

# **THE HOLE AT THE END OF THE ROAD**

**The Authorised, Ideologically Correct  
Guide to the  
People's Republic  
of South Bandicoot**

**by  
Maeve Clark**

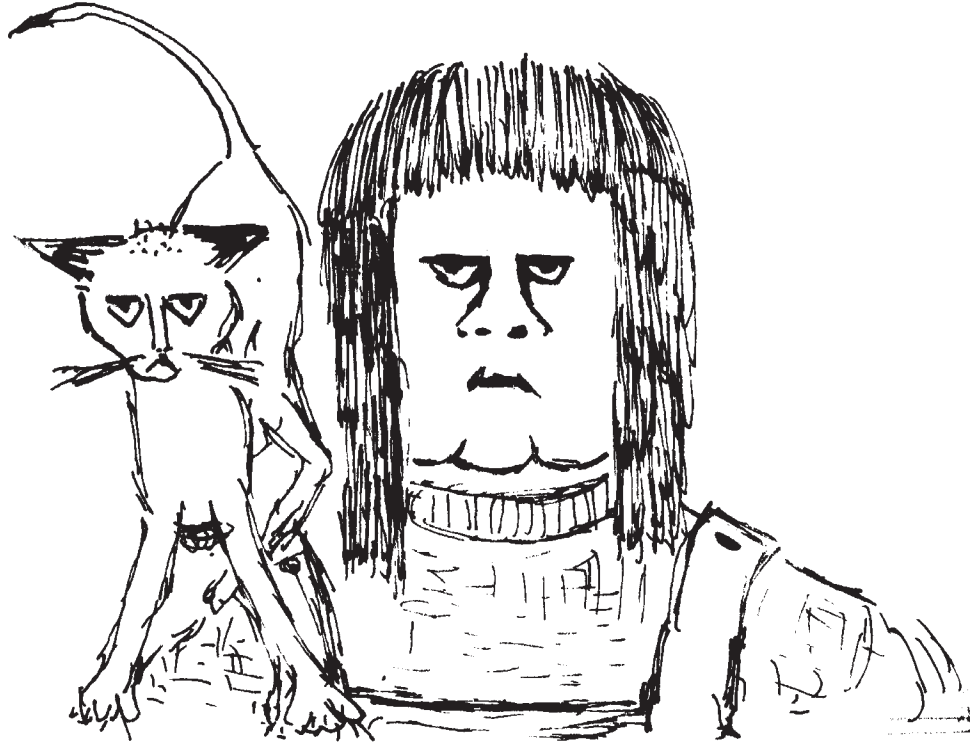
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## Foreword



The obscene gloating of the right-wing press over the irrevocable slide into chaos and decay of the stalinist so-called People's Republics of the communist world constitutes a masterpiece of myopic self-delusion. When a dinosaur died of a terminal disease, did the other dinosaurs congratulate themselves as being superior, neither noticing nor understanding their common symptoms of excessive size, cold-bloodedness, lavish consumption and single-minded greed, or did they see the rodents scurrying underfoot, and wonder where the future lay?

For South Bandicoot is as those rodents, a tiny, unnoticed creature holding aloft a banner of hope for those oppressed by dictatorship, democracy, theocracy, and socialism alike.

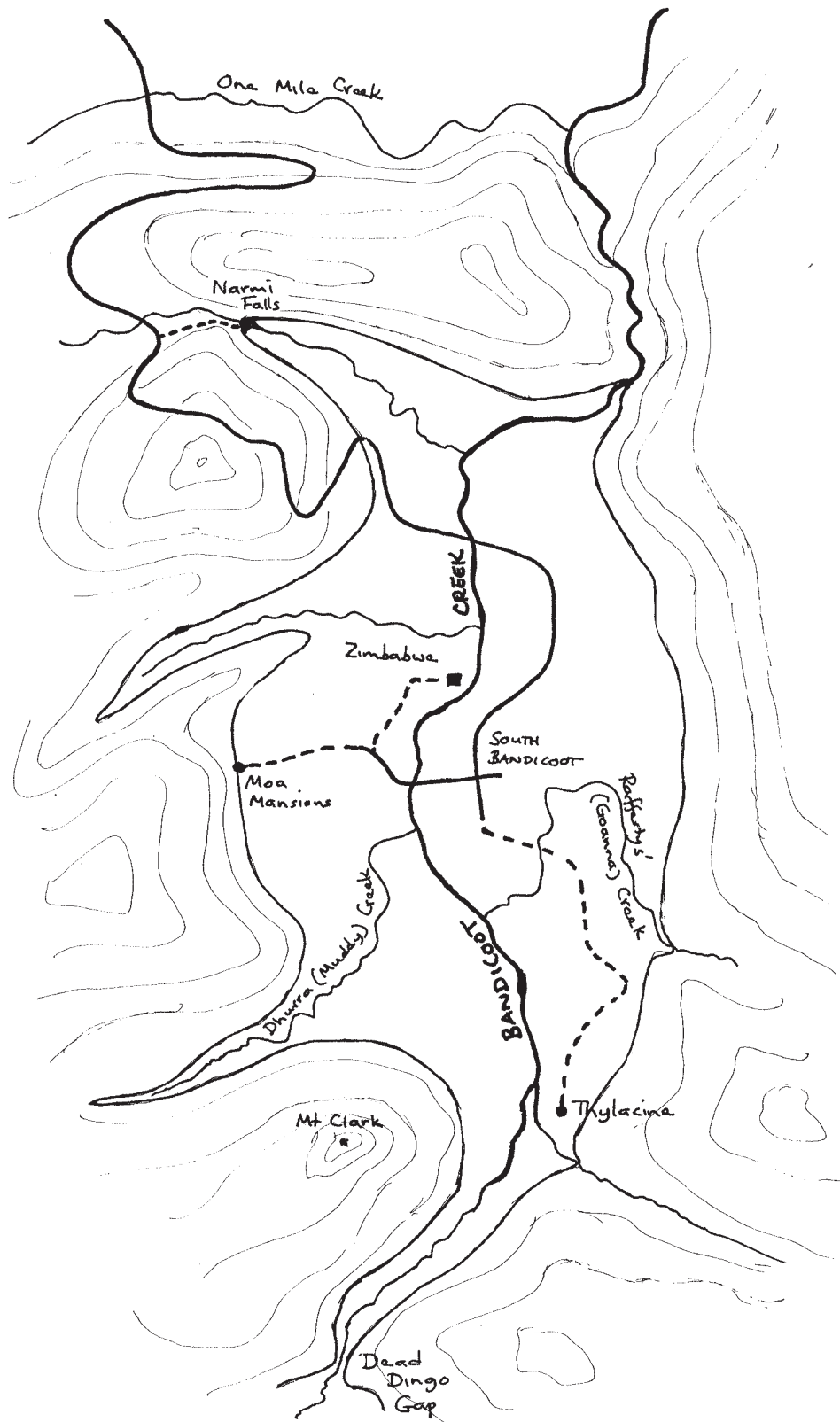
The People's Republic of South Bandicoot occupies an area of 50 km by 20 km in the heart of the Great Dividing Range in Eastern Australia.

Devastated by drought and then flood, and smarting under the combined neglect and oppression of Federal, State and Local governments of all political hues, the entire population took advantage of the contradiction inherent in the only access road being cut by rain to rise as one and declare their independence from the oppressor.

This book tells the story of South Bandicoot, from the beginnings to that momentous revolution and its aftermath.

*S. Clark*

**Sandra Clark**  
Chairperson,  
Management Collective of the People's Republic of  
South Bandicoot



Bandicoot Valley

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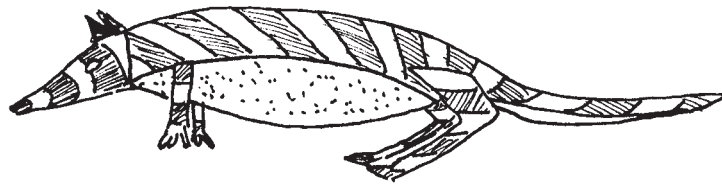


## **PART 1**

### **A FALSE START**







Dhurwan

## Chapter 1

### In the Dreamtime

A long time ago, there were only mountains. Dhurwan the bandicoot lived in these mountains. Dhurwan was tiny, so tiny that an ant would make a day's food, and catching a fly was a battle, and his nose was no longer than yours or mine. But Dhurwan was greedy, and he was lazy. He lay on his side in a cleft in the rocks, and sucked in ants as if he was a vacuum cleaner and topped them off with butterflies and beetles until his stomach bulged, and he began to grow. And as he grew, he ate earthworms and gumnuts and mice and galahs and lizards and wombats and goannas and emus and kangaroos, and his weight made him sink into the earth, pushing the mountains apart.

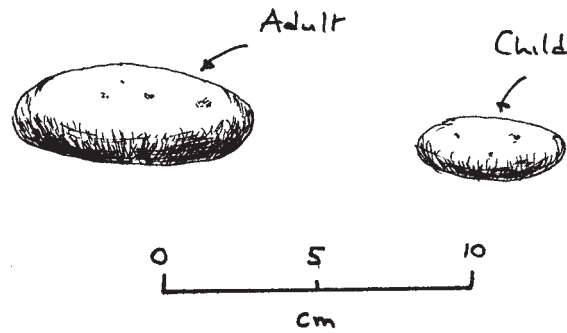
Then Dhurwan became hungry, because the few remaining animals in the world had hidden behind the mountains, and when he tried to get up he could not, because he had become so fat and heavy, and his legs and tail were wedged in cracks in the mountains. He could barely lift his head, to peer over the closest hills, and for a while that sufficed him, as his nose grew longer to find the animals crouching at the bottom of nearby crevasses.

But soon, he had eaten them, too, and he lay there, helpless and hungry, pondering over his own greed. Finally he made a promise to all that could hear, even to the bunyip, that if he became small again, he would eat only the insects that bite and the little rodents that nibble at the dilly-bags, and would never gorge himself again. And then he slept for a long time, the rumblings in his belly bringing dark clouds and flashes of lightning, and when he awoke, he stood up and shook himself, and looked around the enormous valley that he had made: at the winding river where his backbone had pressed into the earth, at the rock ledge where his neck had rested, at the side valleys with their bubbling creeks which had held his legs, and at the wet marshlands where his belly had been. And he thought, "It's not every Bandicoot that makes its own valley."

He has one other reminder, too, of his days of gluttony. He still has his long nose, which he uses to burrow into the earth to search for little rodents at the bottoms of their deep burrows.

This, then, is the aboriginal legend of the formation of Bandicoot Valley, and even now is the origin of many of the placenames in the valley, such as Durra Creek (from *dhurra*, meaning thigh) and Narmi Falls (from *nhami* = jaw). An early map even calls Bandicoot Creek the *Dervent River*, an obvious corruption of *dhurwan*.

However, not all authorities accept that this is the correct explanation of the name, suggesting that the early white settlers may have had an influence. Professor Pandit Khan, Professor of South Bandicoot Archaeology at South Bandicoot University, suggests that it may have been a misunderstanding of a query "Master?" (*beang'go*) when aboriginal servants were asked the



Aboriginal Throwing Stones

name of the place, while Dr Charles Rafferty, author of the until now definitive work on South Bandicoot prior to the revolution, suggests that it arose because one of the early settlers (probably “Nobby” Clark) was a bandy old coot.

Before the revolution, research on the Aboriginal inhabitants of South Bandicoot was a totally neglected area, it being regarded as merely another part of the Southern Tablelands tribal area. Recent research has revealed, however, that South Bandicoot was the territory for a distinct tribe, the Nganfui, which, although related to the other Southern Tablelands tribes, also had distinct elements of culture and ritual.

An interesting instance of this is the Annual Moth Feast. Every spring, tribes from as far afield as Gippsland and Limestone Plains (now Canberra) gathered at the foot of Mt. Jagungal in the Snowy Mountains, to feast on the succulent flesh of the Bogong Moth. The Nganfui played a prominent part in this feast, but being, in a sense, locals (although the meeting place was outside their own tribal area), obviously felt entitled to a longer trip away. This occurred between late December and late January, when an equally massive (but much less well documented) prawn feast was held at what is now Bateman’s Bay. Prawns in their thousands were scooped up using primitive nets, or speared with special prawn spears, plunged into boiling water, and eaten on the spot.

However, although this feast was a feast to end all feasts, the aftermath was, to say the least, tragic, the distended bellies of the old and the weak making the return journey up Clyde Mountain into a nightmare.



The Site of the finding of Bandicoot Man

Aboriginal settlement in South Bandicoot is very ancient. Professor Khan has found aboriginal artifacts, including a perfectly preserved collection of traditional aboriginal Throwing Stones in the bed of Raffertys' Creek, which he dates back to 200,000 years ago, and he is hopeful of even earlier finds. He has described South Bandicoot as "the cradle of human civilisation". His current research is concentrated on the caves in the western side of the valley, where he hopes to discover evidence of the very earliest forms of man, and to demonstrate, for once and for all, from whence they spread out to populate the world. As he says:

We all know that *Australopithecus* was so named because he came from Australia. All we need to do now is to find his remains.

Professor Mfanwy Hughes, of the University of All of Southern New South Wales, disagrees with Professor Khan's findings. On a recent edition of *30 Seconds*, he said:

It's a load of old crap. The site he's working was laid down by the 1948 floods, and there's nothing older there than a few fag packets. But then if that guy did find a coke bottle, he'd use it to deduce that Coke had been manufactured 60,000 years ago.





Zimbabwe

## Chapter 2

### The Zimbabwe of the Southern Tablelands

The first white man to set foot in South Bandicoot was Nobelius Augustus (“Nobby”) Clark, an ex-Captain of the British army who had served with distinction in the Peninsular War, but was cashiered after disgracing himself at Waterloo when he fought on the wrong side, not realising that the unit to which he was attached had defected to Napoleon. At his Court Martial, he tried desperately to defend himself:

“I am a professional soldier,” he said. “I have fought frogs and wops and krauts and boongs. I have fought with frogs and wops and krauts and boongs. I have fought in desert and I have fought in forest. I have fought in searing heat and I have fought in freezing snow. I have fought facing England. I have fought facing away from England. I obey orders. My last order was to join Marshal Ney and to obey his orders. What have I done wrong?”

After a series of futile attempts to rehabilitate himself, he decided to migrate to the colonies. A quick check on the whereabouts of members of his old regiment revealing that none were in Sydney, he embarked at Southampton on the *Lady Denman* on 31st March, 1827 with high hopes and a borrowed letter of introduction to Governor Bligh. After a frustrating two years in which his chicken farm at Mt Druitt near Sydney was washed away in floods, decimated by disease, wrecked by dissident members of the 13th Penrith Rifles and finally confiscated by the New South Wales Chicken Control Commission, he obtained a crown lease on fifty acres in the Southern Tablelands for the princely sum of 1s per year. Spending his remaining 13/4d on stock, he set out in late June, 1831. As his journal records, in the beginning there was nothing but disappointment:

It is a desert of trees. Nothing but trees. We scrambled for a day up a steep rise, hacking through scrub and creepers, the tops of the trees vanishing as pillars into the sky, fighting to keep the pigs together as they foraged on gum nuts as though they were acorns, and at the top we looked down into the next valley: an undulating wave of trees reaching to another crest, another valley, another wave of trees. Is there anything but forest? I keep on

only for the sake of the pigs, but do they appreciate it, do they understand? Why should they? A gumnut is a gumnut is a gumnut, and any gumnut is the same as any other gumnut, until it has been eaten, when it ceases to be a gumnut and another gumnut must be found. Only acorns are better, but there are no acorns here, only gumnuts.

Clark's maps were hopeless. His lease was a collection of lines on a blank piece of paper. At first, he tried to find it. Eventually he succumbed to the temptation of lesser men: find a spot that you like and grab it. His journal describes the discovery:

At last, we have come to Eden. A broad valley, grassland, with a river flowing through, and a line of trees. The pigs disagree. They wish to go back into the trees and find more gumnuts, but I am sure that there will be more gumnuts down by the river. So who shall be the winner, a claustrophobic man or a mob of agoraphobic pigs? Only time will tell.

He picks up the story again the next day:

The pigs and I have reached a compromise. Can one compromise with a pig? They think that they have won, but for all that, we are in the middle of the valley, in a copse of trees where a small creek joins the river. Upstream, about a mile or so, there is an aboriginal encampment. I can see the plumes of smoke from their cooking fires rising above the trees, and more strangely, some piled stones, almost as if there were a dry stone wall. Is it possible that some aboriginals have risen above rude lean-tos and a life of wandering? Could this be the Zimbabwe of the Southern Tablelands? I must find out tomorrow.

The letters of Maria Tully, now in the Centre for Australian Studies at the University of Melbourne, Wisconsin, U.S.A., tell us a lot about the early days of South Bandicoot. Maria's father, Sir Ingham Tully, was a model proprietor for his small estate at Sodding Parva in Dorset, specialising in the development of crops which were adaptable to the social ecology of the day, such as



An Early Depiction of Bandicoot Valley,  
attributed to Lee Wan Tu.



Maria Tully

corn that stood up again when the fox hunt had passed and homing pheasants that escaped from poachers' bags. Maria was the fifth child and only surviving daughter of Sir Ingham. Contemporary reports indicate that she was an ugly duckling as a child, all teeth and freckles. She had little formal schooling, although scoring a record "kill" for the time of seventeen governesses in three years, sixteen of them being

... carried away from Tully House in seas of tears which did not cease until they were finally laid to rest.

The full story of the music master has never been told. Consequently, Maria spent most of her time in the stables and on the farm with her brothers.

At the age of sixteen she was suddenly declared the neighbourhood beauty, and received a constant stream of invitations to balls and parties. It is not clear how much this had to do with her father's acknowledgedly handsome fortune (which was later dissipated on a peculiarly recalcitrant variety of spinach), and how much to genuine beauty. The only extant portrait, a miniature that forms part of the Tully Collection in the Greenland Museum of Technology, reveals little other than a conventional Victorian insipidity.

At twenty, Maria was still unmarried and was regarded as being "on the shelf". At least some of this stemmed from her own outrageous behaviour, such as riding astride and managing the farm single-handed during her father's now extended absences in London, but it is clear that she also rejected one "very flattering" offer, a decision that was to cause her great misfortune.

On 13th December, 1828, Maria Tully was tried for the murder of Solomon Nash before Mr Justice Azrael at the Assizes at Sodding St Paul. The prosecution case was based on the findings of the Coroner, Mr Justin Saltmarsh, a second cousin and rejected suitor of Maria Tully. The coroner found that Miss Tully:

... did willingly go out upon the terrace with Mr Nash on a night of cold and wind and rain, with clear purpose that could not but fail to impress upon Mr Nash that the normal conventions of polite behaviour were to be treated with contempt, and that once there she did push him so hard on the wet pavement that he did not only smash open the rear of his



skull upon a gargoyle but then fell to his death into the ha-ha, whereupon he broke his neck.

Maria's defence was that the room was hot and that she had felt faint, and had requested Mr Nash's escort since on previous meetings he had been "a prettily behaved young man" and she felt that she would be safe with him. Finding Mr Nash's advances distasteful, she had pushed him gently away, but his foot had slipped on the wet flagstones, with fatal results. Eyes downcast, she regretted that the defence of her honour had brought such high toll, but challenged the court to require that any woman, placed in such a position, should behave any differently.

The jury, aware both of Miss Tully's reputation and of the need to protect their womenfolk, compromised by finding her guilty of manslaughter. An obviously disappointed Justice Azrael, who had spent the luncheon adjournment being fitted for a new black cap, sentenced her to transportation for fourteen years.

On 28th February, 1830, Maria Tully was assigned as a domestic servant to Jenkins Metatron, a former Archbishop of Penang who had a crown lease of over a million acres covering parts of the Southern Tablelands and Snowy Mountains area that nobody had ever seen. Metatron was described by W.C. Wentworth as:

... a travesty of a man. His teeth are green and his hair is matted and purple. He thinks only of women and of the acquisition of money for the purchase of the same, but has powerful friends at home such as Lord Belphegor and Bishop Saktas, so the Governor must listen to him and pander to his whims. His broad acres are grazed by none but moths and wallabies whilst he turns the slums of Parramatta from cesspit to charnel house.

Maria Tully was delivered to Metatron's house at 11 a.m. on that day. Two hours later, she had disappeared. Bloodstained garments, identified as hers, were found on the premises, and the finger of public opprobrium, pointed at Metatron, surged over him and nearly washed him away. There was no firm evidence, however, and no body, so Metatron never came to trial.

A recently discovered letter, written almost a year later by Maria to her next oldest brother, Gladstone, serving at the British Embassy in Moscow, does little to solve the mystery:

When this letter reaches you, it will prove the miracle of modern communication where there is supposedly none at all. It will never cease to entertain me the way in which a smile, a friendly dray driver and a few months' dry weather will achieve, albeit with less apparent expedition, that which mail coaches and steam engines forever promise but consistently fail to deliver.

Your Maria has, of course, fallen on her feet in this vast land, although the feet cannot equal in size nor power those of our most distinguished native inhabitants who bounce across the plains as if with seven league boots...

In another letter, Maria describes the arrival of Nobby Clark:

Our little paradise, it seems, has finally been invaded by the white man. Meaning no insult, my dearest brother, but absence does not make the heart grow fonder, nor make the hirsute gender the more desirable.

It happened upon a totally miserable day last November, bleak and overcast and cold: almost like England! Ellen and I had finally completed the wall around the garden, to keep the wombats from the peas. It is dry stone, and heavy, because the wombats push very hard and had reduced the old brush fence to ribbons within a few nights. We had spent many days carrying the stones from the stream, even with the help of Xenophon, Artaxerxes and Darius, the three of our local aboriginies who are the most friendly. The name of the tribe sounds almost Welsh, but Xenophon, at least, is beginning to speak quite passable English, although his sentence construction and use of articles is still a lit-



the eccentric. Florence, our maid, is of course completely fluent, except where strange engines such as our new mangle leave her totally speechless.

Artaxerxes and Xenophon came up the front path and rapped on the door. Ellen was going to send them away, because they have strict instructions that if they wish to see Florence then they should call at the Tradesmen's Entrance (which otherwise would be little used owing to the scarcity of delivery services in this region), but it was obvious to me that they were labouring under some serious concern, so I came to the door and asked them what was the matter.

"White man come, Missus Tully," Xenophon said. "Up alonga hill, with big mob dogs go 'grunt, oink'. Him belonga you?"

I shook my head. "He is not mine."

"You want we stick him?" Xenophon asked.

Ellen was nodding so fast that I thought that her head would fall off, but I held up my hand to restrain her.

"No, Xenophon," I said. "We do not do that sort of thing here." I could have added "not unless he has green teeth and purple hair", but I could not see that we were in any risk of that person's presence.

Maria Tully's first impressions of Clark were not favourable:

He is stupid, that no person will deny. He comes over the hill, when there is a perfectly good track down the valley, and he settles where Muddy Creek joins the river and so will be neck deep in water the next time that it rains. His upper lip is so stiff that his moustache misses his mutton chops by at least two inches.

Later on, her opinion becomes more charitable:

He is, of course, utterly stupid, but then what man is not? Underneath that stupidity there is, however, a kindness that encompasses more than his pigs, and his gumnut bacon has a delicacy that pleases the most critical of tastes.

In her last extant letter, which was in fact written after the death of her brother, who was devoured by wolves while attempting to cross the Volga on 13th September, 1832 (an incident which nearly led to war between Britain and Russia), there is a foretaste of the tragedies to come:

Xenophon is dead. Captain Clark thinks that it is swine fever, because his pigs have runny noses too, and is blaming himself for bringing it upon us, but I cannot agree with



Xenophon, with the stubby didgeridoo so characteristic of the local aboriginal tribe.

him, because Xenophon was no swine but a nice man; a much nicer man than many with far lighter skins. Darius and Cyrus are also sick, and Florence is looking peaky. They are fatalistic about death. "It comes to us all", Xenophon told me. I hope that it does not come to them all, because they are good neighbours, and useful to have around.



A Swindle of Raffertys

## Chapter 3

### Gold! Gold! Gold!

In the spring of 1862, Bandicoot Valley was transformed overnight from a peaceful farming community of three or four families into a jostling, hectic town of ten thousand people, with no less than twenty hotels and a brewery. A letter from Arabella Clark to her sister Isobel Cohen, who had married into a prosperous ham curer's family in Sydney, tells us how it all began:

It is most unfair of you to blame us for Cousin Godfrey's indiscretion. Not even Father would be stupid enough to walk into the busiest bank in Sydney, still dirty and stained from a long journey, and thump down on the counter, in full view of the idle, the covetous and the criminal classes, a leaking bag of gold, and then complain to us, if you would believe it, that for the remainder of his sojourn in Sydney Town he was followed by no fewer than twenty people at any one time, who attempted continuously to discover his identity and from whence he came.

To be charitable, the blame lies more with Godfrey's silly new wife, whom you have not met and I assure you would be grateful not to, with her visions of grand country estates and glittering balls, for it was her who sent him, I am sure, out of the valley by a back way with a bag of gold that in her eyes represented little short of a fortune, but which, I hear, barely paid for his trip once old Bucephalus (which you were wont to call Brucellosis) drowned in One Mile Creek. What is more, a much coloured account of a certain visit to a Mrs Lola O'Malley of Macquarie Street (a person who, apparently, does not mix publicly in the best of circles), in which it is said that a crowd of over one hundred gathered and had to be dispersed by the police, has gained a considerable circulation in the neighbourhood, and has come, by some means of which I am not cognisant, to the ears of Godfrey's wife, in consequence of which Cousin Godfrey is now, it seems, sleeping with the dogs in the barn, his magnificent country mansion not running to a dressing room.

Thus has our secret golden hoard, which was little enough, in any consideration, except to provide a few compensations for our isolation and harsh winters, come to be the subject of an insane scramble by denizens of the four corners of the globe, and I am sure of the moon as well. Father is foaming at the mouth, and rides the fences every day in the vain pursuit of claim-jumpers, but Mama smiles serenely as usual and is, I think, begin-

ning to persuade him of the obvious truth that pigs and geese and oats will fetch far in excess of their weight in gold if we do but wait until the few weeks' supplies that most of the newcomers have brought become exhausted.

Tent cities rapidly sprang up along Bandicoot Creek and its tributaries, as the first comers panned feverishly for gold. Soon the obvious pickings were exhausted, and the hard grind began, as the shafts sank deeper and deeper in the hunt for the elusive quartz reefs. More substantial buildings began to appear on higher ground about a kilometre from the river. The axis of the town ran roughly east-west, along the line that is now Clark Street, down to the ford on the Bandicoot River, from which a track led up to *Zimbabwe*, the Clark homestead.

The *Bandicoot Herald* reports on the New South Wales Government's attempts to name the town:

So they want to call it *Disraeli* because they think the naming of an obscure town will be sufficient flattery to bring floods of assistance to the straitened colonial coffers. If this town were to be the beneficiary of even a small part of this largesse, we might be impelled to demonstrate a modicum of interest in such a proposal, but since our road seems condemned to remain more suitable to mud sleds and carrier pigeons than to proper vehicles, we should be content to call ourselves that which we always have, which is *South Bandicoot*.

The reason for the inclusion of the word South is not clear. Professor Khan suggests that it may be a contraction of *Southwell*, as in Samuel Southwell, a Limestone Plains resident famous for sighting a bunyip, but since the connection between that bunyip and the one that lived in Raffertys' Creek at least until 1931 is somewhat tenuous, this explanation must be regarded with caution. Other explanations include the fact that the new town was to the south of the original settlement, or to the south of the bend in the river; or a suggestion that somebody knew of another place further north called Bandicoot that since has been lost in history.

Conditions in the town were primitive. The main street was a muddy track, and what little drinking water there was was drawn from two wells along the street, the river and the creeks being stirred up and polluted. The few trees were chopped down for firewood, and to erect the flimsy timber buildings. Arabella Clark describes the effect:

We seldom go across the river these days. The copse at the meeting of Muddy Creek and the river is gone, and in its place is a sea of mud in which not even the pigs would wish to wallow. The town is full of drunken men whose manners leave much to be desired. Father, I think, would like to lock us up, and so would our dear brother Edward, but Mama says that she really finds it rather exciting and that we should enjoy it while it lasts. Although, what "it" is, unless it is mud and dirt and drunken songs, I cannot really say.

Access to and from the valley was via a single track which soon became almost impassable. As the *Bandicoot Clarion* reports:

Ned Clark is giving his mare Frederica swimming lessons, because the road to Sydney is so poor and the holes so deep that when it rains, it is deeper than the Bandicoot River itself.

Law and order was also a problem. The *Bandicoot Herald* reported robberies and violence almost daily:

The law in this town is not an ass. It has insufficient flesh for even that. It is treated with contempt. The hotels remain open twenty four hours a day; picks and shovels are valued as offensive weapons and not for breaking the ground; and a claim is seen as valid only for such time as the possessors are larger, more numerous and less inebriated than those that covet it. By far the greatest evil in this town goes by the name of Murphy's Gumnut

Whiskey, a concoction that blinds and maims, and on which its perpetrator Tadeusz Murfovic pays not a penny of excise.

The *Bandicoot Clarion* saw it in another light:

Talk of law and order is a nonsense. Whom does it benefit? Those who have already robbed those, who through the sweat of their own brow, have won the precious gold from the ground, only to have it taken from them by profiteers and racketeers who would charge 1s for a biscuit and a pound for a loaf of bread.

By late in 1862 police were permanently posted in the town, but their manpower was woefully inadequate, as the reports of Sergeant Wilkinson to his superior, Inspector Savage, in Campbelltown, testify:

The hotels continue to trade without interruption, because as fast as we close one and move on to the next, it reopens and the drunks crawl back in from the street.

The banks are robbed daily, and last Sunday, the entire collection at St Matthew in the Mud, earmarked for repair of the fabric (which is badly torn), was hijacked by armed bandits, and dissipated in McNaughten's bar before the malefactors could be apprehended.

By early in 1863, robberies of people leaving Bandicoot Valley had developed from the casual "rolling" or "mugging" of incautious individuals to an organised campaign of bushranging, which reached a stage that even coaches with an armed escort were unwilling to traverse the muddy track that led out of the valley. Sergeant Wilkinson had his suspicions, but could prove nothing:

I believe that the Raffertys have a hand in it. If the creek on which they are camped has yielded even a speck of gold, or the hole in which they sit and play cards all day when they are not distilling the most poisonous potheen this side of County Kerry has given up even a fragment of quartz, then I am an Irishman; yet they have food on their table that Captain Clark informs me was paid for, and their credit is good in every bar except McNaughten's, and that is only because the proprietor is an Ulsterman.

