but cannot remember what they were. (I am not a Ken Enunings).

As for coincidences, whilst in Singapore on the Changi trip, I was asked 'what did you do before you retired?' I replied; 'worked in an MoD Engine Project Office!' to which came an instant response; 'did you know a Mike Cole?' 'Yes, he was my Boss'. It appeared that my Questioner and Mike belonged to the same Model Railway Society. Now they say that they are 'Enthusiasts' because they do not collect numbers but to me they are railway Anoraks. Perhaps I'd better re-write this dossier substituting the two words? I think not!

PiS. *ADVERTISEMENT: There is an illustrative talk to go with this article. Please contact my Agent; Mr lvi Hurry for further details. Usuallecturingfees apply.*

My grateful thanks as always to the Author, "Chris on this occasion", for his contribution to **THE BUGLE**. Perhaps others may feel that their holiday adventures are worthy of a mention or two? Please feel free!

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