Arabella Clark also describes the Raffertys in one of her letters:



Sydney Road in 1863



Equipment used in the Extraction of Gold  
- Raffertys' Mine

Do you remember that stony little hill beside Goanna Creek where Alexander Ord tried to run his goats? Well, a tribe of Irishmen (or is it Irishwomen?), most of whose names are Rafferty, although I would not dare to define their interrelationships, have put a sheet of iron over the ruins, and dug shafts and thrown up mounds, so that it appears like nothing more than an ancient Celtic fort. The men are all little and wiry and you would not think that they could hurt a flea until you see the viciousness with which they will step on one; but the women look as if they could have accompanied Hannibal over the Alps, except that they have no trunks, but rather are conical in shape, and as their heads swivel around to watch their hordes of children, their brooms move too, as if they were pointing guns and crying "Exterminate!"

Little Sean Rafferty, however, has made quite a hit with Father. He is a runt of a child who looks about nine but Father says that he is twelve. Father found him one day leaning over the pig pen talking to Pantagruel, whose attitude to us, as you know, is one of lofty contempt. He is good with the geese, too, and horses and goats and bullocks, and indeed anything that runs on four legs. Mama says that he is dishonest and sly, and that although he might be good with animals, humans to him are nothing, and that while he pets the pigs, his younger sister Megan is engaged upon the theft of anything which she can lift, whether it be tools or harness or food, and that Sean then hides it and helps her carry it away.

Mama smiles more upon the Lees, who although they speak only Chinese, have managed to give her a recipe for barbeque pork which makes a pleasant change from that everlasting gumnut bacon.

By the beginning of March, the situation had become desperate. The *Bandicoot Herald* reports:

There has not been a shipment of gold for nearly a month, nor a shipment of food to fill our starving bellies for over a week, for who would bring food, for whatever gold it will fetch, when the chance of taking it safely from the valley is negligible. Must we eat gold?

The *Bandicoot Clarion*, as was its wont, gives another view of the problem:



The assets of the usurers are locked away more safely than in the strongest vault in Sydney, held as they are in a flimsy safe in a rickety shack, surrounded by the wrath of the people of South Bandicoot, who have been swindled, overcharged and plain robbed by the vampires in ties and tails. But we hear that the police, too busy in harassing the attempts of the few enterprising women in the town to earn an honest living, are to permit the Bank of New South Wales to raise a private army to shift their ill-gotten gains. Let us hope that they meet their Waterloo in such gross abuse of force, contrary to the will of the people.

The last part of the *Clarion's* story contained an element of truth. In an attempt to clear nearly half a tonne of gold that had accumulated in its canvas strong-room, the Bank of New South Wales had organised a coach and a military escort to ship it out. Sergeant Wilkinson expressed concern to his superior about the conduct of the operation:

Captain Craddock, who is in charge, knows nothing of the country, nor does he intend to find out. He appears to be of the belief that sufficient firepower is the solution to any problem.

"I would welcome an attack," he told me. "And afterwards, you will be able to construct an hotel in the clearing beside the road."

Since I cannot but be convinced that the Raffertys are fully apprised of his armament, and have doubtless sold him half of his powder, so much have they exhausted in gunnery exercises, I cannot believe that the Raffertys' plans have not taken this factor into account.

Unless, of course, and this is far too much to hope, that they have decided to let well alone.

The coach was loaded on the morning of 7th March, and set out just before noon. It was accompanied by twelve mounted troopers, and there were two armed guards on the roof and two inside. It carried nearly half a ton of gold, worth 150,000 pounds at the prices then prevailing, and a bag of mail.

Sergeant Wilkinson had decided that his best precaution was to "tag" the Raffertys, and had set his men to work at first light:

Constable Carr was assigned to Liam Rafferty, and watched him for whole day carousing in Reilly's Bar, where he drank more tots of whiskey than can be counted on the entire Rafferty clan's toes; Constable Thwaites spent the day at Kennedy's Hotel watching Fergus Rafferty, and never for a moment did he step outside; Constable Warburton took much needed exercise in following Eamonn Rafferty as he took a drink in every bar in town (except McNaughten's), but assures me that Rafferty was not out of sight long enough to pick a pocket, and in no case to rob a stagecoach; Constable Armitage kept watch on Michael Kelly (Mary Rafferty's man) and Constable Lambert on Daniel Morgan (the husband of Catherine Rafferty) for the entire day, which they, also, spent on the premises of various public houses. I took it upon myself to watch the Rafferty's claim, but saw nothing but the women, who did not leave, and the children, who buzzed around us like flies for the whole of the day, offering to all six of us, in our different places of watch, potheen and a bottle with a rat in it which they called "McNaughten's Poisoned Ale". Bridgit Rafferty, who is four next birthday, attempted to steal Constable Armitage's rifle "to hold up the coach", an enterprise which he vigorously opposed, to the extent of inflicting a bruise and setting her crying, thus bringing down upon his head the Wrath of the Raffertys, because he feared that she might indeed be capable, by some means, of firing the weapon.

At the top of the valley, in thick scrub, the road forked: the main road to the left, to the right the track to Narmi Falls. Fresh, deep wheel ruts curved to the right; to the left, bushes appeared to grow almost the full width of the track, and two kangaroos grazed on the grass verge.

The coach and its escort turned right.

The track narrowed suddenly, leaving the escort in single file behind the coach. There was no way to back or turn. They ploughed onwards, waiting for trouble.

In his report, Sergeant Wilkinson describes the scene:

The track terminates abruptly in a small open area on a rock platform above the waterfall. The trees form an arc behind the fall, providing cover for an army. The sound of a shot echoes, and echoes again, making impossible the detection of the direction from which it is fired.

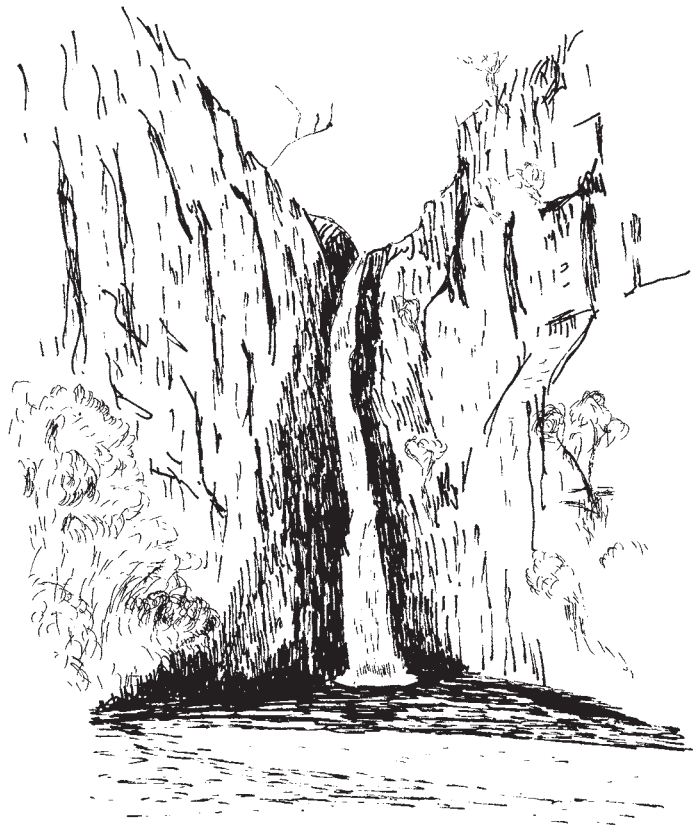
He continues:

The escort and the coach driver appear to have been picked off, one by one, from the trees. There are signs that the escort put up a vigorous defence, firing volley upon volley into the trees, but each in a different direction, as if in hope of a chance kill. However, the trees remain large almost to the edge of the cliff, and provide excellent cover for an ambush. At the end, two of the escort attempted to flee, their bodies being found face down, pointing back the way they came, twenty yards from the fall. Each body had but a single bullet wound.

The horses were then cut loose, the gold removed, and the coach pushed over the cliff.

Sergeant Wilkinson raises one concern about this reconstruction:

It puzzles me that the bandits did not wait for the coach and escort to go over the cliff, or, if necessary, frighten the horses into taking the plunge. Such a scheme would have involved less risk, and although it would have resulted in injury to the horses, these were of little value to the bandits since they could be identified, and were, in any case, turned loose.



Narmi Falls



His report concludes:

There is no doubt in my mind that the Raffertys are involved, because there is now half a ton of gold at the bottom of the shaft beside the still, but there are no bags, and, as Liam Rafferty stated when questioned “Gold is gold is gold, man, and there are enough calluses on me hands that you can not prove that we did not win it fair and square.”

“The calluses should be on the palms, not the knuckles, Mr Rafferty,” I told him, to which he replied “So the Good Lord made me fingers double jointed.”

By the end of 1863, the gold had gone, and the ramshackle buildings of the town were empty, their windows gaping and their paint beginning to peel. Of the newcomers, only a handful of Raffertys, including Sean and his sister Megan, in their shack on Raffertys’ Creek, and the Lee family, picking patiently through the mullock heaps, remained.





The New School

## Chapter 4

### Bandicoot Junction

The period from 1865 to 1890 was one initially of consolidation, and then of slow but significant growth.

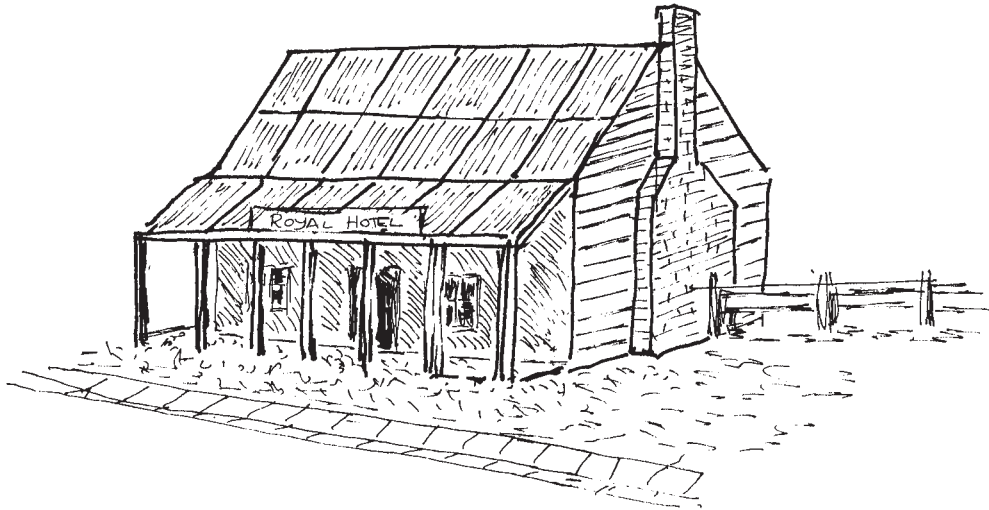
Farming prospered. At *Zimbabwe*, the Clarks augmented their piggery with a flock of 100 sheep, and built a fine new shearing shed that would accommodate ten times that number. Alexander Ord returned with a new flock of Angora goats that ran riot on the slopes below Dead Dingo Gap. James Hume took up a grazing lease at Thylacine and promptly married Arabella Clark, an event that had little effect on the constant stream of letters to her sister. Sean Rafferty drew on a hidden source of funds to establish a horse stud that, in time, was to breed not only the Melbourne Cup winner *Blunderbuss* but the horse ridden by The Man from Snowy River. The Lees' market garden on the river flats provided vegetables for the entire district, although, according to Arabella Hume:

... the variety of strange green leafy things is so enormous that at times one pines for the humble cabbage, but Mr Lee will not be swayed in his determination not to grow "strange, foreign" vegetables.

For all his "green fingers", however, Mr Lee has had abominable luck with his rice, which is his dearest ambition to grow, since the bags that he ships in become green and mouldy, or are full of grit and weevils, depending on the weather. His last crop was attacked by the frost, yielding only what little James will insist on calling "ricicles".

The town, at the centre of this community, began to take on an air of solidity and permanence. Fifty yards of bluestone guttering were laid along Clark Street in front of the Royal Hotel, which itself acquired a magnificent verandah with a corrugated iron roof; the old wooden church, which burned down in 1873, was replaced by a substantial stone building which was later to become "Sarcophagus" Lee's funeral chapel; and Morgan's Store in Sydney Road grew into a massive emporium selling everything from tea to cast iron pipes. The mails arrived once a week in dry weather, having taken a week or three to come from Sydney.

There was even a newspaper of sorts. Arabella Hume describes it:



The Royal Hotel

Did I tell you that Patrick Rafferty has repaired the presses from the old *Bandicoot Herald*, and produces an edition as the mood suits him, with a whole back page in Chinese for the Lees, none of whom can read? A little of what he reports is of interest although of little value, such as month old stock prices from Yass, but for the rest of it, one must but feel that we would be better off without it.

In 1874, Inspector Wilkinson, newly promoted, visited South Bandicoot as part of a review of policing in the area. The *Bandicoot Herald* reported his arrival:

So we are to be Inspected, it seems, by an Inspector of Police, whose Inspections, in by-gone days, of Public Houses, Brothels and Miners' Rights, achieved in full measure the harassment and oppression of the needy, the thrifty and the hard working, while turning a blind eye to the criminals and the exploiters in our midst. Doubtless this Inspection will yield similar results.

Considering this provocation, Wilkinson's report was remarkably mild. He reported that:

... the level of policing in the area appears to be satisfactory, in view of the current level of major crime.

The level of policing was in fact nil, the nearest constable being stationed at Gurrangi, fifty kilometres away. Wilkinson did, however, include a paragraph on the Raffertys:

To say that the Raffertys are going straight would be a considerable exaggeration, but whatever their actual consumption of alcohol, there is an air of sobriety and respectability about them that is a source of wonder to one that knew the Raffertys of old. Eamonn Rafferty still carries on their pretence of a mine, but Patrick Rafferty is now the proprietor of a newspaper, albeit a scurrilous one, and Sean Rafferty is breeding horses from stock at least some of which were legitimately purchased.

South Bandicoot's first school opened in 1872 in the old church, and it is suspected that the children, many of whom bitterly resented having to attend, were responsible for the fire that destroyed the church. The reason was the teacher, an expatriate Russian called Josef Djugashvili whose bushy eyebrows and bristling moustache made him an object of fear. As the *Bandicoot Herald* commented:

There seems little to be recommended in the exploits of Ivan the Terrible and in spells for the casting out of wolves, but at least we can be secure in the knowledge that be there even the slightest rumour of an impending Russian invasion, the youth of South Bandicoot will rally, to a man, to the defence of the nation.

A new school building, separate from the new church, was built on the opposite side of the churchyard.

There were other problems, too, as Arabella Hume reports:

Edward is rarely here, whether it be because he is courting yet another eligible daughter on some far away property, or because he is making deals, which he says are for the good of South Bandicoot, in smoke-filled rooms in Macquarie Street. His manager is lazy, and the pigs are unhappy. And now, I hear, he plans a visit to England.

Cousin Godfrey's silly wife is making much of her widowhood. She appears in black, with a face of stone, and looks all of seventy when she cannot be a day over forty, and sighs over her beloved Godfrey. Megan Rafferty at least has the decency to shed real tears, but then it was the Raffertys' mineshaft down which he fell, and she has the burden of those two boys, who look more like Cousin Godfrey every day, much to the chagrin of Godfrey's widow, who averts her eyes every time that they pass.

In May of 1880, Edward Clark returned from his visit to England with a wife. The *Bandicoot Herald* was not impressed:

So the Squire of Bandicoot has taken unto himself a wife, whose sole recommendation was a double-barrelled English surname which she has now lost, and an accent that will keep the pigs awake at night.

His family were, for once, in agreement:

Why is it that the men in our family (our late lamented Father excepted, of course) have such poor taste in women? Edward's pink and white acquisition shows even less sense, if that is possible, that Cousin Godfrey's widow, so much so that it is likely, in my view, that she will be bitten by something before the summer is out, and will die, being relieved to be anywhere but South Bandicoot.

A significant part of Edward Clark's political activities in Sydney had involved the lobbying of members of the New South Wales parliament (most of whose daughters and sisters he had courted) for the establishment of local government in South Bandicoot. The necessary legislation was passed in July, 1881, and the first meeting of the Bandicoot Shire Council was to be on 1st September. The *Bandicoot Herald* treated the whole idea with scorn:

We have yet to see one single convincing argument for local government. What will it bring us? Rule by small-minded petty crooks instead of crooks of stature and dignity divorced from our small-town squabbles. More taxes, as our local crooks build Taj Mahals to their memory and those of their friends in the building industry. Inferior services and facilities as State and Shire argue as to who is responsible, each saying the other.

To Arabella Hume, however, it also had its humorous side:



Josef Djugashvili

Edward has taken upon himself the role of Town Dignitary, and in his new waistcoat and watch chain, acquired during his last visit to Sydney, seeks to take the place in our hearts and minds of Cousin Godfrey. The effect is marred somewhat, however, by the activities of Sean Rafferty, who has acquired an identical waistcoat and, belly outthrust, struts the main street with an air of scorn, so like Edward that it is with difficulty that one can maintain one's composure.

The franchise was highly restricted. According to the *Bandicoot Herald*, it consisted of:

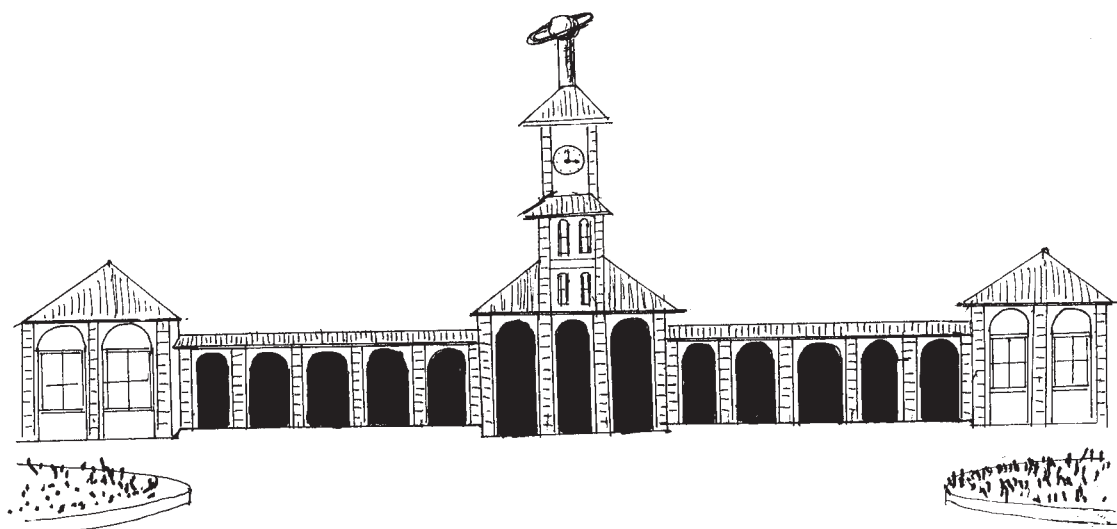
... all adult males with a freehold of more than 100 pounds or a lease of 10 pounds per annum, ten years' residence in the Shire, and sidewhiskers at least 2 inches long, thus excluding from participation every person in this valley with intelligence, sensibility or genuine need.

The inaugural meeting of the council was held in the Private Bar of the Royal Hotel on 1st September, 1881. The *Bandicoot Herald* reported that:

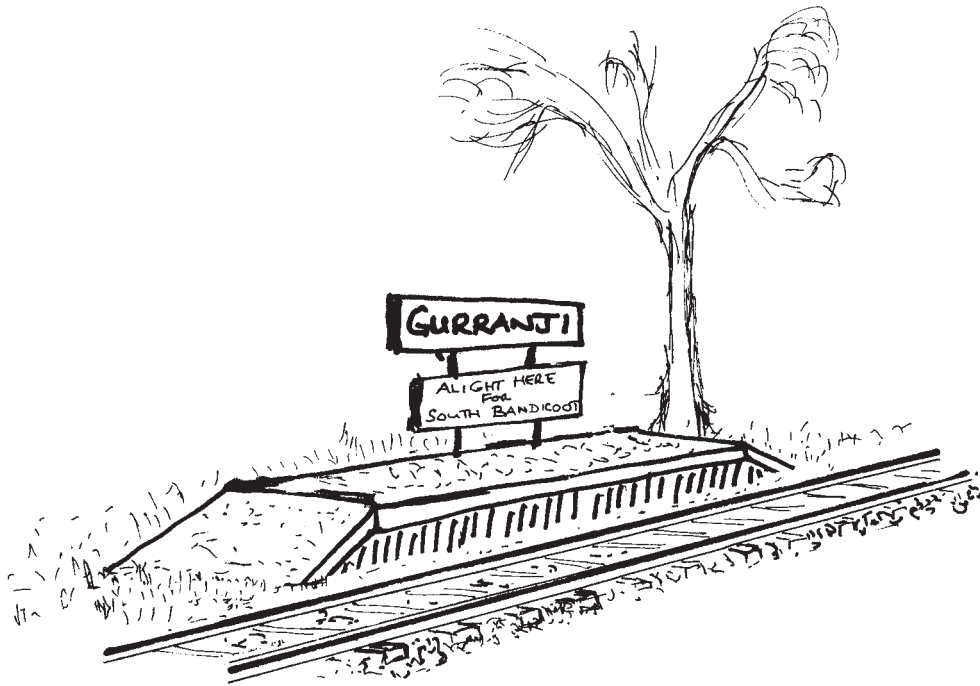
It achieved little except the total inebriation of all present: an omen, perhaps, for the future good governance of South Bandicoot. Mr Edward Clark was elected to the position of Shire President, an appointment which although expected, can be said to have the merit that Mr Clark's watch chain will be able to perform those functions normally required of a Mayoral Chain, thus sparing the Shire an additional expense. Mr Fergus Rafferty has been appointed to the position of Shire Clerk and will commence duty on Monday next in the Shire Offices, which will be located in the Annexe to Morgan's Store.

There was considerable local reservation about the appointment of a Rafferty as Shire Clerk. In retrospect, this seems rather unfair, since in the 1903 Report of the *Commission of Enquiry into Peculation, Jobbery and Corruption*, Bandicoot Shire rated only third on the league table of corrupt councils.

At this time, the railways were creeping out from Sydney. The line had reached Goulburn in 1869, and had then been extended south-west, reaching Albury in 1883, but the road to South Bandicoot was still a track on which the onwards journey from Goulburn could take four or five



The proposed Bandicoot Junction Railway Station



The station actually built

days, even under favourable conditions. There was agitation for a line to the Southern Tablelands, and another to the South Coast, and for a little while South Bandicoot had the running.

As the *Bandicoot Herald* reported:

It seems that we shall become *Bandicoot Junction*: a place of no account except that the tracks diverge, one to the coast, one, perhaps, to Melbourne even, and where the tracks diverge there will be locomotive sheds and workshops and refreshment rooms, and all those things conducive to stability and wealth.

The *Royal Hotel* changed its name to the *Railway Hotel* in anticipation.

Not everybody was as enthusiastic, however. Arabella Hume describes her feelings to her sister:

It is a horrible scheme. The pig pens at *Zimbabwe* will go for an engine shed, the platforms will be the Lees' market garden, the tracks will cut between the shearing shed and the bottom paddock, and the whole valley will be full of smoke and fumes. Edward rubs his hands and talks about land values and compensation, but what value is compensation when it will not buy something half as good as you have already, and have to move house into the bargain? And what is the value of being able to travel to Sydney in twelve hours when one has not been there in ten years, and has little desire (apart from visiting a beloved sister) to go?

The final plans were a disappointment. The line ran through Gurrangi, and although the Bandicoot Shire council attended the grand opening in April 1888, and station sign said *Alight Here for South Bandicoot*, it was a setback from which South Bandicoot did not recover for nearly a century.



One-Mile Creek Bridge

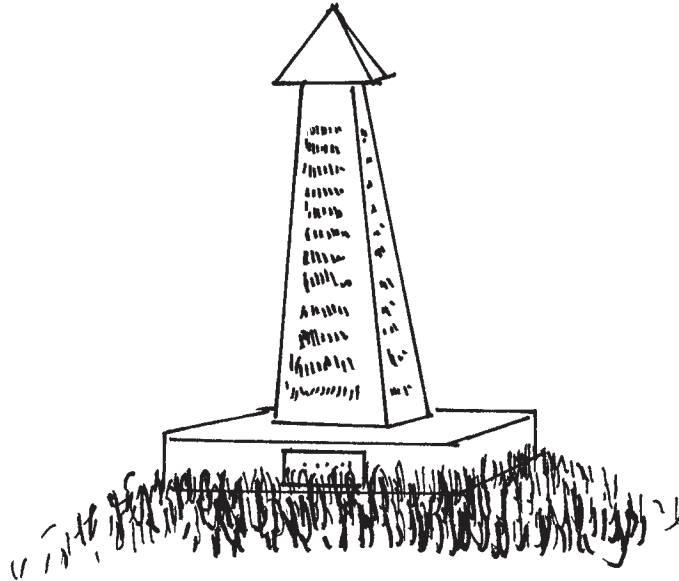
Even the building in 1889 of the magnificent timber truss bridge over One Mile Creek, on the road from South Bandicoot to Gurrangi, was nothing more than a consolation prize.



## **PART 2**

### **OPPRESSION AND NEGLECT**





The War Memorial

## Chapter 5

### Lest We Remember

Like every Australian small town, South Bandicoot has an almost complete list of its adult male population in 1914 carved into a granite pillar located in a prominent position — in this case at the top of a mullock heap 50 metres from the Clark Street intersection. Reading the list, one wonders how names like Clark and Rafferty could ever have survived, until one is told that 2nd Lieutenant Cavendish Clark married his childhood sweetheart Elizabeth Hume a week before his departure, and that a bonny, bouncing boy arrived many months after the dreaded telegram from the War Office; and until one realises that the decimation of a population of Raffertys merely leaves the survivors hardier and more fecund than ever.

The roll for World War 2, Korea and Vietnam yields more names: Donoghue, Fraser, Ferrari, Drosic, Wang, and many others, not in such quantity, perhaps, but more in variety.

At the base of the pillar, there are two more names. On the plinth, almost obscured by the occasionally tended grass, is a small plaque:

To those, from distant foreign shores,  
who made the supreme sacrifice in the  
defence of our land:

Lt. C.H. McLeod  
Sgt. R. Raratonga  
17th R.N.Z.E.

7th June, 1942

Contemporary accounts, and many more recent histories, are strangely silent as to the true extent of Japanese incursions against the Australian mainland. Until recently, most people knew that Darwin had been bombed, but few were aware of the extent or duration of that bombing, not



The Top Secret Defence Installation, Moa Mansions

just in Darwin but along the whole north coast of Australia, both because of the press censorship at the time, and because of subsequent embarrassment by Australian officials and military historians. It is little wonder, then, that a total wall of silence surrounds the repulse of a Japanese invasion force by a platoon of New Zealand engineers.

Official histories also do not say how a company of New Zealand engineers came to be posted to South Bandicoot, but some of the older residents of South Bandicoot believe that they know.

During the dark days of early 1942, the Australian Government, no longer convinced about the integrity of even the Brisbane Line, was looking to build a place of refuge from which it could set up a government in exile and conduct a resistance campaign against the occupying Japanese. Canberra was considered, but eliminated as being insufficiently remote. Eventually a set of caves tucked into the west side of the Bandicoot valley was settled upon, and preparations began to fit them up in suitable luxury. However, in fear of leakages and possible mutiny if Australian troops discovered what was afoot, the New Zealand government was persuaded to supply the needed personnel: a company of engineers under Captain Marcus O'Neill, an iron disciplinarian who believed in *No Fraternisation with the Natives*.

To say that the engineers were welcome in South Bandicoot would be an understatement, not so much because the menfolk were away (to most of South Bandicoot's female residents, this was a matter of relief) but because the New Zealanders possessed unrivalled links to the black market for everything from washers for leaky taps to imported French gumboots, in addition to an inherited genius for keeping Captain O'Neill in the dark. Supreme among the more commercially minded New Zealanders was Rangi Raratonga, six foot high and six foot wide, prop forward for the All Blacks, and Quartermaster Sergeant. Charles Rafferty, the partner left in charge of the local medical practice while the other doctors were at war, remembers that:

If he couldn't get it for you, no-one could. And he was generous, too: a smile here, a clap on the back there, a tube of toothpaste thrown in. Everybody loved him, except Hamish McLeod, because Hamish had his eye on Carmel Rafferty, and Rangi got there first.

Carmel, of course, just shrugs it off. "Hamish should have asked," she says, "instead of just staring, goggle eyed. He was an officer, after all."

Preparation of the caves went ahead by leaps and bounds. New tunnels and caverns were dug and fitted out with the latest in communications equipment, printing presses and hot showers, walls were scrubbed down to remove crude red and yellow ochre portrayals of bandicoots and

wallabies, and piles of emu bones were shovelled out on to a forbidding heap beside the door. It was this last that gave the refuge its name: *Moa Mansions*.

Survey teams were investigating routes for a proto *Ho Chi Minh* trail: a secret network of tracks to the coast and inland, hidden in dense bush and deep valleys, skirting civilisation and habitation alike.

In his evidence to the New Zealand Department of War's *Enquiry into the Japanese Invasion of Australia*, McLeod's batman, Private Robertson, described the genesis of further conflict between McLeod and Sergeant Raratonga.

The pile of emu bones had begun to shrink.

"What are we using them for, sir?" Lieutenant McLeod had asked Captain O'Neill, on his return from a survey, thinking that they might have discovered a new source of road metal.

"Using them?" Captain O'Neill looked real angry, the veins standing in his forehead. "You mean, someone is stealing them? Find out who, immediately."

He found out soon enough, who being Sergeant Raratonga, who was grinding them up and selling them as an ancient Maori aphrodisiac. Captain O'Neill said that a walk in the bush would do him good. We reckoned Captain O'Neill wanted time to do an audit. He instructed Hamish McLeod to take Sergeant Raratonga on his next survey.

"Is that a good idea, sir?" Lieutenant McLeod asked. "Sergeant Raratonga thinks that I dobbed him in."

"Nonsense, it'll be good for both of you."

It was early June. The battle of the Coral Sea had been fought and won. Midget submarines had been found in Sydney Harbour. News of the battle of Midway had not yet come. And the fishing vessel *Ginseng*, believed now to be the notorious Japanese spy ship *Sashimi Maru*, was coasting unseen southwards past Bateman's Bay.

Nerves were tense, and became tenser as the survey team inched its way down the raging Deua River, their sightlines limited by thick timber and their theodolites refusing to stand waist deep in the water. Hamish McLeod was nearly swept away when a swirling branch thumped him behind the knees. Only the presence of mind of his batman, Private Robertson, saved him. Robertson describes the scene:

McLeod turned and shook his fist at Sergeant Raratonga, who was standing on the bank, twenty yards upstream. Raratonga showed a set of very white teeth.

That night, 6th June, the team camped on two small rises, fifty yards apart, beside the river. Unless they climbed the steep hill beside them, this was all that they could find. McLeod, accompanied by his batman, and the chainman, was on one; Raratonga and his drinking mates on the other. Between the two mounds the ground was clear, but marshy, as the river widened a little, and a faint track curved along the foot of the hill; but the tents were hidden in the trees. By midnight, the camps were quiet, Raratonga's grog supply exhausted, and the fires had burned down to nothing.

In the half light before dawn, McLeod awoke to the screeching of the birds — and something else: the scrunch of feet, and the sing-song chatter of the Japanese army. He peered out, and saw a column of yellow faces winding beneath the foot of the hill.

He grabbed his gun and screamed "It's the Japanese!". He opened fire. The column scattered. One fell, and then began to crawl away. There was a fusillade of shots: from beside him, from the other rise, from the Japanese, echoing and reechoing against the hillside and across the valley. He staggered and fell, mortally wounded.

Within minutes it was all over. The Japanese were gone, their bodies swept away by the raging torrent, far out to sea where the sharks and the gulls had a feasting never equalled before or since.

Private Robertson comforted Lieutenant McLeod in his final moments.

“They got Rangi, too,” we told him.

The ship that landed the Japanese force fared little better. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8th June, 1942:

A fishing vessel, believed to be the notorious Japanese spy ship *Sashimi Maru*, was sunk while heading out to sea off Narooma early yesterday morning. There were no survivors.

Confidential Defence Department records reveal that two aircraft were lost in the encounter, colliding in mid-air as they converged to machine-gun the survivors on their life rafts.

After the war, some local residents, including Carmel Robertson, married to a New Zealander and the proud mother of a dark-skinned child called Rangi, attempted to have the names of Lt. McLeod and Sgt. Raratonga inscribed on the war memorial. The South Bandicoot branch of the Returned Servicemen’s League opposed the proposal. In a minute to the Chairman of Bandicoot Shire Council, the branch president, Brian Kelly, wrote:

It is neither customary nor appropriate to award such recognition for service on Australian soil, in particular where, at least in my opinion, death or injury was caused by panic, careless use of weaponry and ricocheting bullets. To do so would demean the entire ANZAC tradition.

Carmel Robertson’s reply, recorded in the Council minutes, was brief and abusive. “They gave us a damn sight more pleasure than you lot of ... layabouts ever did,” she is reported as having said.

A compromise was eventually reached, although not before the R.S.L. clubrooms had burned down and Granny Rafferty had put the evil eye on Kelly’s Fresians, and a plaque was attached to the base of the memorial.

However, Dr Charles Rafferty has his own personal conclusion to the story.

It’d been a stinker of a day. Half the women in the town had crook backs because their mothers didn’t teach them how to lift properly; and the other half had been at the New Zealanders and needed medical intervention so that they could look hubby in the eye if and when he got back from the war — barring the Rafferty girls, of course, who seem to regard the results just like any other souvenir.

I’d just got to my fifth whiskey, and was thinking that the world wasn’t such a bad place after all, when there was a tap-tap-tap on the back door. I went through, and there was old Sarcophagus Lee, so white that he’d get past immigration any day, and shivering.

“Please come,” he said. “Three people, hurt bad.”

I picked up my black bag and went with him. It was a bitter old night, but there was no point in taking the car because we’d used the emergency medical petrol ration to take Mary’s kids fishing down at One Mile Creek, so we scrunched across the paddocks, the frozen grass spearing my feet through the holes in my shoes.

We went to the outhouse where he keeps the hearse. He did his tap-tap-tap on the door, and then pushed it open a crack and we squeezed our way in.

A ring of yellow faces surrounded us, twenty or more of them, from Granny to a three year old kid.



Dr Charles Rafferty

“My cousin,” Lee said. “Escape from China. Come here last night from coast. But Kiwi panic. Shoot first. No question, even after.” He lifted the lamp from its hook by the door, and I saw three more of Lee’s relatives, sitting huddled and miserable.

“You fix them?” Lee asked.







Statue of Lionel Braithwaite  
attributed to Sandra Clark

## Chapter 6

### A Vision of Progress

Lionel Braithwaite is to South Bandicoot what Peter the Great was to Leningrad — a man who from desolate swamplands single-handedly built the foundations of a great city.

These are the words of Ilona Hume in her seminal hagiography, *The Light on the Bulldozer*, in which she chronicles Lionel Braithwaite's years of power.

Braithwaite was elected unopposed as Shire President early in 1981 to replace the late Charles Donoghue. The senior partner of the then struggling Braithwaite Constructions, he described his role to a reporter from the *Bandicoot Herald* as one of

... dragging South Bandicoot into the nineteen eighties in the teeth of the opposition of all those fuddy duddy pig farmers ...

Ilona Hume elaborates:

To Lionel, South Bandicoot was a challenge unequalled since the reconstruction of Germany after the second world war. The Bismarck of South Bandicoot, his dream was to unite his backward, remote valley into an economic giant that would challenge Wagga as the hub of Southern New South Wales. No longer would it have to beg for bacon subsidies and dispute over pig swill, but would stand forth on the twin pedestals of self-importance and self-regard.

Braithwaite's thriving construction business placed him in a unique position to spearhead these developments.

Braithwaite is described in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald's Good Weekend* magazine:

South Bandicoot Shire President Lionel Braithwaite is a big, bluff man with a faith in his mission even larger than the check pattern on his suit. South Bandicoot is "it" as far as Braithwaite is concerned: the developer's dream, the tourist's paradise.

"South Bandicoot is the new Bundanoon," he says, waving a sheaf of photographs of architects' drawings of planned developments. "The only place for a relaxing weekend or a second honeymoon."

He reels off a list of tourist attractions "...Narmi Falls, The Walls of Zimbabwe, Raffertys' Mine, Moa Mansions, The Railway Hotel ..." as if they were Samarkand, Xanadu and King Solomon's Mines. "A bit of restoration work, and a five star hotel, and South Bandicoot will boom," he says. South Bandicoot's annual Gumnut Bacon Festival (due to start next year) is the focus, but other plans include a Big Bandicoot spanning the main intersection, and developments on the snowfields at the south end of Bandicoot Valley.

He fields the objection that few Australian tourists stay at five star hotels with a smile. They are needed to supply the necessary cachet to a tourist resort, he explains. In any case, he is concentrating on the overseas market. "They will love South Bandicoot," he says, "because it is so totally unspoiled."

Iiona Hume describes Braithwaite's management style:

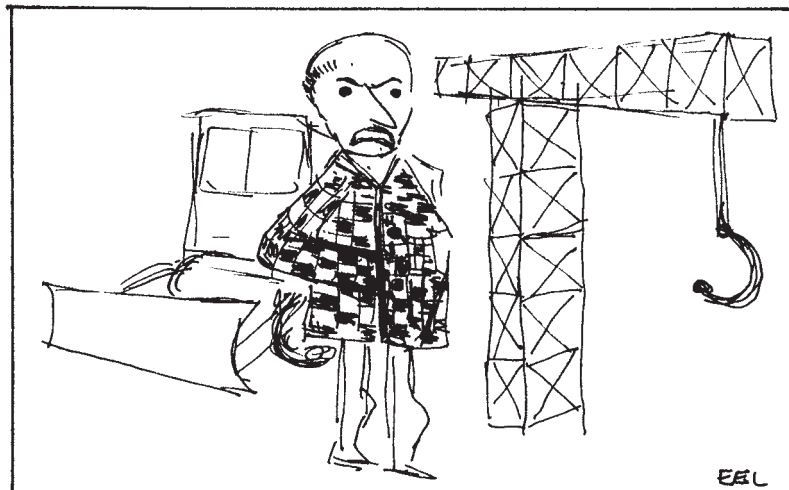
Braithwaite was a general that led from the front. He was never happier than when he was up on the crane, smashing down an old stone house. At council meetings, he revelled in the rough and tumble of debate, ever ready with a quick repartee.

Peter Rafferty, proprietor and editor of the *Bandicoot Herald*, remembers the meetings somewhat differently:

Everybody on the council was scared stiff of him. Nobody except Braithwaite ever spoke, except to say "Yes, Sir". Braithwaite's speeches were a constant stream of abuse, directed at anyone that dared disagree, which usually meant me. I would have loved to print them, but the obscenity laws would have got me every time.

Iiona Hume states that:

In contrast to his public life, Braithwaite's personal life was shrouded in tragedy.



Bandicoot Shire Council

However, she fails to elaborate. The *Bandicoot Herald* also paid little attention to Braithwaite's private life, for reasons that Peter Rafferty described as:

... more to do with self-preservation than with any serious aversion to muck-raking ...

but it does record that:

... his first wife died after an unfortunate accident in which she walked into a door and sustained broken cheekbones, a broken jaw, a punctured lung and numerous internal injuries...

... his second wife left him after two weeks to join a pig breeding cooperative ...

... he is estranged from his two grown-up daughters, who went to live with their mother's sister soon after their mother's death, and who say that they prefer not to talk about their childhood with him for fear of lending a vicarious respectability to similar behaviour ...

The population of South Bandicoot had expanded rapidly in the post-war period, from 1813 in 1947 to 1842 in 1981, before falling back to 1836 in 1982. Some of the comforts of life had already begun to appear. The section of Sydney Road between the Commercial Hotel and Clark Street was sealed in 1958; the coming of mains electricity was consummated by the building of an elegant brick substation next to the church in 1965; and a translator for the ABC Regional radio service was installed on Mt Clark in 1971.

Braithwaite's first act as shire president was to let a contract for the sealing of the road to Thylacine.

For South Bandicoot to flourish, it must have adequate infrastructure

he told the *Bandicoot Herald*. In an editorial headed *Road Scheme Raises Grave Doubts* the paper questioned the planned development:

Sealed roads are long overdue. Nobody doubts that. But is it not a coincidence that the road leads directly to the front gate of Cr Arnold Hume, that the plans bear the signature of Lionel Braithwaite's partner, the prominent Gurrangji architect Basil Hume, and that the construction contract has been let to none other than Braithwaite Constructions?

Ilona Hume described the *Bandicoot Herald's* criticisms as

... unfair, to say the least. What other prominent South Bandicoot construction firm was available to carry out the work at such a good price?

At the meeting the day after the *Bandicoot Herald's* editorial, the council passed a motion approving the laying of storm water drains along Sydney Road. Work commenced immediately with the digging of a deep trench across the entrance to the loading bay at the *Bandicoot Herald*, but was then suspended due to budgetary constraints.

The standard of housing in South Bandicoot was a major concern of Braithwaite's, and hence of the Council. As the Shire Treasurer, James Spence, pointed out to Council:

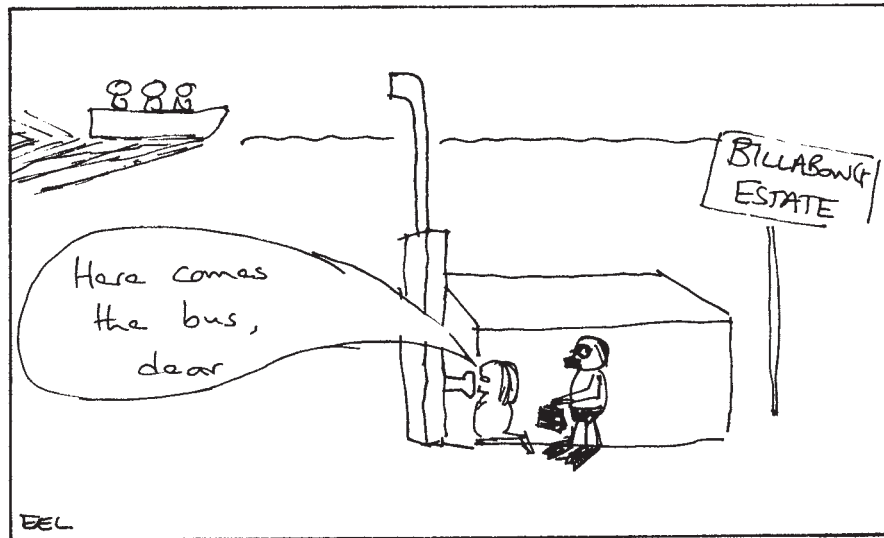
... what will people think of us as they approach our beautiful town through lines of unsightly fibro shacks hiding behind star pickets and chicken wire ...

The Shire Engineer, Aldo Ferrari, was more concerned with safety aspects:

... our meter readers and building inspectors are daily at risk as they venture on to sub-standard properties that would fall apart in the mildest cyclone ...

The council voted to commence a massive housing program, with the object that:

... no child will have cold feet by 2090.



The chosen site for the new housing development was Waterhole, a flat area of grassland near the junction of Raffertys' Creek and Bandicoot Creek. Blocks were presold by mail order and by full-page advertisements in the Sydney newspapers. It was described as:

Billabong Estate, an exclusive canal development on prime land, less than an hour by air from Sydney and the Coast, close to snow, fishing and the pleasant rural community of South Bandicoot. Ideal for that "get away from it all" weekender, or that long-planned move from the smog and grime of the "big smoke".

The *Bandicoot Herald* queried the choice of site:

We hope that the houses will be built on stilts, and that a regular ferry service is to be provided, because the blocks are nothing but quarter acre swimming pools. The only happy people will be the insurance companies, and that is because they do not cover for flood.

The Shire Offices were also targetted as substandard. As Lionel Braithwaite informed the council:

It is little wonder that our predecessors achieved so little during their term of office. The damp and cold of the monstrosity wished upon us as Shire Chambers would damp the vitality of an Ebenezer Scrooge, and is causing irreparable damage to the circuitry of the council's new computer. It is a tribute to the dedication of the Shire's hard-working staff that they can get the rates notices out at all ...

Braithwaite moved that the council approve the construction of new shire offices immediately. He informed the council that

... temporary accommodation, during the rebuilding, can be provided in the new office suite of Braithwaite Constructions, or, if the council thinks this inappropriate, I am sure that Cr Doyle could make available part of the new extension to the Commercial Hotel ...

Fiona Clark, of *Zimbabwe*, was vehement in her opposition to the proposed rebuilding:

The Council Chambers represent a unique example of neo-Georgian Gothick unrivalled anywhere in the Southern Tablelands,

she said in a letter to the *Bandicoot Herald*. The President of the Regional Heritage Commission, Basil Hume, replied:

South Bandicoot Council Chambers are an undistinguished example of of an architectural style that reached plague proportions in the latter part of last century. The actual architect is unknown, as are the architects of the mass-produced project homes of today.

The building was intended as a temporary expedient until the federal capital was relocated to South Bandicoot, and has long outlived its usefulness. We would be doing the memory of the architect a favour if we bulldozed it now.

As Convenor of the Bandicoot Shire Preservation Society, Fiona Clark applied to the New South Wales Supreme Court for an injunction preventing the demolition of the Shire Chambers. It was due to be heard on the morning of 22nd September, 1981. However, as the *Bandicoot Herald* of 23rd September, 1981 reports:

South Bandicoot's historic Council Chambers vanished in a puff of smoke and dust at 3 o'clock yesterday morning.

Shire President Lionel Braithwaite described the explosion as "a triumph of controlled demolition". An angry Fiona Clark, President of the Bandicoot Shire Preservation Society, described it as "a triumph of uncontrolled vandalism".

Damage to fifteen other buildings in the vicinity of the Clark Street - Sydney Road intersection is described by the Shire Engineer, Aldo Ferrari, as "repairable". The council expects that the damage will be covered by insurance, but may be forced to admit liability for the vets' bills for Sandra Clark's cat, which was hit by flying debris.

A three storey office block (Designer: Basil Hume; Builder: Braithwaite Constructions), sheathed in mirror glass, rose quickly to fill the hole.



South Bandicoot Council Chambers

In a report to the Council in August 1982, Braithwaite reported that South Bandicoot's tourist industry was booming:

Visitor numbers quintupled from seven in 1981 to thirty five this year. The new extensions at the Dingo at Thylacine are 20 percent full, and the Travelodge in Sydney Road has had nine guests since it opened in May.

This was not the limit of his ambitions for the tourist industry, as Ilona Hume describes:

Despite his wholehearted encouragement of local South Bandicoot enterprises, Lionel Braithwaite possessed the vision to realise when outside assistance was needed. South Bandicoot's snowfields, on the slopes of Mt Clark, have been renowned for their quality and inaccessibility. Here there has been no hydro-electric scheme to build access roads, nor any promoter to build massive resorts. The council, led by Lionel Braithwaite, set out to change this.

The first news that South Bandicoot residents had of this was an item in the *Bandicoot Herald*:

American-owned ski resort operator Gluhwein International will build a 500 bed lodge, 20 chairlifts and a 1000 car capacity heated carpark at Dead Dingo Gap.

Japanese construction giant Kashira Shio Yaki will build an all-weather railway between South Bandicoot and Dead Dingo Gap, with a loop under the town centre. Russian engineers, fresh from the new Trans-Siberian Railway, will assist in the design and construction of the line.

"This project will make South Bandicoot the St. Moritz of Southern Hemisphere skiing," Shire President Lionel Braithwaite said.

The first stage of the \$300m project will be ready for the start of the 1985 ski season.

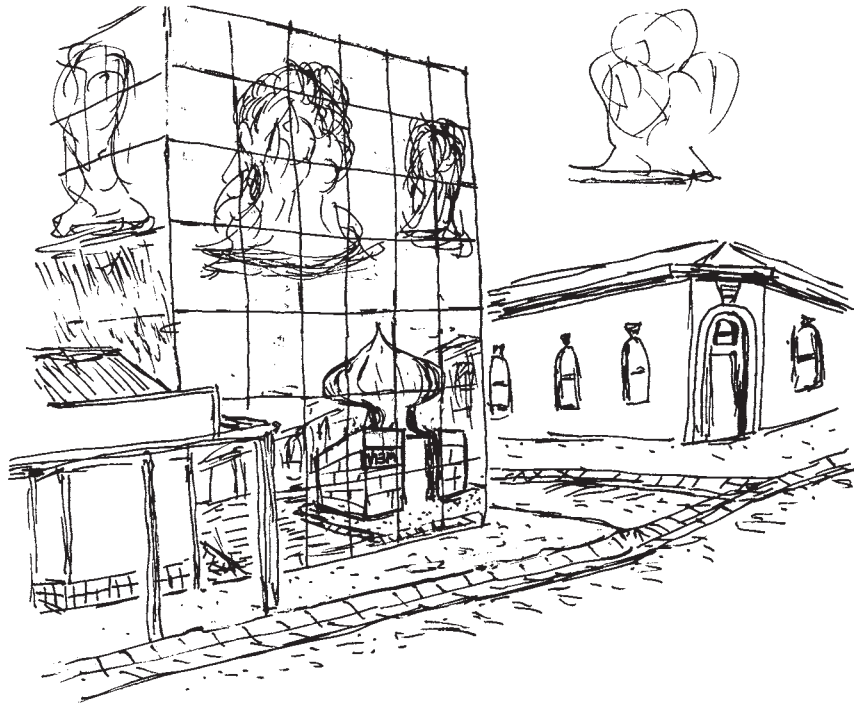
Not everybody in South Bandicoot shared Braithwaite's enthusiasms. The *Good Weekend* interviewed some of South Bandicoot's younger residents about their attitudes to the tourist industry:

"We're not monkeys in a zoo," says artist Sandra Clark. "and if we were, I'd be straight on to animal liberation for award wages."

Organic farmer Jeff Lee describes tourism as a live-sheep trade. "You get five hundred people standing behind a fence, all gazing at a scene that everybody says you've got to see," he says. "Then after sixty seconds they've seen it, so they go home and tell everybody that it's not worth the bother because there's too many people."







The New Council Chambers

However, to most South Bandicoot residents the council's activities were a matter of indifference. Charles Rafferty, who is on record as describing the council as

... a committee designed by a committee

remarked

... I don't give a damn what they do, provided they pick up the rubbish ...

Ilona Hume summed up Braithwaite's term as Shire President:

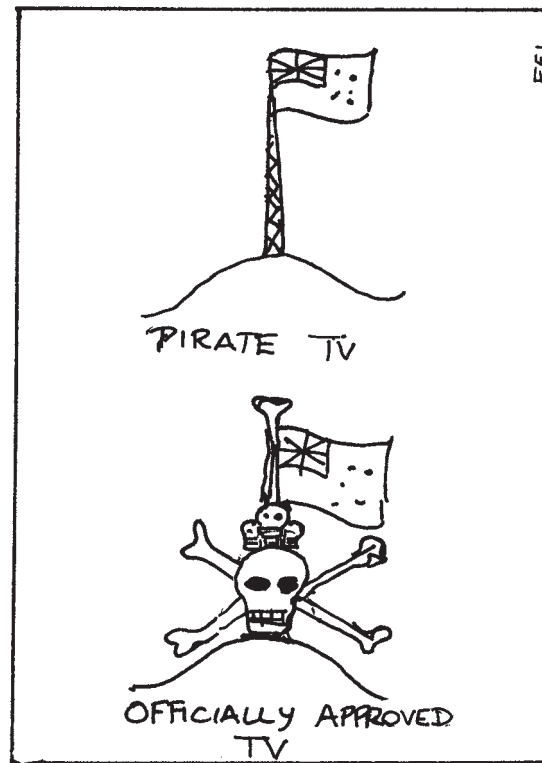
It would be an exaggeration to say that, by early in 1983, Lionel Braithwaite was on the brink of a knighthood, because the New South Wales government did not then recommend knighthoods, but there was a clear indication from the state government that some suitable recognition of his services, such as the Shire Presidents' Good Conduct Medal or the L'Onorata Gold Star, might be forthcoming.

She continues

On 19th March, Braithwaite, tired from his ceaseless exertions on behalf of the residents of Bandicoot Shire, left for a month's holiday in Fiji. On 20th March, it rained. Braithwaite, cut off in a tropical paradise, could do nothing. And so all his work, all his striving, came to nothing, as the swell of Revolution swept him, and Braithwaite Constructions, away.







## Chapter 7

### A Failure of Communication

Charles Rafferty remarks in his memoirs:

We wouldn't have had a revolution just to get rid of Lionel Braithwaite. Nor was it the result of plots and cabals, whatever the myths surrounding the Railway Hotel Reading Circle.

What you need for a revolution is a good dose of sheer blind rage.

Whether the shire council and the state and federal governments had retained the services of Harass and Inflamm, Anger Consultants, or whether it just came naturally, we shall probably never know, but nobody can doubt that they did a superb job.

To get Sandra Clark or Siobhan Rafferty fuming is a matter of a few unkind moments. To enrage Fiona Clark takes application. But to have Aldo Ferrari preaching revolution takes genius. And that is what they achieved.

We cannot tell the story of that anger in a single chapter, nor in two or three. But we will make the attempt.

Although ABC Regional Radio reached South Bandicoot in 1971, television was much longer in coming. On 17th June 1973, the Assistant Postmaster General (Remote Areas) wrote in response to an editorial in the *Bandicoot Herald* (a copy of which had been sent to him):

The provision of television services to areas in which the topographic configuration militates against the receipt of a viable signal from established transmission facilities is a matter of major concern to this department. Although South Bandicoot is not currently on our priority list for immediate action, your readers may be assured that its problems, and those of the many other locations facing similar problems, are under active consider-

ation by planning staff of the Department, and we are confident that a favourable resolution will be achieved in the not too distant future.

In 1980, South Bandicoot still did not have television. Representations from the Shire Council to the Australian Broadcasting Commission and to the Minister for Communications had little effect. The ABC cited budgetary constraints. The Minister replied:

The Government is aware of and sympathetic to the problems of the many remote communities such as South Bandicoot.

Although current economic stringencies make it impossible for any direct assistance to be given from public monies, it is this government's policy that community efforts to provide necessary facilities be given every support.

Further discussions with the Department led to an assurance that if the residents of South Bandicoot were prepared to pay for a TV translator, a suitable frequency would be allocated. As Charles Rafferty explains:

Accordingly, the Shire Council allocated \$10,000 (accompanied by the mandatory photograph in the *Bandicoot Herald* of the shire president, Lionel Braithwaite, handing over the cheque) towards the purchase of a translator, the remainder to be raised by a series of activities organised by a committee led by Mrs Fiona Clark, of Zimbabwe. The highlight was the so-called Tape Drive, in which cars trailing magnetic tape streamers raced the length of Sydney Road. The winner was Brian "Bozo" Rafferty (navigator "Bluey" Clark), in his metallic purple Holden panel van. They celebrated their victory by doing wheelies around the Comfort Station, leaving it wrapped like a mummy in brown tape.

The headmaster of South Bandicoot High School, Derek Ferguson, pledged the school's Year 8 Media Laboratory for use in local productions.

The transmitter came on the air on the evening of Sunday, February 28th, 1982. Charles Rafferty describes the first night's broadcast:

The inevitable opening ceremony, by used shire salesman Braithwaite, was about as tedious as expected. It was followed by an hour of platypuses copulating, and a broadcast of Swan Lake produced in the style of a football coverage, with the cameras always behind the play but giving full attention to any gratuitous acts of violence. However, the picture quality was quite impressive, except when Mrs Clark's automatic pig-feeder started up.

The following afternoon, the transmitter was seized by officials from the Department of Communications. The *Canberra Times* report appeared on page 17:

#### PIRATE TV SEIZED

Department of Communications officials have seized a TV transmitter operating illegally on Mt Clark in the Southern Tablelands.

The transmitter is believed to have been purchased privately by residents of South Bandicoot, who are unable to receive TV transmissions from surrounding areas due to the terrain.

The Department says that it was unaware of the existence of the transmitter until it received a complaint of interference from an unnamed TV company executive in Canberra. It has no idea of how long it had been operating.

The Sydney *Sun* took a more crusading line:

#### CANBERRA BULLIES STOMP WOMBLES

Residents of the Southern Tablelands town of South Bandicoot can't watch the Wombles, or anything else on TV, due to high-handed bungling by the federal Department of Communications.

After only one day, the Canberra bureaucrats have confiscated the transmitter that the people of South Bandicoot paid for with their own money, and have said that it can't broadcast.

The reason — they say nobody cleared it with them first.

South Bandicoot resident Fiona Clark says that they did, and that the channel being used was the one that the Department told them that they could use. She showed Sun reporter Daphne Kishe a letter from the Department to prove it (see Box).

The department's response was swift, reaching page 3 of the *Canberra Times*:

**'LETTER FORGERY'  
DEPARTMENT SAYS**

A Department of Communications spokesman today dismissed claims that Bandicoot Shire Council had permission to install a TV translator on Mt Clark as "pure fabrication".

"We don't do things like that," he said.

He said that the translator would be dismantled, brought to Canberra, and sold.

An Action Committee was organised by Fiona Clark, as Charles Rafferty describes:

Mrs Clark's first idea was to march her pigs up the stairs of parliament house, where they could do their stuff in the Prime Minister's office. Following representations concerning potential ill-effects of this action on the welfare of the pigs, a letter-writing campaign, involving every person in South Bandicoot, and directed at the Prime Minister, the New South Wales Premier, and every member of parliament that they could think of, was settled upon. This, however, was forestalled by an industrial dispute.

As the *Daily Telegraph* reports:

**BANS PLACED ON  
KILLER VALLEY**



Bandicoot Valley, looking towards Mt Clark

The powerful Telecommunication Workers' Union has placed bans on the removal of a pirate TV transmitter in the remote Bandicoot Valley following a series of inexplicable accidents.

Three Communications Department staff are still recovering in Royal Canberra Hospital from severe food poisoning, two are in Cooma Base Hospital following an accident in which they were allegedly run off the Mt Clark road by a purple Holden panel van, and four are still missing in dense bush after they made a wrong turn and left the end of the valley at Dead Dingo Gap.

South Bandicoot residents are at a loss to explain the accidents. "Greasy Joe's isn't exactly gourmet," explains Brian Rafferty, leaning against his metallic green Holden panel van outside the offending eatery, "but none of us get sick." The local council inspector has also given it a clean bill of health.

Charles Rafferty remarks that:

... negotiations had barely reached a decision on the shape of the negotiating table when the final bombshell hit ...

This was in the form of an item in the *Canberra Times*:

RED FACES IN  
"COMMUNICATIONS"  
DEPARTMENT

It seems that the Department of Communications can't communicate.

South Bandicoot's so-called "pirate" TV translator wasn't a pirate transmitter at all, but had full approval from the Remote Areas Division of the Department of Communications.

To her amazement, the Director of the Division, Ms Beverley Agostino, has returned from a month's fact-finding tour in the Kimberleys to find a full scale battle raging.

She explained that the problem was due to an intra-departmental demarcation dispute with the New South Wales Division. "I presume that they have filed their copies of the correspondence in the usual place," she said.

The TV service resumed on Tuesday, 23rd March, but the dispute left a legacy of bitterness in South Bandicoot which was to be a significant factor in the revolution.

Television was not the only communications problem in South Bandicoot. In 1982, the telephone exchange was still manual, operating from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, on Saturday mornings, and for an hour on Sunday mornings. Charles Rafferty describes the service provided:

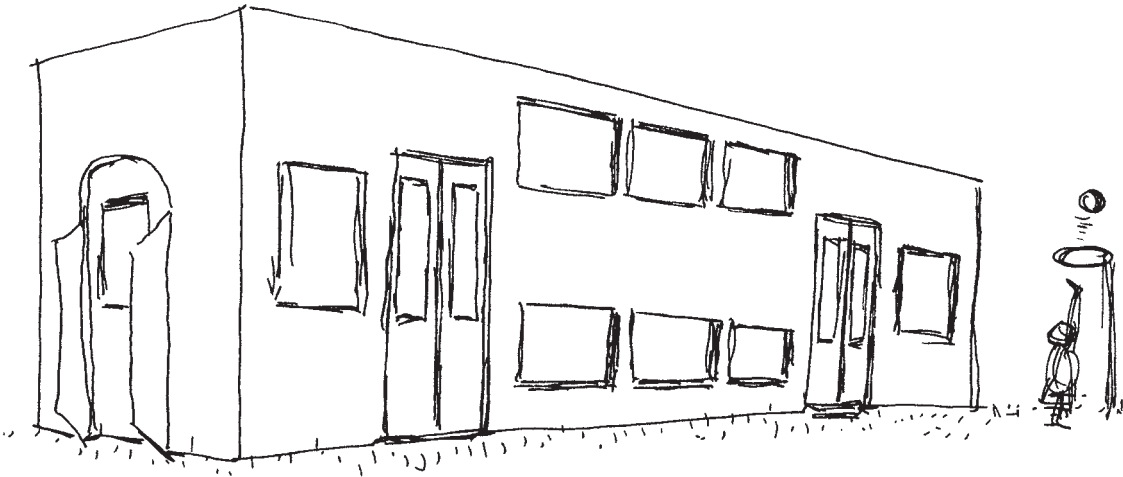
Elspeth Morgan, the Postmistress, operated the exchange from the Postmaster's house under a strange joint arrangement between Australia Post and Telecom Australia that only she understood, but which seemed to preclude her from doing either job because she was too busy with the other.

However, if you were very nice (and patient) she would usually put a telephone call through for you during the hours that the exchange was supposed to be open. Then, after three minutes precisely, she would cut you off, so she could charge you for another call.

You can always pick people from South Bandicoot, because they talk very fast on the telephone, and in a sort of code so that Mrs Morgan won't understand.

This last was the downfall of Derek Ferguson, a Newcastle boy who, in the opinion of Charles Rafferty

... was not aware of the conventions for telephone communication in a country town.



South Bandicoot High School

He discovered his mistake from the front page of the *Sunday Mirror* on May 16th, 1982:

HEADMASTER'S  
TRYST WITH  
YEAR 10  
SMASHER

Sexual harassment is in loco parentis today at South Bandicoot High School as lecherous headmaster Derek Ferguson has his wicked way with luscious year 10 beauty Christina Ferrari.

The dashing young headmaster, married with two young children, was overheard arranging a secret meeting at a coffee shop in nearby Gurranji.

Christina's mother, Rosa Ferrari, has locked up her husband's rifle.

Ferguson was suspended without pay pending an enquiry. In an interview with the *Canberra Times* he denied any wrongdoing:

"Elsbeth Morgan's got it in for me because I expelled her son," he claims. When asked the reasons for the expulsion he says, tight lipped, "Stealing."

It is believed that the offence for which Elias Morgan was expelled involved the removal of the roofing iron from the main school building over a long weekend. He is, however, also alleged to have been involved in the theft of Ferguson's wife's car, which was stripped and dumped.

Ferguson says that, although he has been "sent to Coventry" by the entire population of South Bandicoot, he intended to "hang in there" and obtain justice. His wife and two children have gone to stay with her parents in Sydney.

The case dragged on for nearly six months. Ferguson's small band of supporters protected him from two attempted bashings by Elias Morgan and his brothers, but could not prevent the repeated spraying of graffiti (in Post Office Red) on his house. The decision was handed down on the very last day of the school year. The Sydney *Sun* reported:

PARENTS ANGRY  
AT HEADMASTER  
WHITEWASH

Parents in the tiny town of South Bandicoot are furious at the clearing of local school headmaster Derek Ferguson on sexual assault charges.

Ferguson denied the charges, and in the absence of key witness Christina Ferrari, who is in hiding, the Education Department's Disciplinary Tribunal has dismissed them for lack of evidence.

South Bandicoot parents plan to withdraw their children from the school. "He's not having a go at my daughter, I can tell you that," says postmistress Elspeth Morgan, the mother of three strapping sons.

The threatened boycott did not eventuate, owing to a preemptive decision by the Education Department:

#### SCANDAL SCHOOL TO CLOSE

The New South Wales Education Department has announced the closure of South Bandicoot High School due to falling enrolments. Students will be accommodated at other high schools within the same area.

The department says that the closure is part of an ongoing programme to rationalise facilities and make them cost-effective. The recent sexual harassment scandals had nothing to do with the decision, a Departmental spokesperson told the Sun.

The headmaster of the school, Derek Ferguson, has been transferred to Bourke. "I am looking forward to it," he says. "At least they talk to you there when they're putting the boot in."

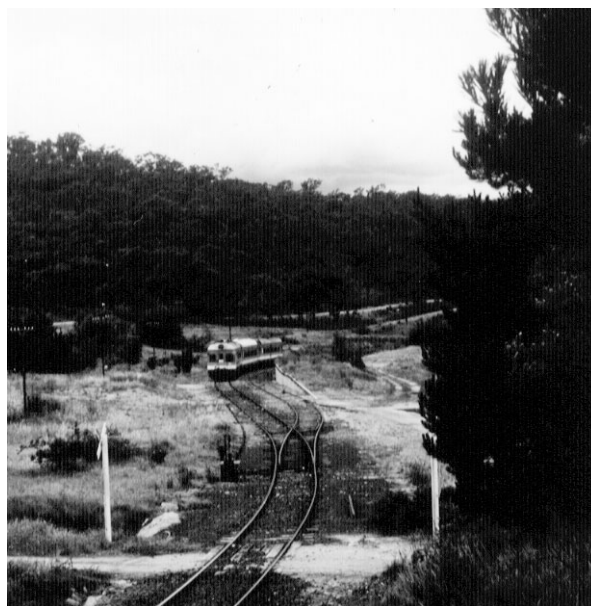
The Shire Council protested against the closure. The *Bandicoot Herald* pointed out that:

... children would have to travel over 100 kilometres a day over rough roads ...

The *Gurranji Advocate* reported:

At a meeting at Gurranji High School last Tuesday, concerned parents voiced reservations about the proposed influx of students from South Bandicoot. Speakers expressed concern about overcrowding, falling standards, violence and the cleanliness of the residents of South Bandicoot.

But the protests were to no effect. As the *Bandicoot Herald* reported early in January:



A Train at Gurranji



The Education Department has no intention of reviewing its decision to close South Bandicoot High School, the *Bandicoot Herald* was told today.

An Education Department spokesperson pointed to the superior facilities, including a fully equipped home science laboratory, the cleanliness and the moral tone of Gurranji High School. "We believe that it will be of benefit to all concerned," he said.

When it was pointed out that children would be travelling for hours every day, he replied that this happened in Sydney, too. "Travel broadens the mind," he pointed out.

Later that week, teams from Sydney boarded up the doors and windows on the main building, loaded the portable classrooms onto low loaders, and departed.

Then, early in February, members of the school council received letters from the Education Department. As the *Bandicoot Herald* reports:

GOVT DEMANDS RETURN OF  
"STOLEN" EQUIPMENT

The New South Wales Education Department has demanded the return of valuable video production equipment which it says was removed by parents from the now-closed South Bandicoot High School.

The equipment was purchased from funds raised by parents over the last four years, but the Education Department claims that it now owns it. It is believed that it has been earmarked for a school in Sydney's western suburbs.

Significant quantities of furniture, books and teaching aids are also believed to be missing.

South Bandicoot residents point out that the school was left unoccupied and unguarded over the entire summer, and that it is a matter of some surprise that even the buildings are still standing.

The following wedding notice appeared in the same edition of the *Bandicoot Herald*:

FERRARI - SILVANO Christina, youngest daughter of Aldo and Rosa Ferrari, of South Bandicoot, to Luciano, second son of Dr and Mrs Cesare Silvano of Gurranji, at St Peter's, South Bandicoot. Videos available from Morgans Emporium, South Bandicoot and J.B. Young's, Gurranji.







Siobhan Rafferty

## Chapter 8

### Agents of Change

It must not be thought that the Revolution in South Bandicoot sprung fully-armed from the swollen waters of Bandicoot Creek.

No revolution can be without its secret band of plotters, hunched over green-baize tables in smoke-filled rooms, harassed by the police, ignored and underestimated by their contemporaries. The French Revolution had its Jacobins — Danton, Marat, Robespierre; the Russian Revolution its Bolsheviks — Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Kamanev, Zinoviev. South Bandicoot had the Railway Hotel Reading Circle.

An article in *The Good Weekend* describes the key members:

Brian “Bozo” Rafferty is dark and slim, with a slow smile that makes him look like a leprechaun. In his mid-twenties, he has never worked. “What’s work?” he asks with a grin, but does admit to “helping with the family business”.

A laugh from his petite cousin Siobhan reveals an old family joke — her father is in charge of the South Bandicoot CES office, of which “Bozo” is a regular client. “He’s almost learned how to fill out the form,” she confides.

Siobhan is unemployed too, but has no trouble with the forms. A recently completed arts degree in philosophy from Sydney University did a world of good for her pool game, but nothing for her job prospects. “I’d probably get something in Sydney or Canberra,” she says, “but I hate big towns.”



Terraces at the Lees' Farm

Jeff Lee also works in the family business, but this time it's for real. The Lees are the only producers of organically grown Chinese vegetables in the Southern Tablelands, and although the market is still small, it is expanding so rapidly that even three generations of Lees are having trouble keeping up.

"My father thought I was a fool at first," he says, "but I managed to convince him to give it a go." He explained how the savings on chemicals more than compensate for the additional "tender loving care" that must be given to the plants.

In more sorrow than anger, he tells the story of the place that they won't supply: a big restaurant in Gurrangji that put big notices in the window proclaiming the organic purity of its ingredients, and then laced everything with MSG.

"Bluey" Clark (he won't admit to a first name) is built like a tank and talks with the same deliberation. Elder brother Trevor used to play for South Sydney until a scrum collapse left him paralysed, but Bluey has no ambition to follow the same path. He works occasionally in a garage on South Bandicoot's main street, while sister Sandra has made a modest reputation for herself as an avant garde painter of abstract pigs.

Sandra speaks bitterly of the "body drain" to the cities which has made Sydney the biggest "South Bandicoot" city in the world, its expatriate South Bandicoot population exceeding that of South Bandicoot itself.

Siobhan Rafferty puts it more bluntly. "South Bandicoot is dying. Everybody's ambition is to go and live in the big smoke, where they can say proudly 'I'm a Real Australian. I'm from the bush.'"

The writings of Jeff Lee, now reissued in a Uniform Annotated Collected Edition by Bandicoot Press, reveal the thinking of the Railway Hotel Reading Circle on this and other problems. In *Extinct Bandicoots* he writes:

When is a place not a place? Is it when your football team moves away? Is it when you can go somewhere else without waiting two days for a train? Or is it when they turn the lights off, because nobody lives there any more?

In *A Cosmic Gravitation*, he asks:

Is our existence no more than a compressible fluid flow in which we are sucked inexorably towards the black hole of the big smoke through the implacable forces of expectation, employment and entertainment, moderated only by the outward pressures of exploitative rents and ravaged lungs?

In *Development Depopulates* he proposes Lee's Theorem on the effect of development:

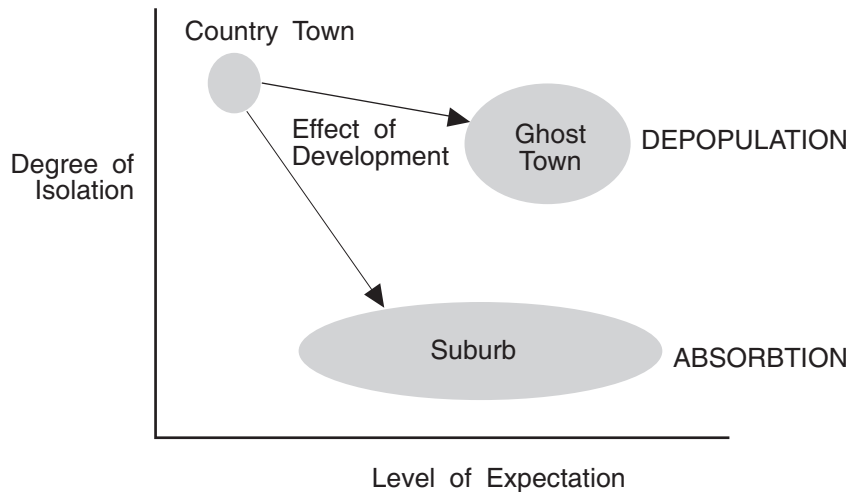


Figure 1

Given some development  $d$  resulting in a change  $\delta i$  in the degree of isolation  $i$  of a place, and a change  $\delta e$  in a set of expectations  $e$  of its people, then the mood  $m$  of the people may be expressed as:

$$\begin{aligned}\forall d : \delta e > \delta i &\Rightarrow m = F \\ \forall d : \delta e \leq \delta i &\Rightarrow m = A\end{aligned}$$

where  $F$  = frustration leading to depopulation, and  $A$  = acquiescence leading to absorption. Figure 1 illustrates the implications of the theorem.

Lee provides an explanation of the theorem in *The Tyranny of Isolation*:

... Remoteness brings two things: a sense of identity as a community, and a sense of neglect.

Development also brings two things: a breaking down of that remoteness; and a raising of expectations, both in terms of standard of living and of career expectations.

If the first of these is greater than the second, the sense of identity begins to break down as the settlement is absorbed into the larger community.

If the second is greater than the first, there is a rising sense of anger. People are either forced to leave the community in order to satisfy their expectations (this is the body drain with which country residents are so familiar), thus impoverishing its cultural, intellectual, social and economic base; or they remain there, becoming increasingly frustrated and paranoid about "missing out" on the real or imagined benefits enjoyed by the larger community ...

He adds, prophetically:

... Usually, that is as far as it goes, because the economic ties to the larger community, and the inability to resist the coercion of the state, preclude any further action. But when the isolation becomes absolute, and the neglect total, yet the levels of expectation remain high, then the resulting contradiction creates a burgeoning of ingenuity and application in which the internal resources of the community are harnessed and developed as the only way in which such expectations can ever be achieved ...

In *Some People Like to Live Alone*, he develops this theme on the basis of an analogy between a person living alone and the life of a small community:

The act of isolation leads to a nurturing of the inner self, a welling up of hidden resources, an increasing richness through self-sufficiency. Thus, too, should a small town develop,

and through this richness and nurturing, create an exciting, caring entity that through its very being becomes a magnet that stems the helter-skelter rush to the inhumane warrens of the suburban sprawl.

However, in *A Manifesto for Getting Pigs off the Ground*, where he attempts to develop a more concrete programme of action, he sounds a note of warning:

... This does not mean that we can wall ourselves off from the rest of the world, however much we would like to.

Remember that there are things that we are good at, like growing organic vegetables and making gumnut bacon, and maybe there are others that we could learn to be good at, so that we do not have all our pigs in one basket.

But if we are to develop, let what we do be low key and consistent with the atmosphere of South Bandicoot. We do not want a high-rise tourist slum, a sea of factories, or a desert of financial deregulation.

He contrasts these needs with the projects advocated by the Shire Council, commenting, in *The Caterpillar Tracks of Doom*, that:

... these merely encrust the established order in further barnacles while we, as quaint peasants and queer intellectuals, add our token splash of local colour.

He adds:

But then, why should they care about how we feel? After all, power is but a sprouting potato in a dark cupboard, feeding on itself and filling space with a pallid tangle of incestuous tentacles.



Jeff Lee

In common with all revolutionary groups, the Railway Hotel Reading Circle were no strangers to police harassment. The Gurrnji Advocate reported the now-famous Battle of One-Mile Creek in a single paragraph in its Angling column:

Avoid One-Mile creek below the bridge. Severe oil pollution has resulted in contamination and fish kills, and will take some days to disperse.

In his seminal pamphlet, *Oppression and Neglect: Why South Bandicoot Rebelled*, Jeff Lee gives more details:

Late on the evening of 13th February, 1983, two ute-loads of South Bandicoot citizens, consisting of almost the entire Railway Hotel Reading Circle, were waylaid just over the crest of a hill by a group of uniformed oppressors waving plastic bags. Not wishing to create trouble, the citizens of South Bandicoot ignored the oppressors and continued on their way. The oppressors, spoiling for a fight, gave chase, catching up with the South Bandicoot utes at the one-lane bridge over One-Mile Creek, where they had courteously stopped to permit a semi-trailer coming in the opposite direction to complete its passage. As a consequence of the ensuing unprovoked attack, from which the citizens of South Bandicoot were forced to defend themselves, severe water pollution occurred, in the form of an upended vehicle and four uniformed oppressors. South Bandicoot's hero of the day, Bluey Clark, personally let down six tyres.

However, the heavy hand of discrimination and oppression was not limited to the constabulary alone. The Railway Hotel Reading Circle sprang into the public eye on 15th November, 1982, with an item on page 3 of the Sydney *Daily Mirror*:

#### PERT COLLEEN SWEEPS POOL

Spunky Siobhan Rafferty (21) isn't just a pretty face. She's also the hero of the tiny township of South Bandicoot, whose Railway Hotel Reading Circle (what a name for a pool team!) has swept to the finals of the New South Wales Pool League, thanks in no small measure to the talents of the delectable Miss Rafferty.

Being behind the eight ball has its points, it seems.

The accompanying photograph, of Siobhan leaning forward over the table to line up a shot, left little to the imagination.

Their triumph was short-lived. Less than a week after the trophy had been ceremonially affixed to the wall of the back bar, disaster struck:

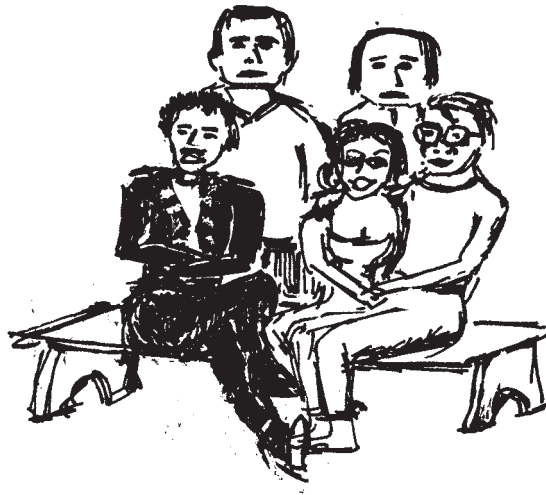
#### WINNING TEAM DISQUALIFIED IN PROTEST

NSW Champion Pool Team, South Bandicoot's Railway Hotel Reading Circle, has had its title stripped for playing an ineligible player.

Losers Sydney University No 17 claimed that star South Bandicoot player Siobhan Rafferty was tied to them. Under Pool Association rules, University has first claim on students up to a year after they complete their courses.

An angry Siobhan Rafferty told our reporter "It stinks". She said that she had played one E grade game for University in 1980, but had then given it away because "they don't let women play A grade".

The president of Sydney University Pool Club, Eustace Barwick, denied that the club had any such policy. "However, we are yet to find a woman with the necessary skills and dedication," he said.



The Railway Hotel Reading Circle  
(Left to Right: Bozo Rafferty, Bluey Clark, Siobhan Rafferty,  
Sandra Clark, Jeff Lee)

A spokesman for the Pool Association explained that the association's acceptance of South Bandicoot's team registration did not mean that listed players were in fact eligible. "It is up to the players to ensure that they have all the proper clearances," he said, "and to the appeal system to resolve any disputes."

Charles Rafferty remarks that "Bozo" Rafferty took the decision like a true sportsman:

He bared his teeth in a massive grin, as if he'd just swallowed cyanide, and surveyed the crowded back bar. "You can tell them the trophy's here, anytime they want to collect it," he informed the team secretary.

## **PART 3**

### **THE STORMING OF THE KREMLIN**







Lake Bandicoot

## Chapter 9

### Lake Bandicoot

The prelude to the revolution in South Bandicoot was a rain storm.

The long drought broke in the autumn of 1983, with torrential rains causing widespread flooding throughout Eastern Australia. On the evening of Sunday, 20th March, 178 mm (nine inches) of rain fell in headwaters of One Mile Creek. A wall of water swept over the bridge, and with it went not just South Bandicoot's only access road, but the cables carrying mains power, telephone, radio and television.

Dr Charles Rafferty describes the events of that night at the Railway Hotel:

With only the black ball still to play, and Jeff Lee with four balls still on the table, Aldo Ferrari junior was poised on the brink of a historic victory. Then the lights went out. Someone (let no-one say it was Bluey Clark) slammed into the table like a two ton elephant, and the two balls that Lee had placed over the pockets went down.

Mick Kelly pulled out the hurricane lamps that he keeps behind the bar. It was pleasantly quiet, with just the lamps, and people chattering, and none of that blast from the television and that electronic poker machine that Kelly calls a cash register.

Aldo Ferrari Snr, the Shire Engineer, described what he found in a report to the Shire Council:

The power failed at about 9.30pm. The duty technician, Jerry Fraser, indicated that the 66kV line from Gurranji was down. The limited capabilities of the fault detection equipment at South Bandicoot necessitated the establishment of telephonic contact with Gurranji.

The Officer in Charge of the South Bandicoot exchange was initially uncooperative, a personal visit to the exchange and the unofficial donation of a large bottle of gin to the Telecom Employees' Provident Association (an expense that the Shire Treasurer is unlikely to reimburse) being necessary before the Officer in Charge would consent to place a call outside of the normal exchange opening hours.



Bandicoot Creek in Flood

The donation achieved little, as the telephone line to Gurrnaji was also inoperative.

Ferrari took out a council truck and attempted to follow the powerline:

Access along the line was difficult, due to the heavy rain and the greasy nature of the track. Although it had only been raining for a short time, the truck came close to being bogged at least twice. The level of Bandicoot Creek was such as to make a direct crossing inadvisable, and a detour to the road crossing, which at that time was still dry, was required.

The planned limit of the investigation was to have been the Shire boundary at One Mile Creek, at which point, if nothing had been discovered, it was intended to drive to Gurrnaji to alert the state Electricity Supply Authority and request that they take the necessary action to restore the supply.

In the event, this proved not to be possible, owing to the fact that One Mile Creek had broken its banks, and had spread for two to three hundred metres over the flat ground. Where the bridge should have been was open water.

Charles Rafferty describes the scene at the Railway Hotel the following lunchtime:

I have always disapproved of zoos. There is nothing more revolting than a bear or a lion, bored stiff, pacing up and down, hoping that someone will be stupid enough to jump the fence to give them a bit of sport.

Aldo Ferrari's always got a bit of a bear about him, with that long face and that wiry hair that's more like fur, but now he was the full grizzly, caged.

He snapped when somebody made a complaint about the beer being warm, and stormed out, no doubt planning to crank the generators by hand if he had to.

One Mile Creek did not go down, because the rain continued. Bandicoot Creek rose steadily. By the afternoon of that day water was lapping up the driveways on Billabong Estate. The *Bandicoot Herald* captioned their photograph:

## THE NEW ATLANTIS

A aquatic wonderland where floating stuffed teddies and drifting draperies lend a new poignancy to the suburban dream.

The creek passed the four metre level just after midnight, and at eleven o'clock on the morning of 22nd March peaked at 5.65 metres.

The valley was one huge lake, with scattered islands. At *Zimbabwe*, water lapped at the dry stone wall around the house and the pig pens. At Moa Mansions, the hummock surrounding the *Rising Sun* teemed with cattle, sheep and dogs, while the local cats hunted the rats along the upstairs corridors. The local residents huddled in the bar. The *Dingo*, the milk bar, and the surrounding houses at Thylacine were on high ground and safe, but properties close by were flooded.

The *Bandicoot Herald* reported the first casualties of the flood:

Sonja Nguyen and Slobodan Drosic were treated for severe lacerations at the Bandicoot Medical Centre yesterday afternoon.

Drosic mistakenly opened the door of a pen at the Nguyens' cattery. Mrs Nguyen was injured pulling him out.

The Nguyens are currently moving their cats, the notoriously aggressive Albanians, to high ground.

The centre of South Bandicoot is well above the level of the most severe flood, but the two creek crossings, on the roads to Gurrangji and Moa Mansions, were closed, and much of the Lees' terraced market garden was under water. Neither of the alternative tracks out of the valley were passable. In Bandicoot Gorge, the creek was over nine metres and running a banker. Alex Robertson attempted to get through Dead Dingo Gap, at the southern end of the valley, became inextricably bogged, and had to walk back.

Charles Rafferty comments that:

The flooding gave Aldo Ferrari something to do. The road gang became a rescue team, visiting outlying farms in the council's launch, bringing in and distributing food and clean water. The workshop staff fixed generators and water purifiers. The building



An Albanian Cat in its natural habitat

branch rigged a flying fox across Bandicoot Creek, to ensure supplies of bacon from *Zimbabwe* to Morgan's Emporium. Duckboards were laid along Clark Street.

The rain continued. Bandicoot Creek fell to 5 metres on the afternoon of the 23rd March, revealing a terrace of sodden *buk choy*, but rose again to 5.4 metres by the following morning. The Lees had a major family row about whether they should plant rice.

The initial excitement and flurry of activity began to die down, and the reality of being cold and wet and cut off set in. Charles Rafferty again:

Candle-lit dinner at the Commercial Hotel, with steaming hot food cooked on their enormous gas range, was a delightful outing on the first night of the floods, with everybody who was everybody dancing to June Doyle's thumping at the out-of-tune piano. By the second night, it was *deja vu*, and by the third, boring and expensive. The candles were exhausted, and had been replaced by hurricane lamps, and the food had that air of sameness of cafeteria food.

Over thirty families were camped in the South Bandicoot High School building, in classrooms, corridors and the hall. The boiler did not work, the Morgan brothers had smashed all the toilet bowls, and the broken windows were taped with Glad Wrap, but the roof did not leak, which was regarded as an advantage over the church hall.

Fiona Clark organised a soup kitchen, but her efforts at more sophisticated catering were frustrated by Michael Doyle and James Spence. Doyle, whose kitchens were the only ones with the capacity, said that he "preferred to retain his operation on a commercial basis". James Spence, the Shire Treasurer (and Acting Shire President in the absence of Lionel Braithwaite) refused to commit the shire to any additional expenditure.

As Peter Rafferty commented in an editorial in the *Bandicoot Herald*:

The milk of human kindness comes in dollars and cents, it seems.

Food supplies as such were a potential problem. Like most supermarkets, Morgan's Emporium worked on a weekly ordering cycle for grocery lines, and although it had adequate stocks of most things, it was beginning to run low on certain items. However, it was panic buying, and a



Bandicoot Valley at the height of the flood





Fiona Clark

potential attempt to corner the market in scarce goods, that precipitated the issue. Charles Rafferty describes what happened:

Martha Spence and Ilona Hume had gone to Morgan's Emporium, timing the visit so that Sue-Ann Donoghue, whose powers of observation and action are strictly limited to spunky males, was on the checkout. Elspeth Morgan made a visit on her own behalf at about the same time. Between them they had bought 96 kilos of sugar, 15 kilos of salt, 51 kilos of coffee, 36 kilos of tea, 478 litres of diswashing detergent, and 123 kilos of laundry detergent. They also visited Wang's Pharmacy, when the Pharmacist on Duty was not, and bought thousands of tampons and hundreds of packets of panadol.

Fiona Clark, in cooperation with key shopkeepers, immediately initiated a "rationing" scheme. It was, in fact, a glorified barter system. As she pointed out much later:

Most of the food in a place like South Bandicoot isn't in the supermarket at all. It's in jars and bottles in peoples' pantries, hanging from the kitchen rafters, in the garden or on the hoof. Our real job was to ease the load on the supermarket by getting it into circulation, without putting Frank out of business.

As Charles Rafferty remarks:

It was almost like wartime, with everybody clutching funny little food vouchers with Mrs Clark's signature on them. If you wanted to buy anything "foreign" at Morgan's Emporium, Greasy Joe's, Wang's Pharmacy, the Thylacine Milk Bar, or almost anywhere else in South Bandicoot, then you had to produce the right number.

Morgan's had an aisle of shelves of "local produce", carefully labelled with a maker and a date. Anything you brought in, he'd give you the appropriate number of coupons (based on a list produced by Mrs Clark) straight off, and write it down in a book so you got your share of the profits when it was sold. Any arguments about what something was worth were settled by Mrs Clark. The other places worked the same way.

Support for the scheme was not universal, as this letter in the *Bandicoot Herald* from Cr Arnold Hume shows:

What right has an interfering old busybody whose only claim to fame is a dry stone wall, and who has never held elective office beyond the level of a school Parents and Friends

Committee, have to dictate what the residents of South Bandicoot may buy in their local supermarket?

Is she aware of the dangers to which she is exposing the unwary eaters of Bridgit's Botulism Chutney and Harry's Hydatid Ham, or of the penalties to which the vendors of such products are liable?

By now, Aldo Ferrari was at loggerheads with James Spence over his relief activities. In *The Guttering Candle of Freedom*, Ilona Hume explains the reasons:

James Spence considered that relief operations were not a shire responsibility, and was concerned that valuable Council equipment and personnel were being placed at risk to conduct them. When Mr Spence suggested to Ferrari that the State Emergency Services be called in, Ferrari had the effrontery to suggest that Spence should contact them, as he (Ferrari) had been unable to do so.

Following representations made to him by certain more responsible members of the community, who, although they were not Councillors, had a certain standing, James Spence finally agreed that staff not otherwise required could participate in relief operations, and that he would be prepared to make funds available from the contingencies allocation of \$1500 for genuine emergency measures, subject to his personal approval. In doing so, Spence was exposing himself to a massive risk, because he had no guarantee that Council would subsequently approve such expenditure, nor was he sure that the auditors would accept such a retrospective approval, but he was persuaded, against his better judgement, that it was for the community good.

It seems, however, that for Ferrari, intent on personal aggrandisement as the hero of the flood, this was not nearly enough.

South Bandicoot's media responded heroically to the crisis. Charles Rafferty reports that, the morning after the flood:

Peter Rafferty was like the cat that got the cream. The Sydney papers hadn't come, and didn't look like coming for a while. With a long face and a lugubrious sigh, he announced that he supposed that he would have to bring the *Bandicoot Herald* out daily for a while. Seeing that he has his own power, a nephew who likes nothing better than to keep his ear glued to distant radio stations to pick up some news, and an auditors' report castigating him for the hoarding of excessive supplies of newsprint, there was little we could do to dissuade him.

However, Jeff Lee has contributed a penn'orth of sanity by renaming it the *People's Daily*.





The Rising Sun at Moa Mansions remained above water

At the same time, there was a push to do something about the radio and television services. It was possible to pick up some radio, even during the day, but it was subject to fading and interference. There was no television.

Sandra Clark sums up the problem, as she remembers it:

The silence was getting to us. You'd go down the pub, and all there was was chatter, and the cash register. No noise, no music. Okay, the ABC was dead boring, and the music was crap, but at least it was something.

Siobhan was the one that suggested we use the Mt Clark transmitter. "No slight on the *Peoples' Daily*," she told her uncle, "but it hasn't got the right sound."

Siobhan Rafferty says:

We went to Aldo Ferrari, cap in hand. We were vaguely hoping to get hold of some of the equipment from South Bandicoot High School, because we were pretty sure he knew where it was. Instead, he took us upstairs in the Kremlin, opened a door with a formal bow in best Borgia style, and ushered us into a very elegant little broadcasting studio. He told us that Lionel Braithwaite had had it built for interviewing foreign dignitaries once the five star hotel was built.

Sandra Clark described it as:

... the progressive shire president's equivalent of gold taps.

Ferrari also undertook to check the links between the studio, the telephone exchange and the transmitter. This led to another confrontation with Elspeth Morgan, as the *Bandicoot Herald* reports:

South Bandicoot Postmistress Elspeth Morgan says that she will lay charges of attempted rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment against Shire Engineer Aldo Ferrari following an incident at the telephone exchange late yesterday afternoon.

Mr Ferrari says that Mrs Morgan attacked him with a relay, and that he was forced to push her away.

Mrs Morgan says that Mr Ferrari and his assistant Jeff Fraser were trespassing on the exchange premises, and were interfering with Telecom equipment.

Mr Ferrari claims that Mrs Morgan had refused to supply a required service, and that, in the circumstances, he had no option but to make the connection himself.

Mrs Morgan says that she has no authority to make the connections requested, since they must be carried out by qualified Telecom technicians.

A mid-evening raid on the Telephone Exchange, while the Morgans were at the pub, led to the establishment of an alternative exchange in the storeroom of Greasy Joe's.

The lack of electricity for all but the few with their own generators was also a major problem. In a minute to James Spence, Aldo Ferrari made a request to lease or purchase emergency generating equipment:

The possibility of an extended mains power outage is now a matter for concern. The desirable objective is a restoration of power to the major portion of the customer base, i.e. to the central and residential areas of South Bandicoot, to Thylacine, and to the hotel and houses at Moa Mansions.

The generating capacity actually available in South Bandicoot, both on outlying farms and within the built-up area, is sufficient to supply at least a base-load capacity in the short term. It is proposed that the Council negotiate with the owners of suitable equipment (listed in Attachment A) for its lease or purchase, and that the equipment be relocated to the yard adjacent to the Council Electricity Sub-Station on Clark Street.

Any generating equipment purchased, although fulfilling an immediate need, can be seen as fulfilling a long-term requirement for stand-by generating capacity.

Spence's reply was that:

There is no provision in the 1982-3 Bandicoot Shire budget for expenditure of this type. The Officers of the Council are in no position to authorise such expenditure without prior approval of council.

When asked to summon a meeting of council, he replied:

A full meeting of Council is not possible at this moment in time because certain key members are unable to attend.

Ferrari also raised the issue with Cr Arnold Hume, but he was of like mind with James Spence, and advised against precipitate action. As an editorial in the *Bandicoot Herald* remarked:

It is not without significance that Cr Arnold Hume has a property at Thylacine, with its own generator, and that Cr Spence and his wife appear to be in residence there.

Alternative solutions to the power problem were being sought. In *Sparks of Water*, Jeff Lee remarks:

It seems silly to huddle in the dark and cold while nature unleashes its elemental forces around us. It seems sillier to squander the few remaining reserves of fossil fuels available to us.

Whether we talk about the world, or about South Bandicoot, the considerations are the same, but in South Bandicoot, cut off as we are, we must address the problem now.

At home, on the farm, we have light-courtesy of nature's elemental forces, and a water wheel.

Why cannot we do the same thing for South Bandicoot as a whole? The torrent in Bandicoot Gorge can supply sufficient power for all, and even when the floods subside, can provide us with some proportion of our power.



Arnold Hume was scathing about the proposal. In a letter to the *Bandicoot Herald*, he wrote:

Anybody would think that the advent of a few inches of rain has made the world turn around. Is the progress of South Bandicoot to be suddenly halted with a lapse into pseudo-environmental mysticism? Are we to turn our backs on the benefits of civilisation, and revert to hand looms, clubs and caves?

If the Bandicoot Herald has nothing better to print than an adulation of water wheels, then I would suggest that it ceases to squander scarce natural resources and reverts to a more appropriate printing schedule.

Ferrari, by this time, was prepared to try anything. As Charles Rafferty reports:

Aldo Ferrari spent half the afternoon with Jeff Lee in the corner of the bar, and then went to look at the Lees' water wheel. From his expression, he still thinks that Lee's idea is pretty scatty, but it's no more scatty than the idea that he has been hawking of linking all the donks on the farms into a South Bandicoot "National Grid".

On the morning of 2nd April, there was an open rift between Aldo Ferrari and James Spence over the conduct of the relief operations. The *Bandicoot Herald* reported:

Shire Engineer Aldo Ferrari has been told to cease supply operations to outlying farms.

Shire Treasurer James Spence says that the council's budget for such operations was exhausted, and that he could not approve additional funds without authorisation from the Shire President, who is currently overseas.

"I am not opposed to the operations per se," he told the *Bandicoot Herald*. "I do believe, however, that the Shire should not be seen as a bottomless pit of largesse."

He added that since the creek was now falling, it was time for people to make better use of their own resources.



Many roads within South Bandicoot were cut by floodwaters

Stephen Raffery describes what happened:

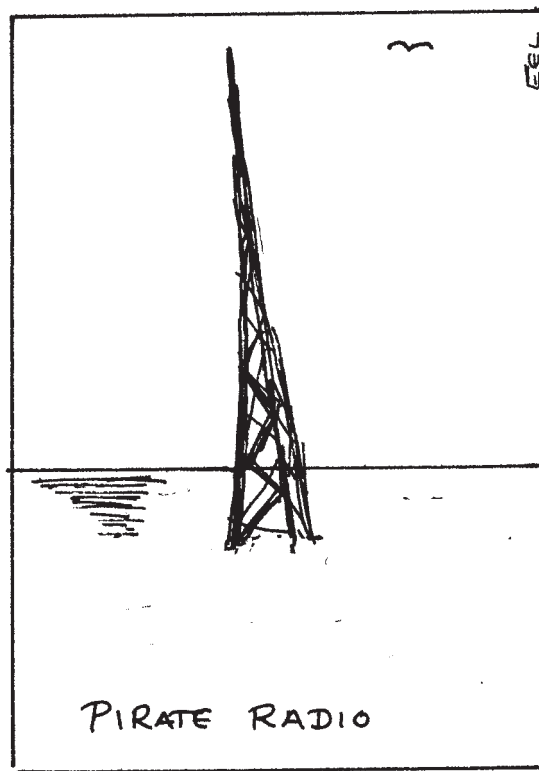
He walked straight into the workshop, without so much as a by your leave, saw us making water wheels, and blew his top.

Would you believe — he foams at the mouth. Really! Truly!

A hastily convened meeting of council employees, chaired by Alex Robertson, voted to continue with the relief operations, without pay if necessary. The motion said that they “believed it to be their responsibility” and regretted the “small mindedness” of persons “unable to appreciate the needs of changed circumstances”.

James Spence retired to Arnold Hume’s house at Thylacine, and ceased his visits to the Shire Offices. In *The Guttering Candle of Freedom*, Ilona Hume remarks that, as a consequence:

The affairs of South Bandicoot fell into the hands of a self-appointed clique of do-gooders whose horizons, limited as they were by water levels and scum marks on the carpet, led to the sacrifice of the long-term welfare of the citizens of South Bandicoot to the short term euphoria of the meaningless gesture.



## Chapter 10

### Have We Been Forgotten?

Conventional wisdom has it that Jeff Lee was responsible for the Declaration of Independence. Certainly he wrote it, with assistance from Sandra Clark and Siobhan Rafferty, but the people that caused it to be written were of a different breed and in a different place. Worthy of special mention are Dr William Mulgrave, Director of the New South Wales State Disaster Office; Cameron Perez, Chairman of the New South Wales Electricity Supply Authority; Grant Risdon, Electoral Commissioner for New South Wales; and Salome Pettifer, Commonwealth Minister for Communications, Conservation, Resources and Tourism.

In the first few days after the flood, everybody was too busy to be concerned about the lack of contact with the outside world, although to many it was a source of puzzlement. As Fiona Clark remarked to Charles Rafferty over a rare warming cup of tea:

I am beginning to feel that we are a bit like one of those little old ladies who's been dead for a week, and who isn't discovered until the stench becomes insupportable.

The *Bandicoot Herald*, in an editorial on 25th March, asked:

HAVE WE BEEN  
FORGOTTEN?

It is five days now since the floods began, and there are no signs that the powers that be are even aware of our situation. Certainly someone, somewhere, knows that the road is cut, but are they aware of the implications? Does anyone out there actually know that it's our only road? And where are the intrepid pioneers from the Electricity Commission to restore our power, and Telecom to fix the telephones?

In *A Goldfish Looking Out*, Jeff Lee comments:

South Bandicoot is like a glass bowl. We can see the world, albeit from a distance, and hear from it. Surely, they must be able to see us? Or is our bowl a one-way mirror?

The expatriate South Bandicoot population in Sydney was indeed concerned, but to little effect, as this letter in the *Daily Telegraph* reveals:

TELECOM FAULT

I have been trying to contact my aging mother in South Bandicoot for over a fortnight. Telecom's story that there is a minor fault in the exchange that will be fixed shortly is wearing thin. Has South Bandicoot been wiped out by nuclear war, a nerve-gas leak, or an Indonesian invasion? Will somebody please tell me?

Trevor Clark  
Darlinghurst

A spokesperson for the Chairman of the New South Wales Electricity Supply Authority, Cameron Perez stated:

Reconnection of power in certain remote rural areas presents significant cost-benefit problems, due to pressure of work state-wide. South Bandicoot residents should be reassured that appropriate action will be undertaken as soon as possible after water levels had dropped sufficiently. In the meantime, any South Bandicoot resident suffering particular hardship is asked to telephone the ESA's Sydney office.

The Manager of Telecom Australia's Southern New South Wales Business Office, Simeon Pappas, stated that:

Telecom Australia has been aware of the problem regarding services connected to the South Bandicoot exchange since 23rd March, and is in process of initiating an approach to Bandicoot Shire at the earliest convenience regarding the inception of major capital works prerequisite to any restoration of service.

South Bandicoot's first contact with the outside world was through Radio Bandicoot, which came on air on the evening of Easter Monday, April 4th. Sandra Clark set the tone of the station in her opening broadcast:

This is Radio Bandicoot, broadcasting from our Kremlin studio. Gee it's swish in here. And warm and dry. Our Lionel sure had it good if he'd ever cracked an interview.

I'm sure you'll be disappointed to hear that we're not going to give you a five hour documentary on the Birth of a New Station, except that you'd better know that Elspeth Morgan and Aldo Ferrari senior are no longer on speaking terms, so there's no point trying to ring Aldo at home. Nor have we managed to get an extended opening address from the Shire President, still soaking up the sun in Fiji. Here's hoping for a cyclone.

So let's get on with what we have all been waiting for-some decent music.

Later in the evening, Jeff Lee read the Bandicoot News. Half of it was a comprehensive summary of the situation in South Bandicoot, the remainder Australian and world news gleaned from the same source as the *Bandicoot Herald*. The local news came first. Jeff Lee explains why:

We were hoping like hell that someone out there would hear us. That someone would understand how much we were cut off, and how much we wanted someone to do something.

But we knew that in reality it was like the loudspeakers at Panmunjom, blasting propaganda into space which would not be heard, and if it was heard, would not be believed.

The results were a disappointment. ABC News the following day carried a denunciation of Radio Bandicoot by a spokesperson for the Minister of Communications, Conservation, Resources and Tourism, Salome Pettifer:

Give them an inch, and what happens? Private TV one day, pirate radio the next. Steps are being taken by the Department. The penalties in the Act are severe, and I can assure you that they will be pursued with the utmost rigour.

A report on Radio Bandicoot also appeared in the *Canberra Times* Radio and TV guide a week after the station opened:

#### RADIO BANDICOOT ROUSES IRE

The Department of Communications' ongoing battle with the residents of South Bandicoot has entered another phase with the appearance on the airwaves of Radio Bandicoot.

Much like Sydney's 2JJ in style, Radio Bandicoot has rapidly acquired an enthusiastic following over much of the Southern Tablelands.

The Department's rage comes not only from the fact that Radio Bandicoot is using both the transmitter and the frequency of the ABC's repeater on Mt Clark, but also because the current floods mean that it can do nothing about it.

To the residents of South Bandicoot, the station makes a lot of sense. The ABC is not supplying programmes, because nobody has fixed the landline washed away by the floods, so what's wrong with a bit of local talent.

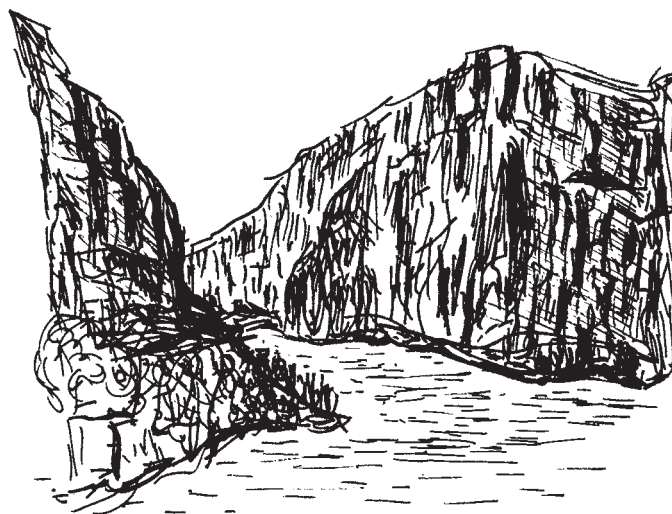
And talent it is, too. The smoky voice of Siobhan Rafferty, the crisp commentaries of Jeff Lee, and the sheer animal blast of Sandra Clark are keeping listeners rapt. Rumour has it that there's already a Siobhan Rafferty fan club in nearby Gurrangji.

So if it's a choice between the River Heights and Radio Bandicoot, long may the landline stay down.

The broadcasts from Radio Bandicoot led one newspaper to investigate. As a correspondent from the *Australian's Weekend Magazine* reported:

The residents of South Bandicoot are wondering whether they are really part of Australia. For all the links that they have, they may well be right.

It took us three days to get there.



Bandicoot Gorge

There is only one road, with potholes the size of Lake Eyre, and where it reaches One Mile Creek, on the “border” of South Bandicoot, it vanishes into a swirling torrent of brown water.

There used to be a bridge there, I am told — a rickety wooden bridge that was put up last century, and had seen better days. “Bluey” Clark, a minor local celebrity, showed me the remains of one of the trusses wedged into a sandbank at the junction with Bandicoot Creek, five kilometres downstream.

The four-wheel drive tracks stop in seas of mud and surging creeks.

We thought of walking, following the high ground, but the dense bush and the deep valleys dissuaded us.

Eventually we returned to Sydney and hired a helicopter.

When we landed, it was like the pictures you see of the first white explorer in some remote New Guinea valley. The natives were cautious at first, and hid their disappointment that we had no gifts of toothpaste, razor blades and coca-cola behind generous offerings of home-brewed beer. The kids gathered around, pulling at our clothes and cameras, to see if we were real.

We were the first outsiders to come to South Bandicoot in nearly a month.

In an editorial, the *Sydney Morning Herald* asked why South Bandicoot had received no emergency relief, and whether any other places were equally affected. The reply, in a letter from the Director of the State Disaster Organisation, Dr William Mulgrave, denied that the State Disaster Organisation had failed to respond:

It is pernicious nonsense to claim that South Bandicoot has been neglected by the State Disaster Organisation.

At no time has any request for assistance been received.

There have at all times been adequate supplies and equipment in South Bandicoot, and in the circumstances it is ridiculous to suggest that the resources of the State Disaster Organisation should have been diverted to attend to a non-existent problem.

We are appreciative of the efforts of Radio Bandicoot in reassuring us in this regard.

The *Sydney Morning Herald*, unable to afford a helicopter, visited the State Disaster Organisation’s control room on a fact-finding mission:

FORGOTTEN VALLEY  
Monumental Cover-up  
in SDO Disaster

The Control Room of the State Disaster Organisation is crowded, frenetic, a hive of activity. Phones ring, telexes chatter, grown men swear, cry and huddle in scrums over urns of black coffee.

One wall of the control room consists of an enormous map of New South Wales, studded with pins, stickers and magnetic clips. A green grasshopper signifies a locust plague at Menindee, paddle-steamers signify floods at Dubbo, Moree and Windsor, a black-headed pin a desperate search for trapped coal-miners at Maitland, a dragon from a corn-flakes packet a lost girl in Kangaroo Valley. Aeroplanes, helicopters, trucks and men with spades signify relief teams; miniature tins of baked beans mark food drops.

But against that same wall is a filing cabinet, obscuring one small corner of the state ...

In that afternoon’s *Sun*, the SDO replied:

Dr William Mulgrave, Director of the State Disaster Organisation, denied that there had been a cover-up on the lack of relief operations to South Bandicoot.



Aldo Ferrari turning on the power

Variations in colouration between different panels on our control-room map is a manufacturing fault of no significance, and has no impact on relief operations," he said.

The New South Wales Minister of Corrective Services and Catastrophes, Wal Wojtly, said in a radio interview rebroadcast on Radio Bandicoot:

The flood relief programme is going swimmingly. All areas of genuine need have been properly addressed. If you want to retail the scuttlebut of a pack of rural whingers up to their usual games, you're welcome, but don't expect us to bust a gut pumping their pig farms dry.

On April 7th, the first stage of the new power station was opened: a water wheel suspended from a massive tree overhanging Bandicoot Gorge. Charles Rafferty commented that:

It was worthy of Heath-Robinson at his best.

Aldo Ferrari described it as:

... a temporary expedient, with a potentially limited operating lifetime, but adequate in that it provided several hundred kilowatts ...

The opening was reported by Radio Bandicoot, and received an immediate response from the Chairman of the State Electricity Supply Board, Cameron Perez, again via the ABC News:

... the actions of residents of Bandicoot Shire in the unilateral restoration of local electricity supplies can only be regarded as criminally irresponsible, and a danger to all concerned. Appropriate action will be taken against the culprits as soon as practicable ...

The *Gurranji Advocate* reported:



Two unidentified bodies wearing SESB overalls were washed up at the junction of Bandicoot Creek and One Mile Creek yesterday morning.

The SESB denies any knowledge of the men, but usually reliable sources suggest that they were on a secret mission to dismantle the new South Bandicoot power station, regarded by the authority as a threat to its revenues.

The *Daily Mirror* reported:

Bandicoot Shire Engineer Aldo Ferrari is quaking in his shoes and hoping the water doesn't go down too soon after the State Electricity Supply Board took out a warrant for his arrest on the grounds of illegal generation of electricity.

Ferrari faces a \$10,000 fine and up to five years in jail if the charges are proven.

Another seed for the revolution had been planted over a year before by the Australian Electoral Office, with the decision that South Bandicoot did not warrant a polling booth. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the story at the time:

#### VOTES MEAN DOLLARS IN ELECTORAL RESHUFFLE

The Australian Electoral Office is to make drastic cuts in the number of polling booths in an attempt to reduce the horrendous cost of conducting elections.

A polling booth such as Birdsville costs thousands of dollars to run, but only brings in 70 votes. "This is obviously uneconomic," a spokesman for the office pointed out.

Small polling booths would be amalgamated with nearby booths to give one large booth. In remote areas, postal voting would be available.

The Federal Election of 1983 was held on "national" issues, far from the borders of South Bandicoot, the poll only a few days before the flood. There was anger at the requirement to drive 50 kilometres to vote, and more anger when, three days after the declaration of the poll, a major party candidate was declared ineligible:





New Zealander Jonathan Blunt has never taken out Australian citizenship, and has convictions for fraud, grievous bodily harm, and sheep stealing.

The darling of the New South Wales party machine, Blunt was preselected over the head of a number of well regarded local residents.

The by-election, scheduled for April 30th, yielded a football team of candidates. At first, the *Bandicoot Herald* and Radio Bandicoot gave a day by day account of the campaign, but as time went on, their enthusiasm waned. The Socialist Worker candidate scheduled a visit to South Bandicoot, but it rained, and the creek rose again.

Fiona Clark summed up the problem in a letter to the *Bandicoot Herald* (27/4/83):

I have been told that an election is to be held this coming Saturday.

As we well know, the Electoral Office has abolished the South Bandicoot polling booth as an economy measure. "Postal votes will be available," they told us. Where? And How?

In the old days, maybe, the mails always got through (although I have my doubts), but a more appropriate saying now would seem to be "You can take a Pony Express to water, but you can't make it cross."

Perhaps the electoral office could spread its wings a little, and fly us in some ballot papers.

The letter was read on Radio Bandicoot and received a response in the form of an interview with the Electoral Commissioner for New South Wales, Grant Risdon, on a Canberra breakfast programme:

... It is a ridiculous request. We would have to take a helicopter from house to house. It would take days, and cost the earth. And for what result? The numbers in a place like that are never enough to affect the result.

An angry editorial in the *Bandicoot Herald* remarked:

The Australian Electoral Commission leads the world in its new concept of Optional Democracy, otherwise known as giving the vote only to those people whose votes are thought to make a difference to the result. By the next election, may we look forward to polls only in the marginal seats, and a simple run-off for the last senate place in each state?

It is our right, as citizens of a democracy, to vote. If we are denied that vote, are we really citizens?

Risdon's reply to this was:

I don't see what they're beefing about. We won't fine them.

In a tongue-in-cheek article in Saturday morning's *Bandicoot Herald*, Jeff Lee suggested that the only honourable solution to the problem was secession:

It is pretty clear that Australia doesn't want us because we're too expensive. Perhaps we should settle for a footbridge, one vote between us, and a man on a hilltop semaphoring messages, as the price of rejoining the lucky country. Or perhaps we should go our own way.

The problem then, is what do we call ourselves? Are we South Bandicoot, or just Bandicoot, or Bandicoot Valley, or maybe Moa Bandicoot, or Thylacine Mansions? It is a little worrying sometimes, that two of our three main placenames are extinct.

## People's Republic of South Bandicoot

# Declaration of Independence

We, the undersigned People of South Bandicoot, having borne with patience generations of Oppression and Neglect by the Australian and New South Wales Governments, and having now come to the realisation that the aforesaid Governments are possessed of neither the willpower nor the competence to succour such an insignificant fraction of their people in a time of need, but instead content themselves with bluster, threats and lies, do now declare a reciprocity of contempt, and do tell the Australian and New South Wales Governments that we shall now take upon our own shoulders that burden of responsibility and caring that is so fundamental to the duty of government and which they have failed so miserably to perform, and that, as from this day, 1st May, 1983, we shall form an Independent Nation, which shall be called The People's Republic of South Bandicoot.

Name	Address	Signature
Jeff Lee	Swatow	Jeff Lee
Sandra Clark	44 Sydney Road	S. Clark
Siobhan Rafferty	Rafferty's Farm	Siobhan Rafferty
BLUEY CLARK	132 Sydney Road	Bluey Clark
Brian Rafferty	132 Sydney Road	Brian Rafferty
Susan Rafferty	Rafferty's Farm	Susan Rafferty
TONA CLARK	ZIMBABWE	T.C. Clark
Catherine Lee	S.B. Medical Centre	C. Lee
MICHAEL KELLY	RAILWAY HOTEL	M. Kelly
Frank Morgan	161 Sydney Road	F.A. Morgan
ALDO FERRARI	Thylacine Road	Aldo Ferrari
ROSA FERRARI	" "	Rosa Ferrari
C.T. WANG	Wang's Pharmacy	C.T. Wang
SONDA NGUYEN	Tram via Thylacine	S. Nguyen
N.S. NGUYEN	" "	N.S. Nguyen
PEER RATHERY	Bandicoot Herald, Sydney Rd	Peer Rothery
ALEX ROBERTSON	Mac Mansion Road	A.B. Robertson
CHARLES RAFFERTY	Rafferty's Farm Road	Charles Rafferty

Page 1. of 2.!!

And what sort of country are we? We can't be a kingdom, because King Lionel has been deposed in absentia. We can't be a United States, because neither Moa Mansions nor Thylacine have yet tried to secede. So I suppose that that makes us a Republic.

What sort of Republic? Federal Republic won't work for the same reason as United States. A Democratic Republic? That doesn't seem right, because we are fleeing from Democracy Australian Style. Socialist Republic is wrong too, because all we are doing is helping each other.

What about People's Republic? It brings images of gerontocracy and the creaking of a Party Machine, and with all respect to Dr Rafferty and to the Railway Hotel Reading Circle, we are neither of those.

But then neither are China or Albania or Mongolia people's republics in any real sense. And we are.

So here's to the People's Republic of South Bandicoot.

In his memoirs, Charles Rafferty describes how Lee's idea took off:

There are some things that you should never say, such as referring to your sister-in-law as a supercilious bitch who would nag a labour caucus into privatising Parliament House, even if you mean them, because they are likely to get away from you.

During the afternoon, Lee's article grew from a giggle, through a game in which Elspeth Morgan was cast as Margaret Thatcher and James Spence became Lord High Executioner, to a manifesto for revolution.

By the evening, the whole town was in on the action. The Railway's always a bit of a scrum on Saturday night, but this was grand final night, and vicious, too, except the opposition hid at the other end of the field where we couldn't get at them.

There were still some voices in the wilderness. Fiona Clark argued for caution. "What happens when the creek drops?" she asked. Aldo Ferrari objected on principle. It was one thing to get on with the job in the absence of Authority, he argued, but it was another to openly defy them. "Bozo" Rafferty was worried about whether he'd have to paint his van mission brown.

Sandra Clark favoured instant rearmament and an invasion of Australia. Jeff Lee was advocating a barrage of revolutionary rhetoric that would make them kick us out from sheer exasperation.

Siobhan Rafferty summed up. "What the hell. Why not?" Sober words to herald the start of a revolution.

"Bluey" Clark was despatched to Radio Bandicoot with an ultimatum to the Australian Government:

We're not real experienced at sending ultimatums, except when some bludger's dragging the chain about buying his round. But I suppose that's what this is about then, really, isn't it? It's you bludgers dragging the chain about our democratic rights — you know, voting, and all that.

So, whoever's out there listening, tell the pollied, will you, that we're real fed up, and that they've got till 10 o'clock tomorrow morning to fly us in voting papers for today's elections, and they've got to make sure we all get them, and that they're counted, along with all the others. Mind you, the way we're feeling, we'll probably vote informal anyway, but that's not the point.

If they don't fly us those papers in, we reckon that what the Australian Government's saying is that the People of South Bandicoot aren't really part of Australia at all, so tell them that, and tell them that we'll take them at their word and we'll declare ourselves independent.

There was no response, except for a reported interview with the Chief Electoral Officer for New South Wales, Grant Risdon, in which he said:

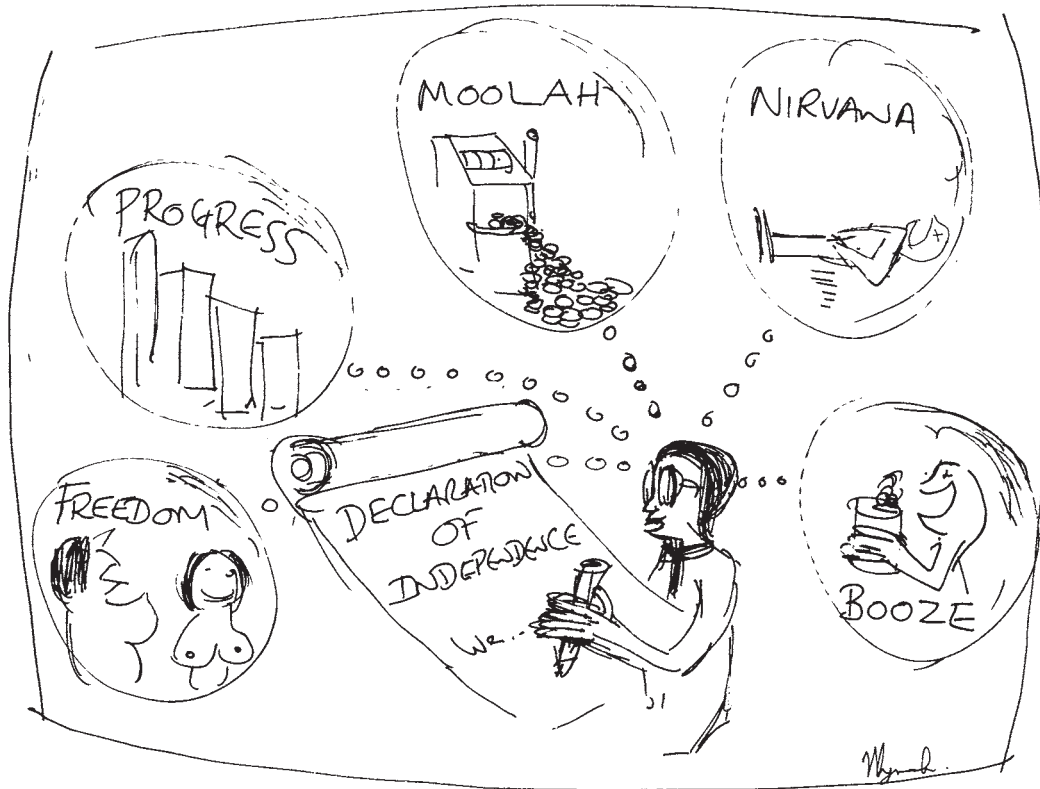
Don't be stupid. The polls have closed, and that is that.

A Mass Meeting of the People was held the following lunchtime at the Railway Hotel. The crowd overflowed onto the verandah and into the street. "Bozo" Rafferty gave a short speech, and the Declaration of Independence was passed around for everybody to sign. As Charles Rafferty remarks:

Such was the intensity of feeling that not one D. Duck, M. Mouse or L. Braithwaite affixed his signature to the declaration, because to do so would have resulted in certain lynching.

Arnold Hume was permitted a "You are being very silly ..." before being booed from the scene.

At 5 p.m. on 1st May, Radio Bandicoot broadcast the Declaration of Independence. A special edition of the *Bandicoot Herald*, officially renamed *The People's Daily*, celebrated the occasion. At the Railway Hotel, drinks were free for the rest of the evening.



## Chapter 11

### The Thylacine Soviet

The Declaration of Independence was syndicated by Australian Associated Press as a humorous filler, and appeared in the “Odd Spot” on the front page of the Melbourne Age. A spokesperson for the Taxation Department was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying:

I would presume that it is a tax avoidance scheme. These breakaway states usually are.

In a weekly syndicated column, headed *Bring Back the Gibbet*, Bernard Roberts said:

The maunderings of the pseudo-intellectual left lead now to treason. What right have a pack of spoiled brats, accustomed to having their sweeties hand-delivered at the taxpayer’s expense, to claim that a moment’s appearance of neglect confers upon them some mystical right to secede? Their bottoms should be smacked and they should be strung high from every lamp post from here to South Bandicoot.

Most newspapers ran their usual series of articles on Andorra, San Marino, Ruritania and Albania.

A feature article in the *Age*, a week later, commented that:

The so-called Declaration of Independence of the New South Wales township of South Bandicoot has become an integral part of our nightly diet of soap opera. However, the tension of “Will the beautiful Siobhan Rafferty succumb to the wiles of the evil construction magnate Lionel Braithwaite?” seems to have obscured the more fundamental issue of the repercussions to Australia as a whole of the piecemeal secession of its component parts.

We are used to the idea of states seceding. Western Australia threatens it once a decade, and Queensland almost as often, so we know how to handle it. Dubbo or Orange might think of it sometimes, but they are important regional centres, and have too much to lose. But South Bandicoot?

One problem is that the people of South Bandicoot have done little, other than at a local level, that can really be challenged, and even that can be interpreted as “self-help” in a difficult situation. Certainly they have declared their independence, but so have many of us, on Saturday night down at the pub, when the selectors have picked the wrong team. What they have not done is actually failed to pay Australian Taxes (because the bills cannot have reached them) or refused admission to Australian or New South Wales government officials (because none have deigned to visit them). Their only real offence so far is the running of “pirate” radio and television stations. The ABC and the owners of Channel 9 may regard this as treason, but few other Australians do.

So should we respond to South Bandicoot in true dramatic style, guns blazing and Green Berets rampaging, or should we laugh it off, like mature adults, as the joke that it really is?

Administration of the new republic was vested in the Management Collective. This consisted of Jeff Lee, Siobhan Rafferty, Sandra Clark, “Bluey” Clark, “Bozo” Rafferty, Fiona Clark, Peter Rafferty and Aldo Ferrari. James Spence had been invited to join the Collective, for reasons that Jeff Lee, in *The Binding of the Wounds*, described as

... more out of politeness than respect for his previous position or abilities ...

but had declined to respond to the invitation. Charles Rafferty also refused to join, on the grounds that

Gerontocracies are not currently fashionable.

The Management Collective reported to Mass Meetings of The People, held twice weekly at the Railway Hotel. Charles Rafferty described the meetings as

... living proof of why we pay politicians to go away and bore each other.

To Jeff Lee, however, they were

... a unique expression of the commitment of the People of South Bandicoot to the flowering of a new national culture.

In *The Guttering Candle of Freedom*, Ilona Hume alleges that

The average attendance at the so-called “mass” meetings of the people was twelve. Given the normal complement of at least fourteen comatose inebriates in the back bar of the Railway Hotel, it cannot be claimed that the meetings were a raging success.

Mick Kelly, the licensee of the Railway Hotel, says that Ilona Hume’s claims were groundless. He recalls that:

There was a significant increase in trade in all bars on the nights of the Mass Meetings.

Charles Rafferty was prepared to concede that there was some value in the meetings, however:

The advantage of having a People’s Republic is that, at long last, one can discover the meaning of the phrase An Enemy of the People.

In our case, we have three, all called Morgan. They stand at the back of the meeting, yelling obscenities at whoever tries to speak. Either their repertoire is limited, or we all have a common ancestry. Routinely, after five minutes, a motion is put to expel them, which is followed by a scuffle in which “Bluey” Clark and “Bozo” Rafferty demonstrate their





A Mass Meeting of the People

commitment to the revolution. Some rocks bounce off the flywire covering the windows, and then peace descends as they return to Thylacine to become the Dingo's problem.

The Shire Chambers were renamed the Management Collective Operations Centre, but were commonly referred to as the Kremlin. As Charles Rafferty remarked:

The Management Collective now strut in and out just like the Shire Council. But to give him credit, Jeff Lee was in shock for two days after Charmaine Donoghue called him "Sir".

The Bank renamed itself The National Bank of South Bandicoot without actually clarifying the nature of its on-going relationship with its erstwhile foreign owner. Elspeth Morgan remained in control at the telephone exchange, her boycott of lines tainted by unauthorised repair so all-embracing that she remained ignorant of the rival exchange at Greasy Joe's.

Within South Bandicoot, the Thylacine Soviet, based at Arnold Hume's house in Thylacine, formed the main centre of opposition. Arnold's brother Basil, James Spence and Arnold Kelly were members. Elias, Jasper and Solomon Morgan were regular visitors to the house. The licensee of the Commercial Hotel, Michael Doyle, was believed to be a sympathiser, but was too dependent on Mick Kelly for his beer to take a stance.

Jeff Lee describes the Thylacine Soviet in the *People's Daily*:

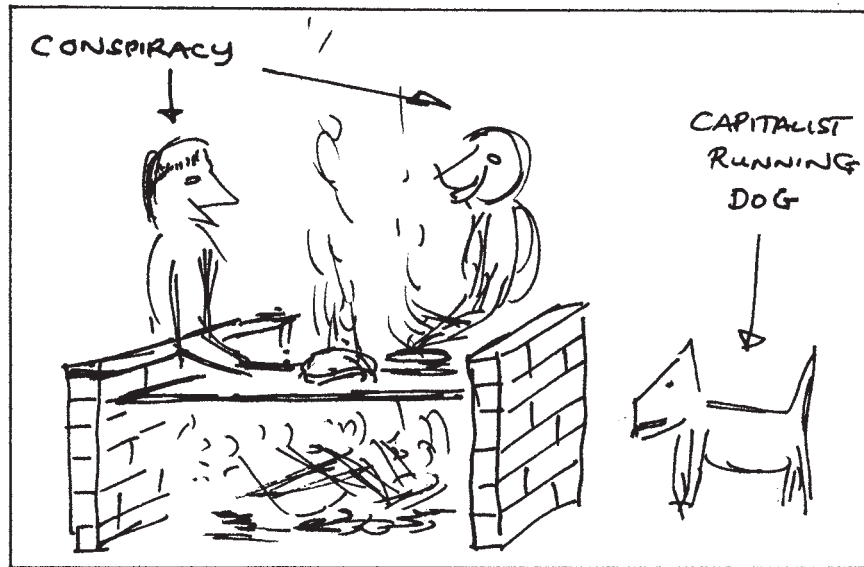
After any revolution, the ousted oppressors clump into cliques and covens, where they scheme unceasingly to regain their lost power — a power to which they believe they have a divine right, however much they have misused it, because they know that those who now have it can be trusted to misuse it even more.

In the nether wastes of Thylacine there assembles every night such a sinister group of manipulators, hunched over a bare table in the dim light. Have they the latest Playboy, perhaps? No such chance, because the mails have not come. Nor is there the rattle of dice or the slap of cards, nor the raucous laughter after the tenth can.

Outside, their lantern-jawed secret army hones its skills with a can of kerosene, a cat, and a box of matches.

These men are serious, and they are plotting our downfall.

Ilona Hume, in *The Guttering Candle of Freedom*, describes them as



The Thylacine Soviet

Men whose dedication to the highest ideals of freedom and democracy led them to reject unequivocally the upstart cabal that had usurped the most sacred symbols of authority and had defiled their very blades in unauthorised excavations.

The only overt act by the senior members of the Soviet was a boycott of the Mass Meetings of the People. The Morgan brothers, as was their wont, were more proactive. The *People's Daily* reported that:

Management Collective member Jeff Lee has been released following treatment at the Bandicoot Medical Centre after an assault at the Railway Hotel last night.

The Mass Meeting of the People adjourned in disorder as participants rushed to Lee's aid.

The doctor in charge of the Bandicoot Medical Centre, Dr Catherine Lee has described the assailants, Elias, Jasper and Solomon Morgan, as "uncomfortable", due in part to the severely limited supplies of painkillers available for elective patients at the centre.

She said that the prognosis for the recovery of their ambulatory functions was reasonable in the long term.

Lionel Braithwaite returned to Sydney from Fiji on 11th May. After a flight to Thylacine in a State Emergency Services helicopter, he called a press conference in Sydney to appeal to the state government to intervene. He claimed that:

It is a politically motivated sit-in by a gang of closet marxists with no morals and no manners whose sole aim is to disrupt the business of the shire.

Later the same afternoon, the New South Wales Police Minister, said that there was no question of talks with the "rebel" government:

When they cease their occupation of the Shire Offices, and permit the legally elected Shire Council to resume their functions, then it may be possible to negotiate a suitable flood relief package.

He said that police had been ordered to take action to end the demonstration.

The South Bandicoot community in Sydney held a noisy demonstration outside Parliament House. As the Daily Telegraph reported:



Twenty people with banners and bandicoot suits protested unheeded outside Parliament House yesterday afternoon as punch-drunk MPs indulged themselves in yet another round of the World Heavyweight Caucus title fight.

Former Souths player Trevor Clark described the planned despatch of police to South Bandicoot as counterproductive. "What they need down there is beer, not beer guts," he said.

An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* gave qualified support to the demonstrators:

Perhaps the Bandicoot Shire President's intervention has been beneficial, in that it has at last produced action, although not of the sort that South Bandicoot residents have apparently been requesting for the last two months. It must be asked, however, why has it taken Mr Braithwaite so long?

The police set out at dawn the following day in a helicopter gunship piled high with tear gas and assault rifles. However, the operation turned out slightly differently from what was intended, as the *Sydney Sun* reported:

The crack New South Wales police Anti-Demonstration Squad is missing in dense bush in southern New South Wales.

The remains of their crashed helicopter have been found on a lonely hillside in the Brindabella Ranges, west of Canberra, but no bodies have so far been located.

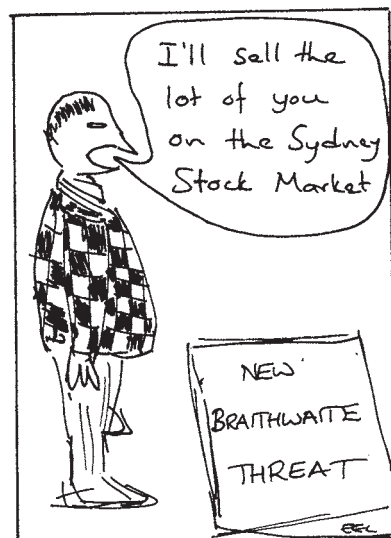
The crash was reported by a local farmer when Yass police station opened this morning. He reported hearing a thump and seeing flames in the middle of the night, but could not reach the site until daylight.

Fears are held for the safety of the squad. "These guys are great in dark alleys, but the bush isn't their thing," a police spokesman said.

The State Emergency Services, the New South Wales and the Federal Police conducted a massive manhunt lasting three days, and found no trace of the men. The cockpit voice recorder recovered from the wreckage contained heavy metal music, and there was a stub from a joint on the cabin floor. The Department of Aviation's investigation blamed pilot error for the accident.

On May 17th, the *Sun* reported that the missing police had been found that morning, exhausted but unhurt:

The missing police anti-demonstration squad has been discovered hiding in a Darlinghurst brothel following an anonymous tip-off to Vice Squad police.



Squad leader, Sergeant Luke Morgan, claims that the squad was kidnapped at Banks-town Airport as they were about to board their helicopter, and had been held ever since.

Brothel owner, former Souths front row Trevor Clark, says that police burst into his establishment Feral Passions at five o'clock last Sunday morning and demanded sex at gunpoint. They then refused to leave. Clark claims to have lost tens of thousands of dollars worth of business, some of it permanently, due to the enforced closure of his business.

Independent observers of the Darlinghurst "scene" confirm that even regular clients have been turned away from Feral Passions, and that many have "gone elsewhere".

The squad's weapons, including its notorious banner blaster, were found on the premises.

In an interview on Sydney television, Lionel Braithwaite described the failure of the operation as:

... a setback, not a defeat.

On 25th May, South Bandicoot received diplomatic recognition from Libya, an offer of troops, and funds for a mosque. The latter two were politely turned down by the Management Collective, with dissent from Sandra Clark:

Jeff thought that the acceptance of Libyan troops would constitute a provocation, but I believe that he was really more worried about Siobhan having to wear a veil. As far as I was concerned, some sort of "grunt" was essential, in spite of the dead silence so far from the Australian Government.

In an interview with the *Canberra Times* on 29th May, General Charles England, army Chief of Staff for South Eastern Australia, ruled out military intervention in the dispute:

General England cited the armed forces' tradition of non-intervention in civilian matters, the fact that most of his troops are "country kids" from places just like South Bandicoot, and "that damned creek".

"Time is on the New South Wales government's side," he pointed out. He claimed that expert hydrological opinion was unanimous that One Mile Creek would go down eventually.

The acting Prime Minister, Salome Pettifer, announced the imposition of sanctions against South Bandicoot:

From this day, no goods, services or cultural artefacts shall enter or leave South Bandicoot. The clouds shall be diverted, offending birds shall have their wings clipped, even the pollen from the trees shall be halted at the border.

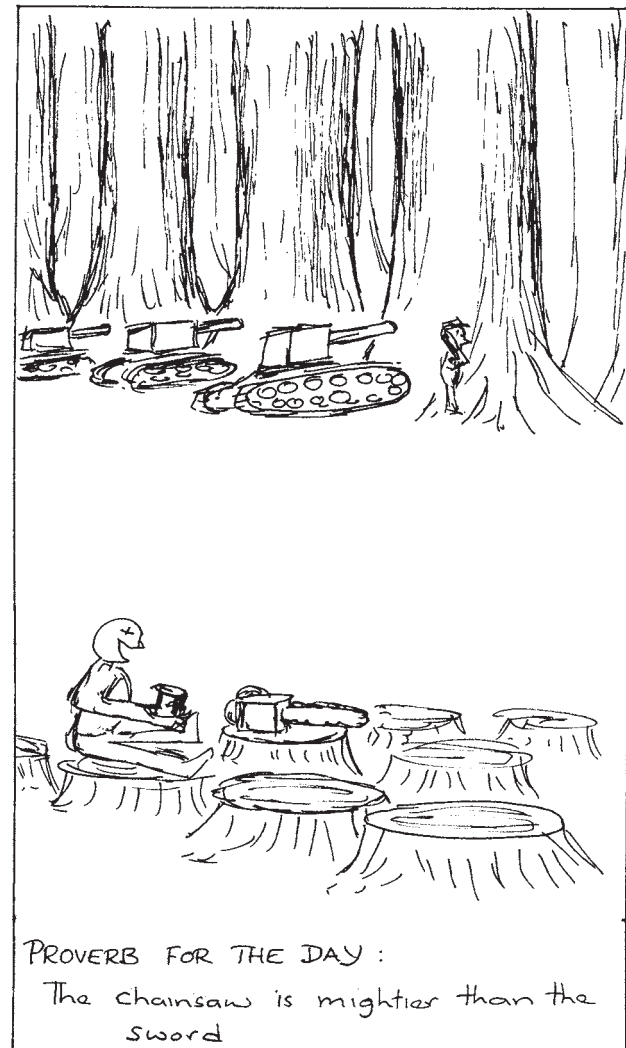
On 30th May, it was announced that

The Australian Defence forces will be conducting exercises over the next few weeks in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, to develop a preparedness for action in temperate rainforests and at high altitudes.

The exercises caused a blast of opposition from the timber industry:

Angry timber workers today set fire to a stranded tank in protest at the devastation to the industry caused by military manoeuvres in the South East forests of New South Wales.

Large areas of the forests have been placed out of bounds to logging, many others have been rendered inaccessible by the damage done to logging tracks by heavy military equipment.



Conservation groups, appalled at allegations of the shooting of rare koalas and parrots for target practice, set up camps along the ranges. Local shopkeepers complained that the army was bringing them no new business, and driving existing business away.

Soon South Bandicoot was surrounded. As the *People's Daily* reported:

The vicelike grip of the foreign oppressor tightens inexorably on South Bandicoot as the agents of slaughter grind into place. Only five hundred metres of surging brown water guard us from the steel Frankensteins encamped on One Mile Creek. Only a hundred kilometres of impenetrable forest protect us from the iron tentacles reaching up from the coast. Only sheer cliffs and vertigo save us from the quick blitzkrieg from the next frost valley.

However, the *Age* reported that:

Morale among troops surrounding South Bandicoot is at an all time low. Eerie groanings in the trees, lack of STD telephones, and pizzas that are cold by the time that they are delivered have combined to turn to collection of hardship allowances into sheer torture.

Lost in trackless forests, their tanks dwarfed by the hundred metre mountain ash trees that bar their way, the soldiers see no end to their mission.

Front-line troops are bitter at the army's rejection of a timber industry offer of assistance in clearing the way.

On 5th June, the acting Prime Minister of Australia announced that:

The economic embargo on South Bandicoot is beginning to bite. No goods have entered or left South Bandicoot since the start of the rebellion and it is clear that it is only a matter of time before the resistance crumbles.

Bernard Roberts was demanding swift and decisive action:

The removal of warts requires heat: searing heat that burns away all traces of malignant growth and cauterises the wound. For what reason have we invested billions in sophisticated weapons systems if we cannot blast into oblivion this cancer on the body politic.

A peace demonstration in Sydney was placed under armed guard in hospital after being trampled by a police horse.

In an opinion poll, respondents around Australia were asked:

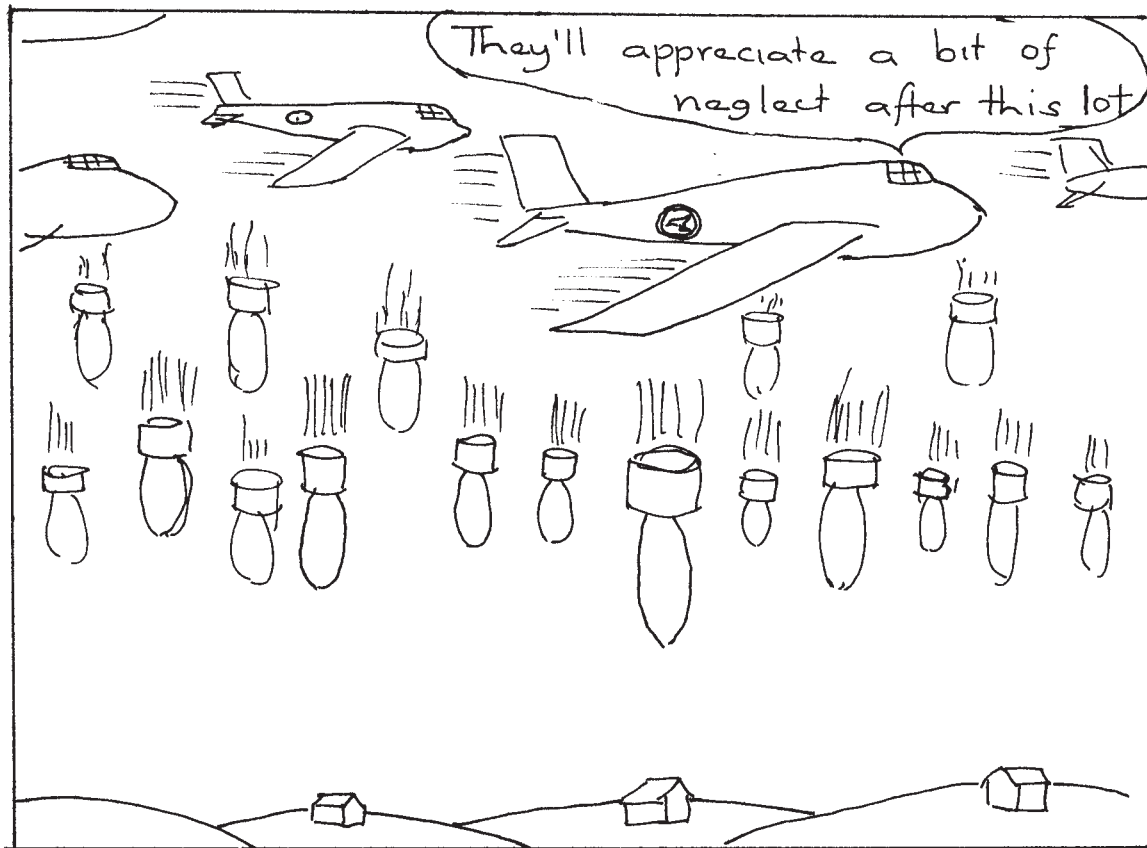
What action should the Australian Government take in respect of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of South Bandicoot:

- a) Send in the army to restore order;
- b) Wait and see if the rebellion collapses;
- c) Recognise South Bandicoot as a Sovereign Nation.

The responses were:

(a) 41%, (b) 36%, (c) 1%, Don't Know 22%.

And so South Bandicoot waited, separated from Australia not just by the waters of One Mile Creek, still running strong and deep, but by a massive lack of understanding about what was going on.



## Chapter 12

### So This is How We Defend Democracy?

The problem with war is that it is so horribly noisy  
writes Charles Rafferty in his memoirs.

I suppose that we should be grateful that the 3 a.m. flypast has ceased since an F111 clipped the Mt Clark radio mast, providing nocturnal illumination unsurpassed since last year's bush fires, but that has not spared us of the interminable illusion of carpets being beaten as the TV crews return home at the end of their shift.

The problem of defending South Bandicoot was at the forefront of everybody's mind. In *A Tortoise on its Back*, Jeff Lee canvasses the options:

There is little value in adopting the Danish Defence and lining our borders with loudspeakers booming "We Surrender", because we have already established that the Australian authorities do not listen. Fiona Clark's suggestion that we should all wear gasmasks so that the invaders will confuse us with pigs and thus allow us to escape has merit, but is only a partial solution to the problem. And although Bozo Rafferty's technique of making the invaders do all the work is both demonstrably successful and financially rewarding, it does inflict its toll the following morning.

Infiltration was an ever-present problem, as Lee's reference to "Bozo" Rafferty's frequent hangovers attests. Rafferty describes his ways of identifying and neutralising infiltrators:

They come from the wrong direction. Their lovely white helicopters are the wrong make, the stick-on logos peel off, and in the right light you can make out the camouflage paint underneath. They've got short hair, moustaches and are far too fit. The women look like they've come off a ten kilometre walk, not out of somebody's bed. They bring gifts, like bottles of gin, that any real journo would have had confiscated. And they don't know one end of the *Daily Mirror* from the *Gurranji Advocate*.

The trouble is, the bastards can drink. They shout, that's no problem, but you've got to keep a standby squad on hand to cart the bodies away, because there's no way that the front-line reception team can do it.

A side-effect of the attempts at infiltration was the steadily-growing size of the People's Air Force of South Bandicoot, unfortunately crippled in its range of action by a total lack of suitable fuel, and by "Bluey" Clark's inability to fly a helicopter.

The Australian attack came at 2.47am on 7th June. The Management Collective Operations Centre was empty except for the echoing voice of Siobhan Rafferty, doing Midnight to Dawn on Radio Bandicoot.

Tapes from the hidden cameras in the studio tell the story. There was a crashing of glass, and the sound of automatic weapons fire. The announcer's body jerked, then slumped. A shout of "Good shot Chip!", and masked figures filled the room. Then a curse, and a howl of rage. The body was dragged to the shattered window and hurled to the street below, where it smashed, spreading plastic foam chips over the roadway.

Simultaneous raids were made on other key points. The Bandicoot Bank building was empty, and was occupied without resistance, but at the telephone exchange the Morgan boys were on guard, and had routed the invaders before they realised who they were. The door of Sandra Clark's house was smashed in, and shots fired into her portrait of Jeff Lee, but nobody was home. Some unexpected fox traps and both barrels from Bridgit Rafferty's shotgun led to a Gunfight in the Rafferty Corral, in which the attackers used a flame thrower and grenades before being brought down by the Rafferty dogs. In the fire that followed, five year old Susan Rafferty's teddy bear was badly burned. Rescuers burst into the Lee house as old Mrs Lee, a sufferer from night starvation, heaved a wok full of flaming fat over a masked gunman. Napoleon, Fiona Clark's prize boar, expired wheezing in her arms, but not before rolling on his assassin.

On the 3 a.m. news on Radio Bandicoot, Sandra Clark reported

It's not cracker night folks, and those guys in black aren't supporters of Gurranji Croatia.





Expert opinion in the studio here reckons we've been invaded. But don't panic. It's all under control. We'll keep you posted.

Now back to Siobhan.

Within an hour, the Kremlin and the bank had been sealed off, and the remaining "strays" were rounded up. A visiting TV crew had the tapes from the studio and film of the "body", footage of Susan Rafferty's teddy bear, and of the Clarks' second best boar standing guard over a dejected group of attackers in muddy black overalls.

The story led every morning news bulletin in Australia, the graphic pictures of the bullet-ridden dummy intercut with pictures of an alive, laughing Siobhan Rafferty.

I must have offended my fan club

she told them. The tape of Sandra Clark's report on Radio Bandicoot was played so often that it reached number two in the charts. A press release from the acting Prime Minister of Australia, Salome Pettifer, embargoed for release at 9 a.m., described the operation as:

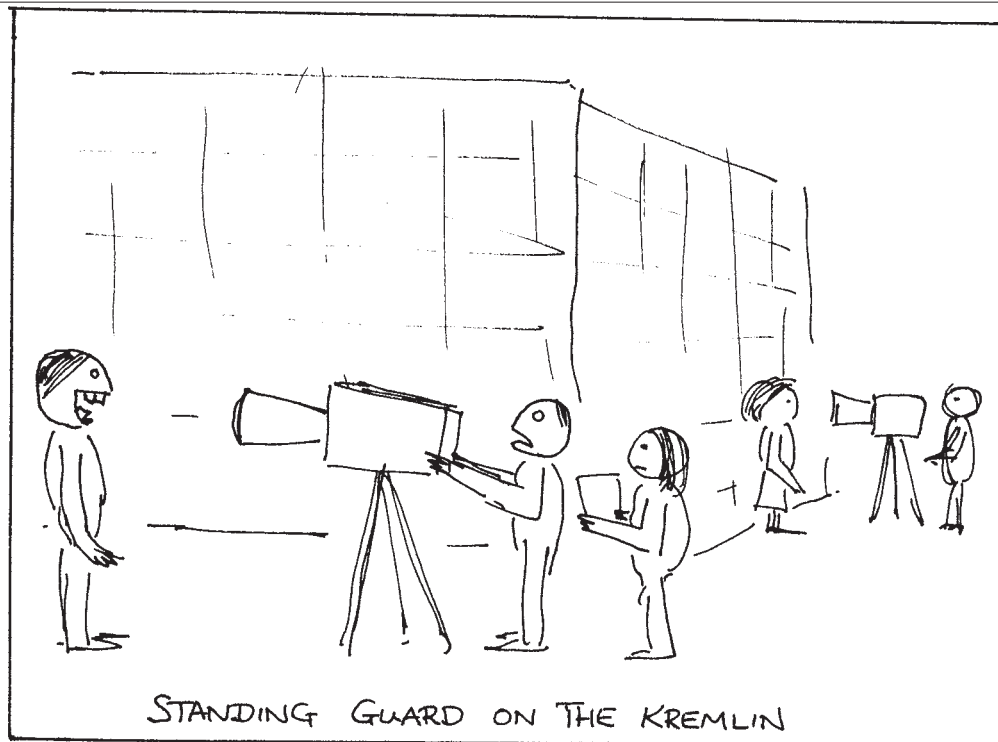
... a necessary piece of surgery, which will excise the canker of insurrection for all time.

Live coverage of the "seige" occupied the rest of the morning. Small squads of guards covered each entrance to the buildings from behind trees, fences and neighbouring buildings, chatting cheerfully to the TV crews and reporters as if it was the annual show. The South Bandicoot commander, "Bozo" Rafferty, was optimistic throughout:

We're treating it as an economic boycott. There are three packets of stale twisties, a Mars bar and a flat can of coke in the vending machines. No water or power. They can burn the files for all we care, but they won't dare, just in case they contain state secrets.

The party at the bank surrendered first. They came to the door, three big men, all in black, their faces still covered in black smears, slouching a little, trying to look nonchalant, but with their arms held out from their bodies in a V-shape, palms outwards to show that they were unarmed. They walked slowly down Sydney Road, followed at ten paces by Bluey Clark with his





father's shotgun, Aldo Ferrari with a family souvenir of the First World War, and Simon Lee with his favourite target pistol. They climbed into the back of Frank Morgan's delivery van.

Inside, the bank was a mess: papers strewn all over the floor, coins in pyramids, cones and circles. But they had spent most of their time writing graffiti by taping banknotes to the walls. They only knew two words, both of four letters. One began with F, the other with S. The TV crews filmed them conscientiously, but they were covered with crazy patterns of squares for prime-time viewing.

Soon afterwards the glass doors of the Kremlin opened, and four men shambled out. One clutched a Mars bar wrapper, another an uneaten packet of twisties. They climbed into the back of the van and were driven away.

The Australian Government declared a state of emergency in the Southern Tablelands and placed more troops on standby. It issued a ban on media coverage on security grounds. It demanded the immediate release of the captured men.

In an editorial entitled *So This is How We Defend Democracy?*, the *Age* deplored the conduct of the operation:

If this is surgery, then the implement was a jack-hammer and the anaesthetic laughing gas.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* remarked:

We appear to have blundered into a remake of *The Mouse that Roared*, set in the Southern Tablelands and starring none other than South Bandicoot's own Bozo Rafferty, who appears set for a long and rewarding career in Green Beret movies.

The *Daily Mirror*'s front page proclaimed:

OUR BOYS  
BETRAYED

An bungled invasion of South Bandicoot has left Australian's crack troops prisoners in the hands of the rebel South Bandicoot regime.

Blundering in high places is the cause.

In a broadcast on Radio Bandicoot, Sandra Clark raised the issue of feeding the captives:

Are these unwanted guests yet another element in some unsubtle plot to starve us into submission?

she asked. The resulting outcry led Jeff Lee to take a party of reporters (suitably blindfolded for part of the trip) down the tunnels at Moa Mansions, to see that the prisoners were alive and well. The *Age* reported the visit in solemn terms:

Somewhere beneath South Bandicoot, concrete catacombs echo to the coughing of their black-garbed inmates. Is this the remnant of some long-forgotten Maginot line, or the start of an underground railway? The air is cold and dank, the walls stained and weeping, the overhead pipes furry with flaking insulation.

The *Daily Mirror* reporter saw the pipes too:

HEROES HOSTAGE  
TO HELL-HOLE  
HORROR

Crack Australian troops sacrificed in the South Bandicoot debacle face a lingering death unless rescue comes soon.

Incarcerated in asbestos-lined tunnels intended for yellow-spined politicians in the last war, it is only a matter of time before the fatal fibres inexorably scar the lungs of our best fighting men, and start them on the slow and painful road to an inevitable death.

A blurry photograph showed lagging peeling from one of the overhead water pipes.

In an interview on ABC Radio, the Australian Acting Prime Minister stated:

It is abominable that South Bandicoot is not treating its prisoners in accordance with the Geneva Convention.



Jeff Lee remarked on Radio Bandicoot:

The Geneva Convention is an international convention. Does this constitute recognition?

“Bozo” Rafferty issued a series of demands, including:

- . Withdrawal of all troops surrounding South Bandicoot and immediate recognition of South Bandicoot as an independent state.
- . A new teddy bear for Susan Rafferty, to be presented in person by the Australian Prime Minister without attendant photographers.
- . A commitment to the retraining of the Australian Army to teach them more words.

An editorial in the *Age* on 14th June, just one week after the abortive invasion, reflected the tide of Australian Public opinion:

#### DID WE BLOW IT IN SOUTH BANDICOOT?

The South Bandicoot problem is a molehill that has grown into a mountain.

It is a problem that we have known about for a long time: the problem of rural alienation. Recently, it has been exacerbated by the accountants, who have nothing but contempt for the efforts of the people in remote rural areas to keep going, in some form or other, a range of marginally uneconomic operations, whether government or private, which make their lives more comfortable.

We have also known about the specific case of South Bandicoot, from the faces and voices of Brian “Bozo” Rafferty, Jeff Lee, Sandra and “Bluey” Clark, the late Siobhan Rafferty, and many others, long before they were pushed into their tragic Revolution.

And we have done nothing.

Even on the day of the Revolution we could have done something: reconnected power, flown in food, flown in ballot boxes, built a new bridge.

Why didn't we? There are as many excuses as acts of neglect. We didn't know. There weren't enough people affected. It'd cost too much. They were okay anyway, they didn't need help.

These all add up to one thing: they didn't matter.

So why the bully boys? Why this tremendous bruise on ministerial egos and national pride from a handful of people who don't matter? They are no threat, unless they call in the Libyans, and that they will only do if we force them to.

The people of South Bandicoot have shown that they can do without us. Not from choice, but because we made them. Now we must live with our decision, and go our separate ways, hopefully as friends, if we have it in us.

An opinion poll conducted the same day supported this view. Respondents were asked:

What action should the Australian Government take in respect of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of South Bandicoot:

- (a) Invade and Crush the Rebellion;
- (b) Negotiate with the so-called “Government” of South Bandicoot;
- (c) Recognise South Bandicoot as a Sovereign Nation.

The responses were:

(a) 11%, (b) 36%, (c) 53%. Young people voted overwhelmingly for the third option (67%) with only 1% favouring invasion.

On 18th June, the Australian Prime Minister, on a brief visit from overseas, announced that the United Nations had been approached to appoint a mediator:

... between the Australian Government and the People of South Bandicoot, with the view to the establishment of a mutually acceptable legal and constitutional relationship between the two nations, including the settlement of any outstanding disputes and claims, and the repatriation of any persons held as a consequence of the recent conflict.

Response to the announcement was mixed. An editorial in the Age said:

An environmental castastrophe has been averted.

In a column entitled *A Nation Betrayed*, Bernard Roberts wrote:

The conspiracy of pusillanimous penny-pinching permeating the left-leaning leper colony that for so long has shored up the pretence of a government in Canberra has so sapped the morale and sabotaged the preparedness of our armed forces that our last bulwark of democratic freedom has proved itself incapable of refereeing a football match, let alone supressing a one-horse rebellion in a tin-pot township, and so has been forced to settle upon that most demeaning of all outcomes: peace at any price.

Lionel Braithwaite, former Bandicoot Shire President, remarked to the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

We have lost a battle, not the war.

As a gesture of goodwill, a space-suited team of Australian technicians laboured in the tunnels of Moa Mansions, replacing cotton-waste with polyurethane foam on mile after mile of empty, rusty water pipes.

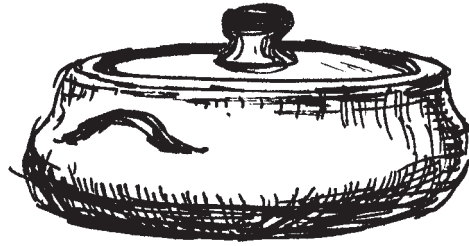


## **PART 4**

### **DISILLUSION AND DISAPPOINTMENT**







Bandicoot Ware

## Chapter 13

### Let a Thousand Transistors Bloom

The evening of June 18th, 1983 was one of celebration, covered live by Radio Bandicoot for those too far away to come. There were bonfires every hundred metres along Sydney Road, and down into Clark Street. There were bands and singing and dancing. Beer flowed from the Railway Hotel and from a makeshift bar outside the Commercial. Charles Rafferty recalls the scene:

It was like the climax to a romance: the evil villains banished; the old cracked church bell ringing out over the happy throng destined to live happily every after; “Bluey” Clark mimicing a walrus in a pothole full of water; Siobhan Rafferty ripping Jeff Lee’s latest pamphlet from his hands and telling him to get up and dance; Aldo Ferrari gazing open-mouthed at a working street-lamp; and Ilona Hume driving a hard bargain on serial rights with an inebriated editor.

But even amidst this euphoria, Peter Rafferty sounded a note of caution. In an editorial in the *People’s Daily* the following morning, he commented:

It has been said that the easiest part of a revolution is the fighting. The real battle comes later: the long grind of reconstruction and transformation of society; the constant vigil against revisionism, backsliding and the hijacking of the revolution. We must beware, too, of the cult of personality. Much as we love and respect them, is Jeff Lee to be the new Marx and Sandra Clark our own private Lenin?

Lee’s ideas were incorporated in the *5 Point Plan for the Future of South Bandicoot* presented by the Management Collective to the Mass Meeting of the People the following Wednesday. Lee described the plan as:

The blossoming of our collective inner self that leads inexorably to true fulfilment.

*In Rays of New Hope*, Ilona Hume described the plan as:

The same set of hackneyed old ideas on the making of backyard transistors that Lee has been hawking for the last six months, based on industries so small that they are barely visible under their own microscopes.

An early business success was Christopher Rafferty’s *Secure Storage*. It would be unfair to describe Christopher Rafferty as a foreign entrepreneur, even though he had not lived in South Bandicoot since his late teens. Rather, he was the first of the returnees, the expatriate South Bandicoot people who returned after the revolution. The *People’s Daily*’s newly established *Bandicoot Business* section described the company as follows:

Christopher Rafferty's innovative new business is designed to make computer records more secure than Fort Knox.

"Keeping records of any sort is dangerous these days," he told the *People's Daily*. "The Australian Tax Office, the police and the courts have no respect for the confidentiality of the client-business relationship."

He said that a prototype system was operating successfully at *Feral Passions*, a Sydney business where the maintenance of confidential records on client preferences was essential, and that a number of other prominent Sydney Personal Services and Racing businesses were interested.

"The key to data security is instant erasure," Mr Rafferty explained. "If a machine is turned off, or lifted, or any attempt is made to access data without the correct commands being entered, all data is erased."

Backup copies of the data were protected in the same way, and were preferably kept in another state or country. "This is a major attraction of South Bandicoot," he explained.

Other proposed high technology projects included an automated disk-jockey (with a built-in donation processor to facilitate record company input in the scheduling of new releases) that would allow commercial radio stations to operate totally unattended for months on end; the development of an automated wok; microchip-controlled "intelligent" seeds, that could compare soil moisture with weather forecasts and decide when to sprout; and alternative energy technologies, including the development of batteries to capture and store lightning strikes.

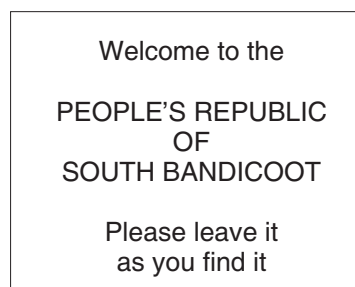
Sandra Clark's *Bandicoot Ware*, pottery in strange shapes and bright glazes, free of heavy metals and developed using Simon Rafferty's chemistry set, was an instant critical success at the South Bandicoot Environmental Ceramics Exhibition, and achieved several sales among visitors to South Bandicoot.

In the meantime, however, another, unplanned, industry was developing. An article in the *Australian's Weekend Magazine* tells the story:

Each generation among us throbs with the thrill of some remote paradise: Samarkand, Katmandu or a sun-drenched island in the Ionian Sea. Now it is South Bandicoot. Even the name conjures romance as our four-wheel drive rocks and sways down the rutted gravel road, the flashes of light through the overhanging gum trees ticking off our seemingly endless progress.

We emerge from the canopy of trees, and gaze out over a narrow valley to the steep hills beyond. Below us, the glittering waters of a fast-running creek, the half-completed piers for a new bridge. We plunge downwards. The waters surge around us, a token resistance now, and let us pass. We scramble up a grassy bank scarred with wheel tracks and rejoin the road.

A sign says:



to which some wag has added with a spray can:

(Independent!)



We glance back at the creek in awe. It glitters back at us, placid, unafraid. So that was One Mile Creek.

The road winds up a bare hillside, then into forest again. A sign on a side track points to Narmi Falls, notorious as the site of an unsolved gold robbery over a century ago. South Bandicoot is a community steeped in history. A curve in the road, thinning of the trees, and we are looking out over a broad valley scattered with toy buildings. At the far end, there is a glint of snow on the hills. The guide points to a small huddle of buildings beside the river. "That's the town," he says.

The main street is the broad, dusty expanse of a fifties country town. A strip of bitumen, two cars wide and broken at the edges, runs down the middle. The cars and utes, many of which would not be out of place in a fifties film, are angle parked. Only the glint of a mirror-glass cube in the middle distance condemns the scene to modernity.

Our hotel proclaims itself to be the *Glorious Revolution*, and has repainted its iron lace-work verandah red, but the sandblasted doors to the Residential Section still say *Commercial Hotel*. Publican Michael Doyle, a big, outgoing man with a passionate vision for the future of South Bandicoot, says that the original name is "part of our history" and that the retention of the doors "adds a richness to the tapestry that makes up the revolution". In the bedrooms are posters of prominent revolutionaries: Marx, Che Guevara, Jane Fonda.

The article goes on to describe the tourist facilities:

We were taken to places whose names are graven on our hearts: past the Railway Hotel and the terracing of the Lees' farm which makes one think of Bali, to Zimbabwe; to the dark, cool tunnels of Moa Mansions; to Thylacine, where our guide pointed over a fence to a barbeque that was the core of the counter-revolution; to Raffertys' Farm where the burnt shell of the old farmhouse faces the foundations of the new across bare earth paced by a horde of chickens; to Napoleon's Grave, covered in fresh flowers; and lastly to the War Memorial, where the long list of familiar names bears tribute to South Bandicoot's tragic history.

The People of South Bandicoot had mixed feelings about this invasion, as is evidenced by the letters in the *People's Daily*:

Must we give our visitors the impression that Revolutions are inevitably bedded in misery and squalor?

writes Fiona Clark of *Zimbabwe*. She continues:

Admittedly the food at the *Commercial Hotel* has never been anything to write home about (nor to eat, if one could avoid it) and it is common knowledge that the Himalayas are merely an inferior Nepalese copy of the beds, but surely the mere act of renaming the hotel after our Glorious Revolution imposes upon us an obligation to make it a show-piece of what the People of South Bandicoot can achieve?

Nothing will aid the export of our revolution more effectively than pleasant memories of South Bandicoot in the minds of our visitors.

Ilona Hume, in *Rays of New Hope* describes:

... the foetid stench of the tent cities on the vacant blocks near the War Memorial, and beside the public lavatories at the so-called Pinochet Barbeques, which make any visit to the town centre an ordeal to be avoided at all costs.

People slept six to a room at the Railway Hotel. Massive extensions were built on to the *Dingo* at Thylacine, approved only in retrospect by the Management Collective. The *Rising Sun* at Moa Mansions grew an annexe, and a prison with balconies, called the *Historical Inevitability Inn*, replaced the single-storey Travelodge in Braithwaite Constructions' old yard in Sydney Road.

Sandra Clark regarded the provision of additional facilities as unnecessary:

Although I am not one to inflict needless cruelty upon any animal, however dumb, I feel that F. Clark's plea for the provision of tourist facilities is at best misguided.

These people come uninvited to gawp at our Revolution as if it was some expo or two-headed monster. I have no objection to their coming, provided that they do not leave tyre tracks on brand-new bridges and lolly papers in sacred sites, and indeed there may be some minor benefit if, as F. Clark suggests, it assists in the export of our Revolution.

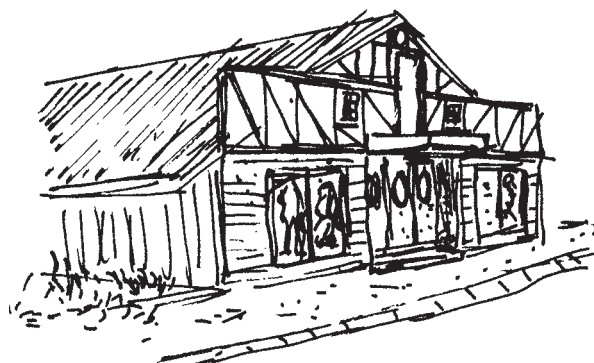
Any such benefit is peripheral, however, to our avowed objective, which is Revolution in One Bandicoot. Our scarce resources are stretched thin enough by our programme of National Reconstruction without our squandering them on cake for foreign trippers.

Tourists should take us as we are, and be pleased that we permit them even the role of spectators to our Glorious Revolution.

Jeff Lee argued strongly for the establishment of a Museum of the Revolution:

If people are to come to hear about our revolution, then we must tell them about it in the best and clearest way possible, and not have our message distorted by foreign guides whose sole source of inspiration is the Sydney Sun.

The tour operators continued to complain. A travel reporter in the *Melbourne Age* remarked:



The Regal Cinema

Don't expect too much of the nightlife, any more than you would in any other town of this size. There are two pubs in South Bandicoot itself, plus an overpriced bar at the Historical Inevitability Inn, the Dingo at Thylacine, and the Rising Sun at Moa Mansions. The walk down Clark Street to the river is very pleasant on a clear night, or if it is raining, the remains of the posters on the old Regal Cinema will make time travel a reality.

Simon Rafferty proposed the establishment of illuminations to permit day-night sightseeing. Sandra Clark had another answer:

If they want nightlife, why don't they go down to the bend in Raffertys' Creek, past the end of Clark Street. The din of the mosquitoes is louder than any rock band, and their visit will surely leave them with tangible memories of their stay.

The *People's Daily* revealed a less pleasant aspect of South Bandicoot's nightlife:

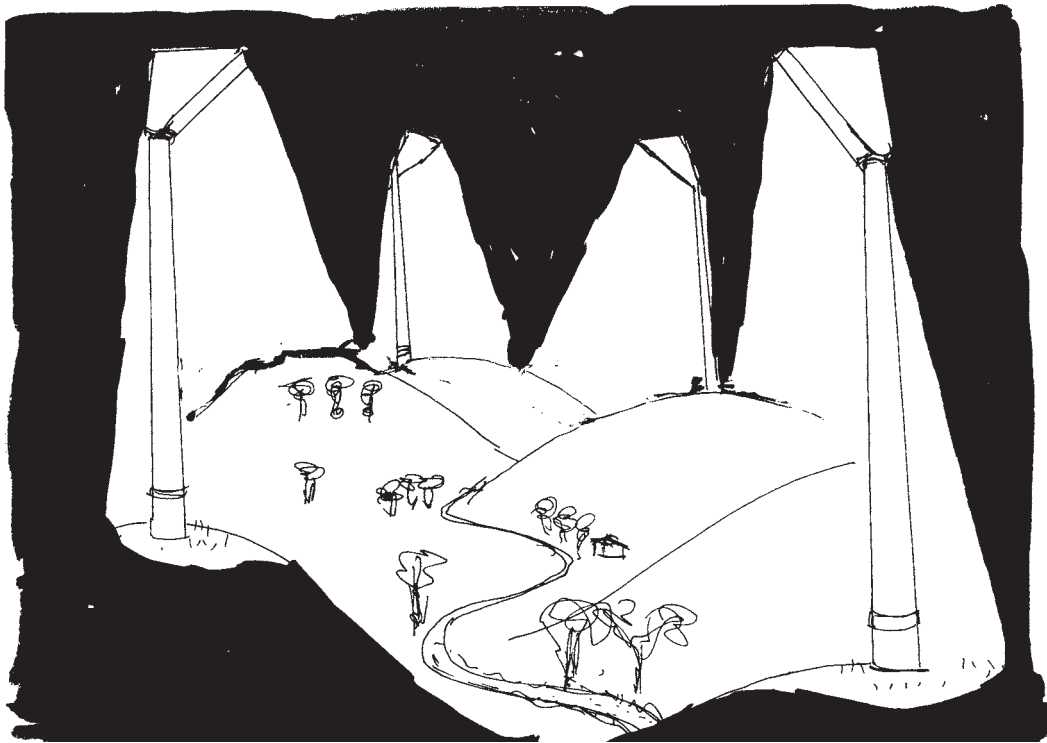
The apparent popularity of the *Dingo* at Thylacine with visiting businessmen, in spite of its out of this world room rates, has suprised many of us. But then we haven't been allowed to meet Suzie, Cindy, Annie, Esmerelda, Rosie, Theresa, Paola and Meg, even though they have been living in South Bandicoot for over a month.

They've all got big, dark eyes, lovely smiles, and not much English, which is the way Trevor Clark and Arnold Hume want to keep it.

They live in the new six and a half star extension to the Dingo, and get to dine tete-a-tete with a chinless wonder in the candle-lit seclusion of the exclusive *Le Grub* restaurant, and to sip cold tea in the elaborate cocktail bar. Some nights, when things are quiet, they get their own bed to sleep in, but then they go hungry, because there is nobody to pay for their meal.

Suzie tells us that she earns \$50 per month, which is sent directly to her family in Thailand. The other girls earn much the same.

The Laundromat on Sydney Road, next to Greasy Joe's, was closed for refurbishing. A Sydney firm did the work, excavating a basement the full length of the building and installing mas-



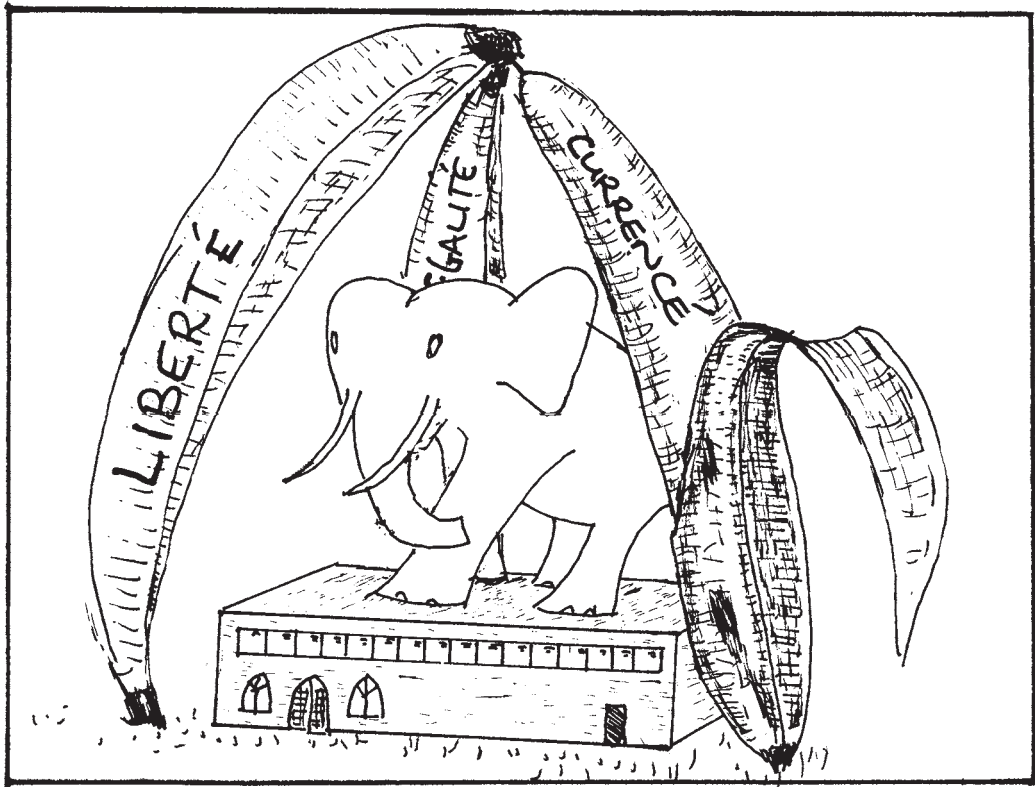
Simon Rafferty's proposal to assist  
Night-time Sightseeing



The unspoiled beauty of Raffertys' Creek  
makes it haven for visitors

sive vaults and security doors, before replacing the concrete floor with rose marble and fitting a row of brand new lime-green washing machines. The new manager, Carlo Goldoni, wore a dark suit and dark glasses, and was seen in public only at *Le Grub*. The sign outside said *Banco Laundromatique de la Bandicoot Midi*.





A suggestion for the proposed Cathedral, Casino and  
Pornographic Movie House  
(Courtesy of the People's Daily)

## Chapter 14

### A Building of Elephants

There is an inevitability in the affairs of South Bandicoot that turns clockwork into a throw of the dice

observes Charles Rafferty in the final chapter of his memoirs.

It was, of course, inevitable that the United Nations mediator, Irish diplomat Fergus O'Reilly, would look with affection upon his long-lost third cousin twice removed, Bridgit Rafferty, because she is a fine figure of a woman still and not backward in those things of which Father McMurtry disapproves.

It was inevitable, too, that at the first mention of reparations, the rats crawled from the sewers and donned their suits and ties.

The question of compensation for damage and neglect from the Australian Government was raised at the first formal meeting with the United Nations mediator, hosted by the Pacific island nation of Kiribati. As the *People's Daily* reported:

The leader of the South Bandicoot delegation to the peace talks with the Australian Government has claimed over one billion dollars in damages from the Australian Government in punitive damages for the recent invasion, and for past neglect.



The leader, Sandra Clark, pointed out that South Bandicoot residents have been paying Australian taxes for more than a century, and have received nothing in return.

The meeting broke up in deadlock after two days heated debate:

The Kiribati negotiations adjourned in confusion today when South Bandicoot delegate Sandra Clark ground a broken water jug into the face of NSW Right Winger Morris Stark.

Stark is alleged to have called Clark a “Maoist Lesbian Crow who wouldn’t know a real revolution if she stepped in it”.

UN Mediator Fergus O’Reilly announced a fact-finding mission to give time for tempers to cool.

O’Reilly spent a week in South Bandicoot, staying with Charles Rafferty, before returning to New York via Canberra. The Sydney newspapers screamed bias, to which O’Reilly replied:

It’s always best to speak to the little fella first, ’cause he screams even louder.

His programme in South Bandicoot consisted of extensive series of talks, extending to the late hours of the evening, with the Management Collective in the back bar of the Railway Hotel, coupled with meetings with the People of South Bandicoot, in particular Bridgit Rafferty. Charles Rafferty was concerned that the Management Collective may have taken the wrong approach:

We can talk all we like about the hardships and sufferings of the Revolution, but if we let him sleep in a comfortable bed, drink Kelly’s beer, and see Bridgit’s happy smile, then what is it all but ideological posturing? We’d have done better to put him up in a burnt out pigsty with an Albanian cat on guard and fed him with iron rations from Moa Mansions.

Rafferty’s pessimism was not shared by Basil Hume and Michael Doyle. On the evening following O’Reilly’s departure, a Mass Meeting stacked with employees of Hume Industries (formerly Braithwaite Constructions) passed a vote of no confidence in the Management Collective. The *People’s Daily* reported:

New Management Collective Chairman, Arnold Hume, described last night’s vote as a “victory for progress”.

The foreman of Hume Industries, Kevin Donoghue, defended the workers’ action. “It’s our democratic right to vote,” he said, “and if the company had denied them overtime payments for the meeting, it could be seen as standing in the way of that right.”

In *New Rays of Hope*, Ilona Hume described the coup as

... the sweeping away of the cobwebs of ideological indecisiveness and the ascent of true managers, capable of firmness and decision without the constant reference of the most insignificant trivia to the anything but mass meetings of the people.

The first significant act of the new collective was the announcement of a *8-point plan for the Future Development of South Bandicoot*, including an international airport, construction of a five star hotel, opening of a casino, development of the snowfields, joint ventures with foreign business, utilisation of foreign expertise, a world-wide advertising campaign and the strengthening of the management role of the Management Collective.

An editorial in the *People’s Daily* remarked:

South Bandicoot’s latest competition sport, *How Many Points has Your Plan Got?* raises complex theoretical issues in determining a winner.

Is sheer quantity a valid measure, or should we applaud a plan with a few, elegant points?

Within a week, the collective had announced a \$1.5m advertising campaign to be conducted by Sydney agency Cohen Metatron, and an International Competition (open only to native South

Bandicoot architects) for the design of a Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House (with attached International Hotel and Convention Centre), to be located on the swampland between the end of Clark Street and the bend in Rafferty's Creek, below the War Memorial.

Jeff Lee, in *A Building of Elephants*, summed up the feelings of many South Bandicoot residents:

So our maturity as a nation is to be measured by the building of Taj Mahals, and not by the achievement of social justice and human happiness. Behind this, the more paranoid of us might perceive the hands of the Bandicoot Shire Council reaching up from the grave, clutching the sordid apple of the fast buck and casting forth the banana skin of revisionism.

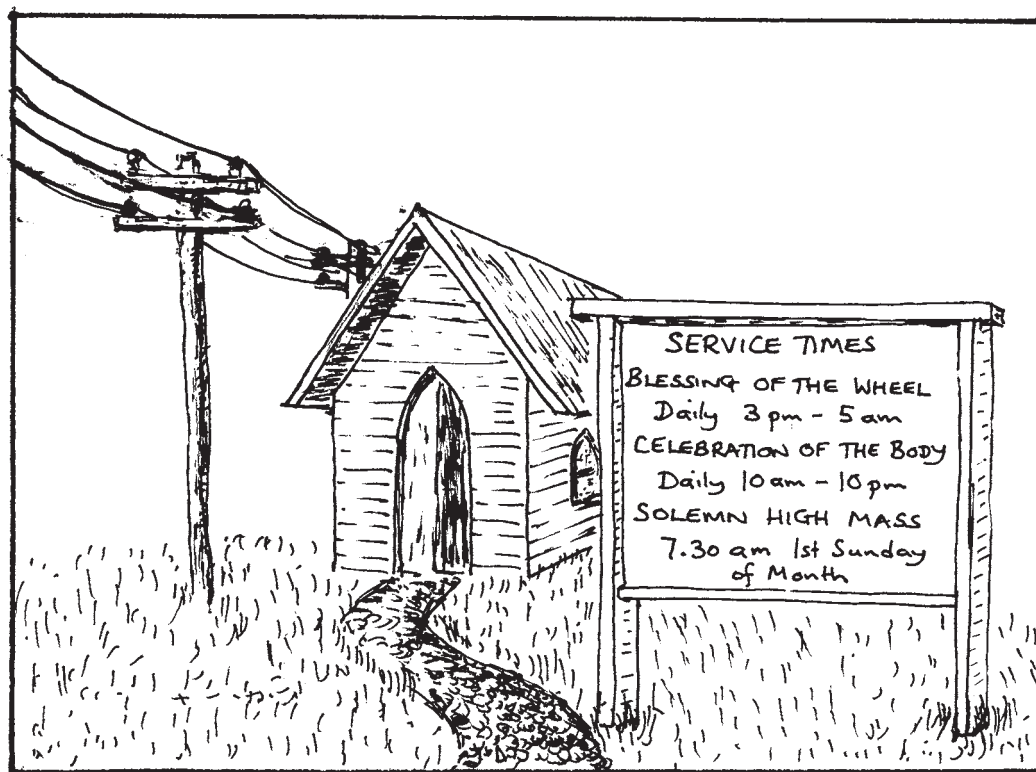
Arnold Hume announced sweeping media reforms:

The *People's Daily* presents only the tired cliches of a discredited clique of blinkered ideologists.

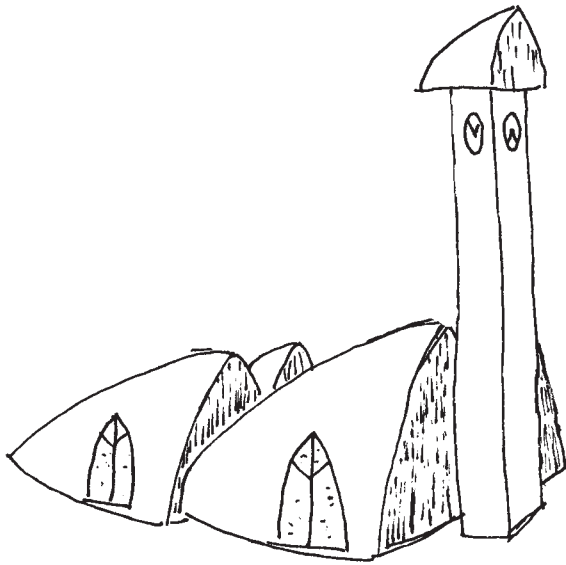
In future, the Management Collective would look elsewhere for the reliable dissemination of views and information.

The *Bandicoot Courier* appeared for the first time the following Wednesday. Its lead article was on real estate values in Billabong Estate, accompanied by an advertising feature disguised as editorial matter lauding "new breakthroughs in cuisine" at the Korean Restaurant at the Dingo. There were columns headed "The Latest at Moa Mansions" and "Thylacine This Week". It was delivered to every house in South Bandicoot by members of the clerical staff from the Kremlin. Throughout its short existence, it was known universally as *Pravda*. Hume also foreshadowed changes at Radio Bandicoot:

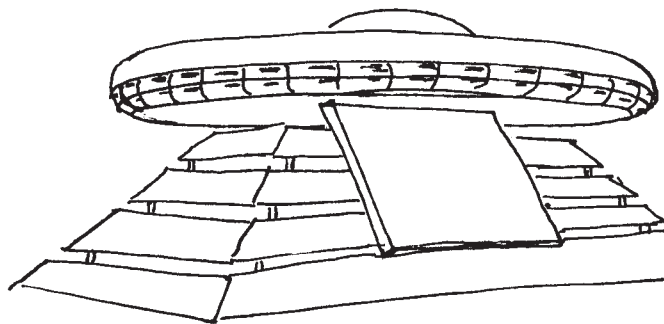
The citizens of South Bandicoot want good music, the favourites of the fifties and sixties, and useful information like farm prices and river heights.



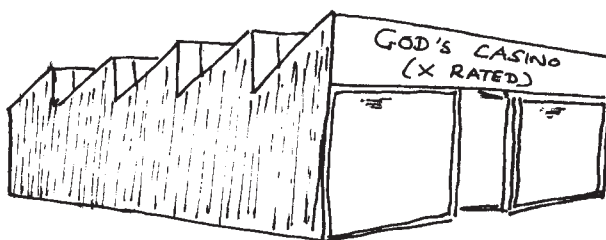
Another suggestion for the Cathedral,  
Casino and Pornographic Movie House



(a)



(b)



(c)

Some Entries in the Competition for the  
Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House

Negotiations are under way with the Australian Broadcasting Commission to relay its Regional Radio programme on Radio Bandicoot.

A phone-in, organised by Sandra Clark, jammed the South Bandicoot telephone exchange for two days. It included an anonymous employee of the Management Collective, who claimed that she had been ordered to remove a pin-up of Jeff Lee from her office wall. The plans were abandoned.

The design competition for the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House provided an endless stream of controversy and scandal. It was alleged that:

- . Michael Doyle had been paid ten million Swiss francs to drop and break the model submitted by Alistair Clark prior to the judging.
- . All the acceptable designs had been hidden in a back room, and the judges had not seen them.
- . The judges (Michael Doyle, Arnold Kelly and Kevin Donoghue) had been handpicked to give the required results, and had no architectural, engineering or personal qualities to fit them for the role.

Michael Doyle, in a letter to the *People's Daily*, insisted that the selection process was fair:

The judges are men with a Bandicoot-wide reputation for integrity, and with the interests of the People of South Bandicoot at heart. All have had extensive experience in the construction industry. The final choice will be made only after an exhaustive analysis of the merits of the different proposals on both financial and aesthetic grounds.

The *People's Daily* commented:

Bandicoot Shire Council records indicate that in 1968 Arnold Kelly was issued with an owner/builder's permit to construct a cream brick veneer barn. Kevin Donoghue was, between 1972 and 1974, an organiser for the Builders' Labourers Federation. Michael Doyle is believed to have built his own barbeque, which has since collapsed.

An alternative form of outrage came from Katherine Connolly, nee Rafferty, a mother of four, in a letter to the editor of the *People's Daily*:

Shall the minds of innocent children be indelibly scarred by the indecent displays of unspeakable acts in the House of God, and do the wheels of mammon claim the blessing of our Lord by the mere act of juxtaposition?

Mother of Six  
Thylacine

The winner, when it was finally announced, was Enzo Crzk of Moa Mansions, with a design that the judges described as:

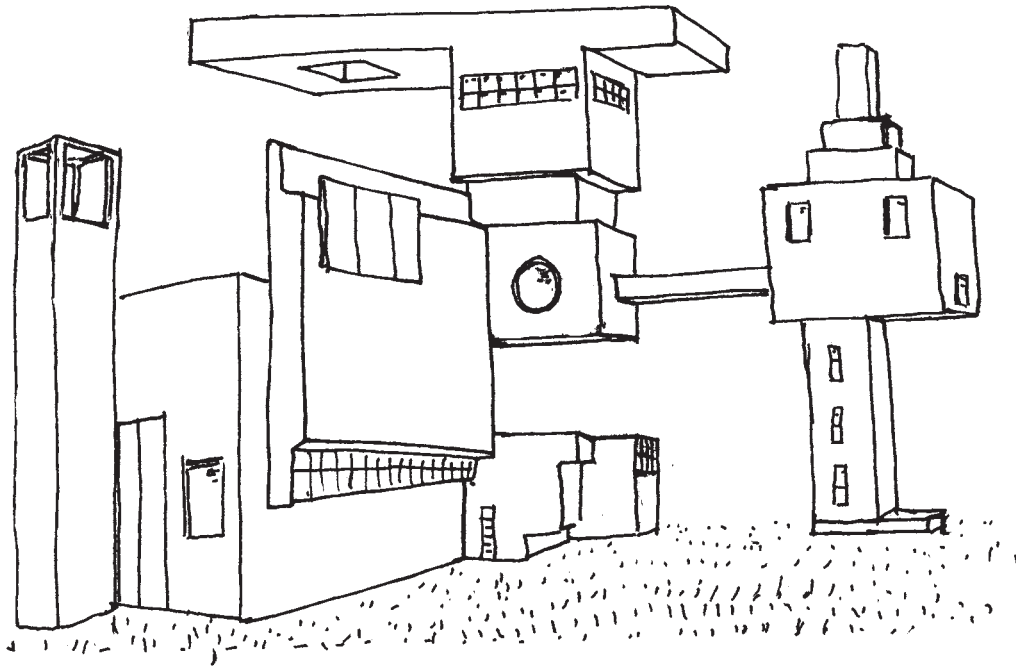
... possessing a breathtaking legoesque chunkiness that both commands its site and blends sensitively into the nearby railway yards, whilst providing immense flexibility and functional potential.

The architectural correspondent of the *People's Daily* described it as:

... a building all of whose christmasses have come at once and which has made itself horribly sick by guzzling every one of the goodies given it. At least there will be no trouble providing extensions-any rectangular lump will do, anywhere.

The complex was to cost \$5 million, and would be complete within three years. A loan was available for the full amount from a reputable foreign bank, and would be repaid within the first two years of full operation.

The *People's Daily* reported:



The Winning Entry in the Competition for the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House

Enzo Crzk is not a South Bandicoot resident, but is the multinational and CIA funded architectural conglomerate Enzyme Occam Rozic Kraft. The nominated building contractor (Rude and Rural) is a front for Lionel Braithwaite.

Enzo Crzk denied being a CIA Agent.

Not even the KGB,

he said in an interview on Bandicoot 1's *Eyewitness Scandal*. However, after the third hour of an interview on Radio Bandicoot's *In Gruesome Depth*, he broke down and revealed that he had received "some assistance" from a major architectural firm in Sydney which would act as his agent in the role of Supervising Architect during the construction process.

Further plans announced by the Management Collective included the resumption of the snowfields developments; the building of a marina and hotel complex at Narmi Falls; a comprehensive Tourist Information System, planned to handle hotel and tour bookings, catering, rostering and entertainment planning for the entire South Bandicoot tourist industry; and the establishment of the University of South Bandicoot.

The idea of a University for South Bandicoot had first been raised by Siobhan Rafferty during a discussion on Radio Bandicoot. Instead of a large, impersonal institution like Sydney University, she wanted:

... something small, of which we are a part, and which sees knowledge and learning as an ecology, as a unified whole that relates to our aspirations and needs ...

Basil Hume's proposal was slightly different, as outlined in the *Bandicoot Courier*:

The new university will concentrate on the development of badly needed skills in Business, Agriculture and Engineering, with an emphasis on their application in South Bandicoot today.

The Foundation Vice-Chancellor, Professor Edwin Arnold, M.A. (Oxon), previously Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kiribati, had his own ideas:

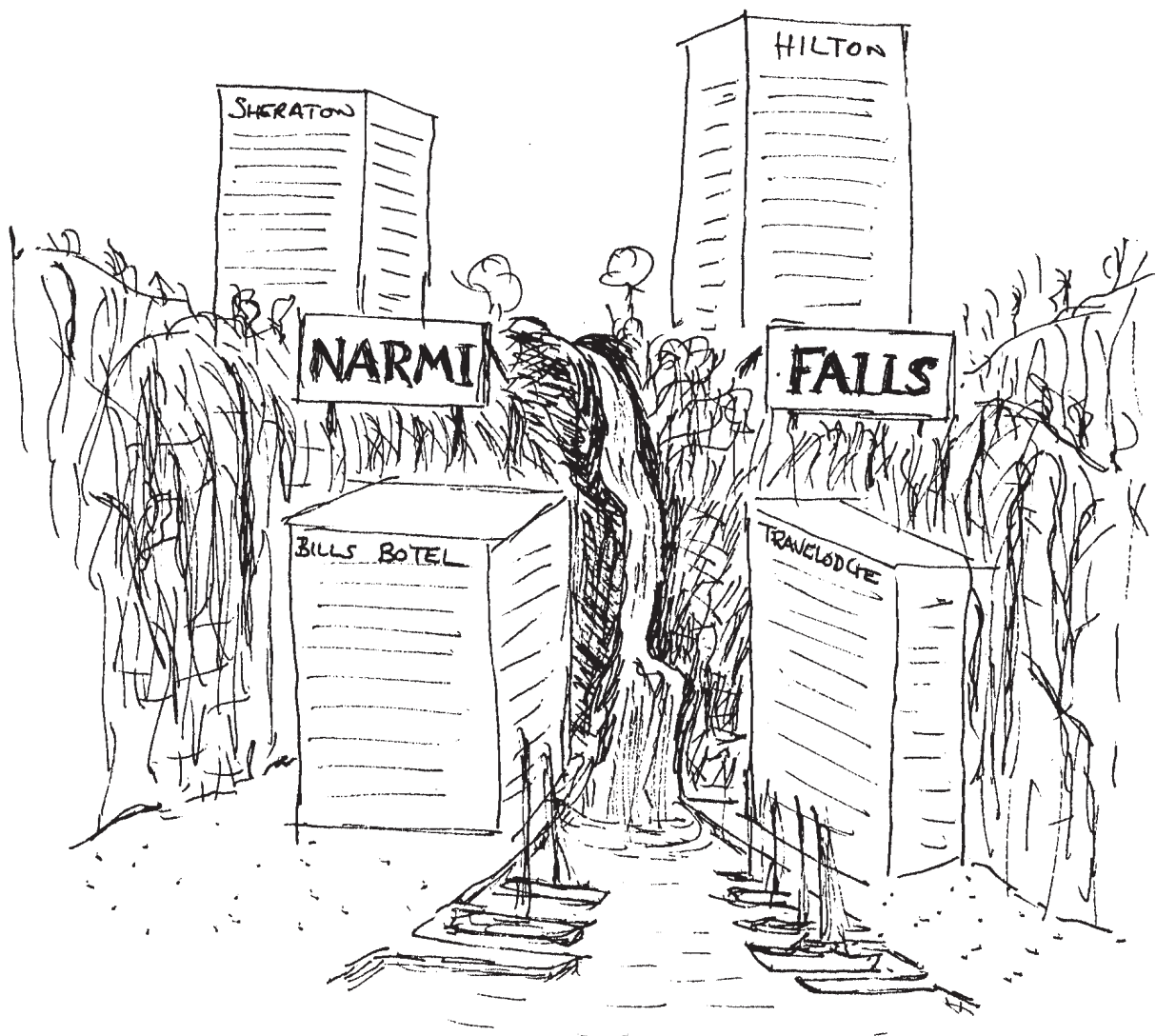
What are seen as needs are merely symptoms, superficial ripples upon the body of true knowledge. How can we teach Rice Seed Biology or the circuitry of the Z80 Microchip when Viral Biochemistry, Psychopathology and Magnetohydrodynamics call to us in their timelessness and conceptual rigour?

Arnold also envisaged a broad student base:

The presence of a wealthy client group of potential students from New South Wales, Asia, the Pacific, Africa and Latin America will permit vital economies of scale in the establishment of world-class research facilities, and in the longer term will enable the university to become a significant source of revenue for the citizens of South Bandicoot.

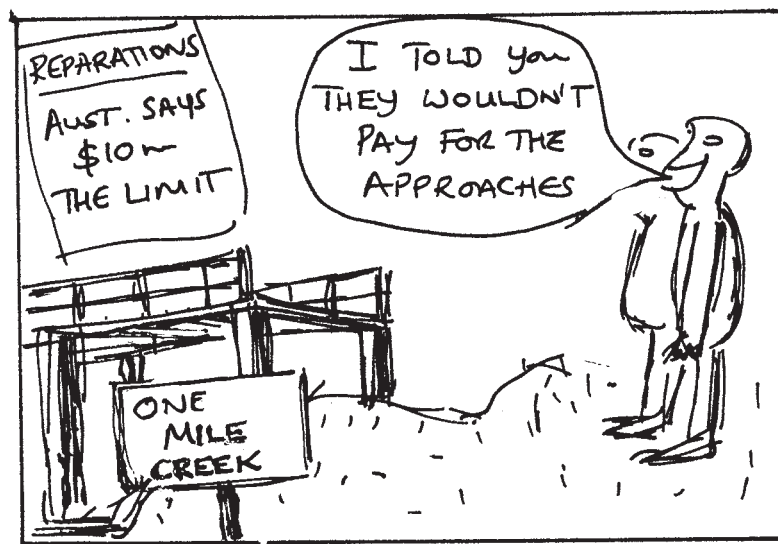
In spite of the change of Management Collective, negotiations on a peace treaty with the Australian Government remained deadlocked. Interim agreements on cross-border movement of people and goods (including the duty-free transit of goods to and from Australian ports) were put in place, but the sticking point was reparations. As the *Bandicoot Courier* reported:

Management Collective chairman Arnold Hume today angrily dismissed UN Mediator Fergus O'Reilly's \$10 million reparations award as "an insult".



The planned Tourist Complex at Narmi Falls





A thousand times that amount would barely cover the Australian Government's moral liability, he claimed.

The *People's Daily* saw it rather differently:

It is not the outrageous amount that we demanded with a smile on our faces, and it is possibly not as much as we would have liked, but it is sufficient to pay for the bridge, to buy a new telephone exchange, and to provide some seeding grants for new industry, and it is certainly better than nothing.

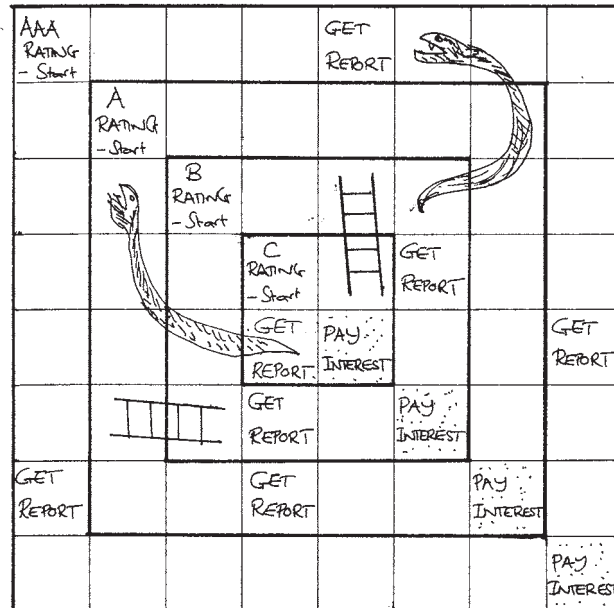
For our part, we will still be speaking to Mr O'Reilly.

In *Rays of New Hope*, Ilona Hume took a philosophical view of the award:

It is true, of course, that we have been sold out, but then one would not expect a relative of the Raffertys, however distant, to have the breadth of vision to appreciate such splendid plans for the future of South Bandicoot.

But this setback should cast no more than a fleeting shadow over our so-bright prospects, for the money has already been forthcoming from our friends the bankers for those far-sighted developments that will put us in the forefront of the world, and they will not be so small-minded as to demand its return simply because the promise against which it was borrowed has become a mere chimaera.





## Chapter 15

### A Legacy of Debt

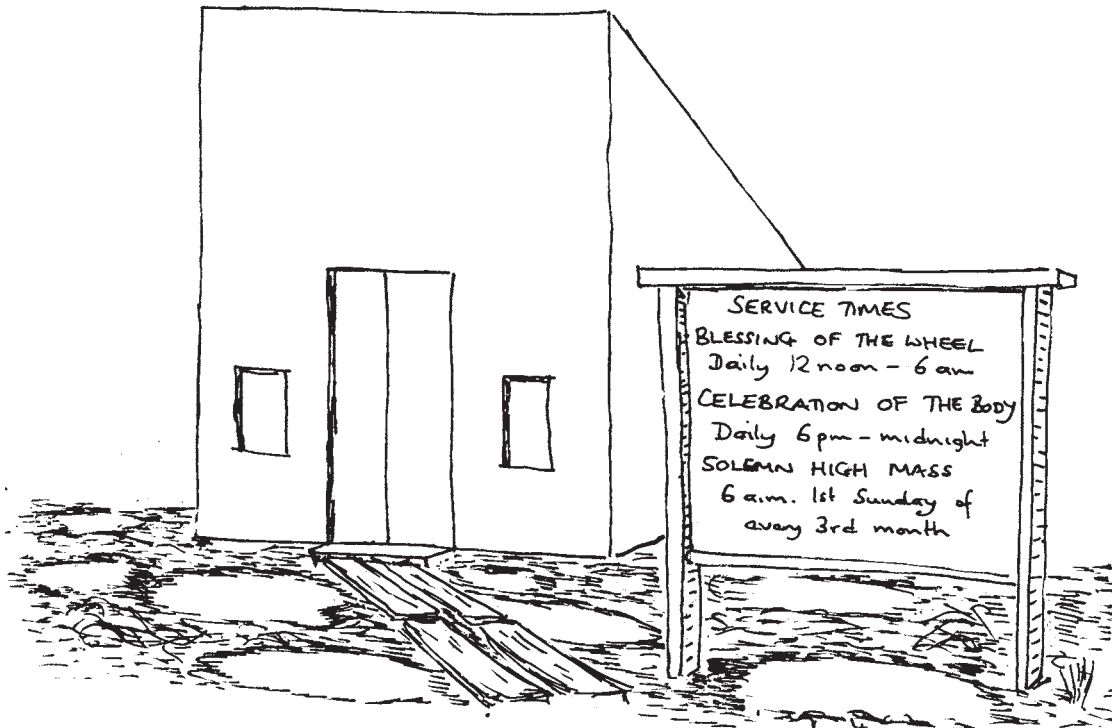
South Bandicoot's largest-selling export is a board game designed by Simon Rafferty. Called *Flip-Side Entrepreneur*, it is described by *Games and Gamesters* as

... a game of unmitigated gloom, doom and disaster, in which no player can be guaranteed to win, so uniquely reflective of these economically troubled times.

*Games and Gamesters* goes on to describe the principles of the game:

At the beginning of the game, each player has \$2 billion in a range of investments, and a AAA credit rating. All the money has been borrowed from the bank, and interest payments (at 20%) are due each time a player lands on an "Interest Payment" square. The investments bear an uncanny resemblance to certain schemes (some successful, some disastrous) in South Bandicoot: a ski resort, a hotel complex, a casino, a railway, a brothel, an organic vegetable farm, an electronics manufacturer. "Investment Report" cards are drawn from a pile for each investment at the beginning of the game, giving its status, including its book value, its actual value, and its current revenue. Some investments reflect completed projects and earn substantial revenue, others are still under construction and may require additional money to complete, in others the money has simply vanished. Further "Investment Report" cards drawn during the game change the status of these investments, give windfall receipts or require additional financial input. On landing on an "Investment Report" square, the player declares which investment they wish the report to apply to before drawing the card. Players can sell investments to each other, at whatever prices they care to negotiate.

Unlike most board games, players in *Flip-Side* do not follow the same path. Instead, there are a series of concentric paths: the outermost, corresponding to a AAA credit rating, is the longest, has the most squares where no harm can come to a player; the innermost, corresponding to a C rating, has only four squares. Each path has one "Interest Payment" square, arranged in a diagonal line across to one corner of the board. Changes



Stage 1 of the Cathedral, Casino  
and Pornographic Movie House

in credit ratings come about in two ways: by landing on a “snake” or a “ladder” which leads to a square on another path; or when the ratio of income to indebtedness changes by a significant amount, e.g. through Interest Payments or Investment Reports.

Each player has two aims: the first one is to get their investment out of the country; the second is to stay in the game by being able to pay any bills when they come in. A percentage of revenue can be sent out of the country legitimately. Money obtained from the sale of assets must be “laundered”, which the banker does, but at a discount. The banker will also lend money, but often at extortionate rates.

A key feature of the game is the ability to lie. Players are permitted to tell lies about values and revenue, but may then be publicly denounced by the player who was deceived, who has no other recourse. Most players prefer to keep silent if they have been swindled, in the hope that they can pass overvalued assets on to another player. Players may also lie about their credit rating, but only to decrease it. This is a high risk policy, used to overcome players’ reluctance to buy properties from prosperous players (since it may assist them in getting out of the game) and to capitalise on a commonly held belief that if anyone with a low credit rating sells, it should and must be at “fire sale” prices, and so is a bargain.

*Flip-Side Entrepreneur* does indeed contain many features of the South Bandicoot scene.

Stage 1 of the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House, was officially opened on Friday, October 13th, 1995, by the Bishop of Murrumbateman, the Totally Reverend “Boots” O’Masher, who praised what he described as an “unusual and valuable” combination of the sacred and the profane:

It is our duty as good Christians, not to stand aloof from the People, but to mingle and show, by our example, the goodness of man. So why should not the House of God be also the House of Man? God created both Man and Woman. Why should we feel shame in viewing His creation? God gave Man brains to count with and hands to shuffle cards. What sin is there in using God’s gifts in the way that God intended?

And since God also gave us the gift of sleep, to bear the tedium of Conferences and Official Openings, I had best, without further ado, declare this unique edifice open.

The building was a shell: a single grey Lego block in a sea of mud. Inside, a khaki concertina partition separated the gambling tables from the auditorium in which orange stackable chairs housed conference delegates during the day and blue movie fans at night. On Sunday mornings, an altar replaced the screen. Tapestries depicting scenes from Hieronymous Bosch alternated with single bar electric radiators along the bare concrete walls. The cost, \$80 million, with the estimated cost for the completed building \$750 million. The expected completion date: 2013.

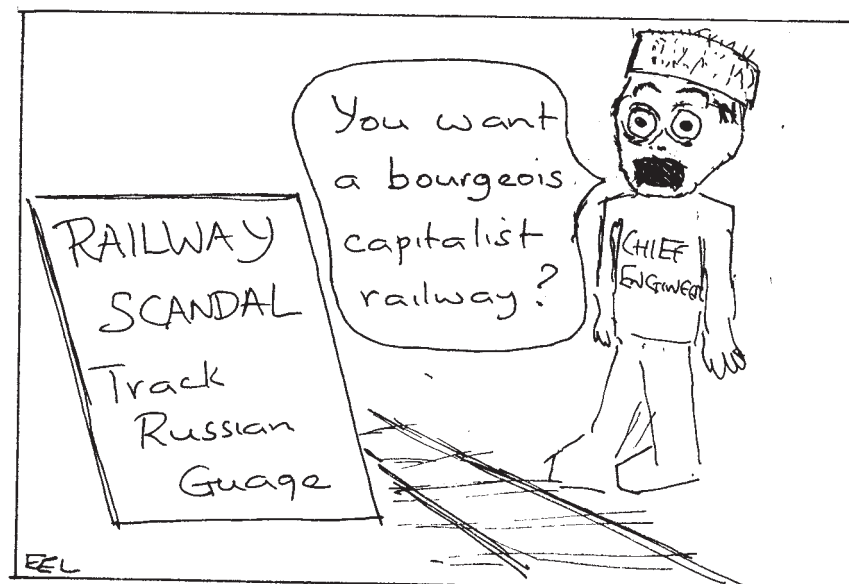
The Hume Collective's other projects were in a similar state.

The South Bandicoot and Frozen Toe Railway was running an hourly shuttle between Treefern station (outside the car sheds near Raffertys' Creek) and Thylacine, with a train morning and evening during the winter to Dead Dingo Gap, where it connected with the solitary ski tow. Instead of a fast, modern electric trains, the line's sole motive-power was an ex-New South Wales railways diesel rail motor. The running tunnels under the town centre were complete except for the tracks, but the stations were empty, echoing caverns with no link to the world above. The rumour that the track had been built to the Russian gauge of 1675 mm (5'6") had fortunately turned out to be unfounded. The only facilities on the snowfields themselves were a hot-dog stand and a refurbished bush-walkers' hut. The nominal repayments on the line were ten thousand times its revenue.

The promised Tourist Information System, intended to handle hotel and tour bookings, catering, rostering and entertainment planning for the entire South Bandicoot tourist industry, estimated to cost \$100m and planned to be operational by early 1993, had only three modules, and brought down the entire South Bandicoot telephone system every time it was tested.

The University of South Bandicoot had 200 staff and 800 students, all but 50 from outside South Bandicoot and paying "concessional introductory fees" that barely covered the wear and tear on the lecture room seats. A lavish genetic engineering laboratory stood vacant, black-banned since a mutant cell escaped, turning fields of Patterson's Curse bright orange.

Virtually all the money in and out of South Bandicoot flowed through the *Banco Laundromatique de la Bandicoot Midi*, not merely laundered, but ironed and folded as well. The Dingo Sexual Research Institute, directors Trevor Clark and Arnold Hume, not only paid no taxes in the 1994-5 financial year, but received a \$100,000 research grant for an *Epidemiological*



*Investigation on the Effect of the Use of Prophylactics on the Transmission of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome within a Semi-Controlled Heterosexual Environment.*

Several million dollars paid to Hume Industries for a preliminary study on South Bandicoot International Airport had yielded a thirteen page report riddled with spelling errors, described by Peter Rafferty as having been:

... copied from the Little Golden Book on Airplanes.

In an editorial in the *People's Daily*, commemorating the official opening of the Stage 1 of the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House, Peter Rafferty remarked that:

Is it a matter of pride, or of concern, that South Bandicoot has achieved third world status in world record time?

A demonstration of Concerned People of South Bandicoot, picketing the opening, rapidly degenerated into a Mass Meeting of the People (the first for eight years) as the solitary banner

BUILD SOMETHING USEFUL

was torn down by Elias and Solomon Morgan. The meeting appointed Martin Ord, a former solicitor and currently Arbitrator of the People's Dispute Resolution Collective, as the South Bandicoot Corruption Commission, with wide powers to find out where the money had gone.

Interviewed by Simon Rafferty on Radio Bandicoot, Ord described his mission as:

... The initiation of a litigation-led recovery of the economy of South Bandicoot.

He described his new powers as

... sufficient to be enjoyable ...

and provided an illustration of his planned approach:

Money breeds corruption. Right? Money is a symbol of corruption. Okay? Money is corruption. You'll go along with that? Good.

Turn out your pockets, and I'll start on you.

In a pen-portrait of Ord in her *Conversations about a Revolution*, Siobhan Rafferty says:

Martin Ord scares me. It's not so much that he pulls the wings off flies. It's the way that he persuades them to do it to themselves.

In *Rays of New Hope*, Ilona Hume says that:

Martin Ord casts a shadow over the bright sun of progress in South Bandicoot.

Ord began his job as the Commission with a gentle warm-up, following a trail of petty-cash vouchers from Charmaine Donoghue in the Management Collective Operations Centre to the imported chocolates held under Sue-Ann Donoghue's checkout at Morgan's Emporium, implicating Ilona Hume in a scandal of spectacular proportions, involving not just chocolates, but cut flowers, cheap bubbly and junk plastic earrings.

Ord remarked afterwards that he had grossly underestimated the difficulty of the investigation:

Merely asking a question of one of the Donoghue girls was a form of intellectual harassment, and the task of assembling their replies into a coherent whole was like working on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Ord's next investigation was into the Tourist Information System. In a bold move calculated to bring down the wrath of the entire international business community on to his head, Ord began



to question why the system was not yet complete. The *People's Daily* reported the outcome of his enquiries:

Giant computer manufacturer TCM (The Computer Manufacturer) has closed its entire South Bandicoot operation, alleging harassment from the South Bandicoot Corruption Commission.

TCM's action follows the placement of its entire South Bandicoot staff in protective custody last Friday, following an alleged attempt to destroy documentation requested by the Commission.

The staff are currently being held in the Computer Room in the basement of the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House, and the Commission says that they will not be released until the CCPMH's \$100m computer system is working to the Casino Collective's satisfaction.

The Casino Collective has told the tribunal that it believed that it had been misled by TCM about the capabilities of the new system.

The Manager of TCM's South Bandicoot branch, Dwight Utah, claims that the Collective had confused the potential of the system with the system actually tendered. "At no time has TCM promised that the supplied system will fly to the moon, process a million bookings per second, or make the Casino Collective Chairman's publicity officer a second Harold Robbins, although TCM has, of course, products that will achieve this, and it is natural that, as an essential feature of any upgrade path, these should be mentioned in briefing sessions conducted by TCM," he told the Commission.

Over the following weeks, the Commission's activities gained momentum. In an action which Ord described, in an interview on Radio Bandicoot, as

... sowing the seeds of dissention amongst the ranks of the ungodly ...

he suggested in passing at a hearing of the Commission that Gluhwein International might be liable for non-completion of the ski resort, and for Kashira Shio Yaki's consequent losses on the railway. In *The People v. The Banks*, he suggested that the liability of the People of South Bandi-

coot to the consortium of banks owed money on the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House might be significantly limited because

... if they didn't know it was a lousy investment, they damned well should have ...

but that, of course, the banks were quite welcome to test that ruling in the highest courts of the land.

In a paper entitled *On the Traversal of Minefields: An Introduction of South Bandicoot Law*, Professor Harvey Barranquilla, Professor of Revolutionary Jurisprudence at The University of South Bandicoot, remarks that:

An analysis of both the role and the thought of Martin Ord is central to the understanding of the emerging legal system of South Bandicoot, not so much because Ord offers legal insights of any depth or credibility, but because in his combined roles of investigator, prosecutor, judge and court of appeal, his decisions possess an irrevocability which would be disturbing except for the fact that it is not yet clear whether Ord regards himself as bound by his own precedents.

He goes on to say that:

Ord's approach appears to be based on a set of pseudo-legal principles that are best expressed in extra-legal terminology in order that they not be given undue credence.

1. *The Principle of Poor Investment* - Man who make stupid investment deserve to blow dough.

2. *The Principle of Irrevocable Commitment* - Man who take on job, gotta finish it.

The combination of these two "principles" leads to a third, which I shall refer to as Ord's Fork:

3. *Ord's Fork* - If man who make stupid investment claim not his fault, managers stuffed it up, then man get to manage investment himself.

In a later section, he notes that:





It has been suggested in some quarters that Ord's Fork may be circumvented by the employment of the concept of an Act of God: in other words, that the non-performance of the investment can be attributed to delays and disasters that no reasonable person could have foreseen or allowed for.

Unfortunately, Ord does not believe in God.

In his conclusion, Barranquilla says:

Ord's legal training appears to have been based upon selected episodes of Perry Mason, thus omitting all reference to those more civilised aspects of the law, such as mediation, negotiation and logical argument, and refining instead the arts of confrontation, posturing and impenetrable utterance from on high. If Cassandra had been employed as the Delphic Oracle, the portents could not have been so grave.

Iлона Hume invokes the concept of historical inevitability to explain Ord's approach:

It must be remembered that Martin Ord's great-grandfather made some poor investments which resulted in the Ord family losing the bulk of their property to the Humes in the depression of the 1890's. This is his revenge.

The Commission's operations settled into a pattern, which Jeff Lee describes in *Mate in Many, Many Moves*:

SCENARIO: Black has a non-performing investment, on which it requires regular, massive debt repayments from White.

ROUND 1: White has refused to make any payments not backed by income (direct or indirect) from the investment. Black says that White's credit rating will be irreparably damaged.

ROUND 2: White says that it is anyway, so what's the problem? Black says that it will place an embargo on the operation of the investment, refusing to supply maintenance or spare parts.

ROUND 3: White says Who Cares? It isn't working anyway. Black advances with 52 QCs and 2 supermarket trolleys full of writs.

ROUND 4: White's administrative assistant rejects the writs, supplying, in return, 2 supermarket trolleys of incomprehensible guidelines (charged for by the kilo) for presentation of submissions to White. Black initiates a series of legal actions requesting clarification of the guidelines.

ROUND 5: Each of White's clarifications fills 4 supermarket trolleys and is eight times as incomprehensible as the original guidelines, while failing to rule on the point at issue. Black initiates a new set of legal actions requesting clarification of aspects of the clarifications.

ROUND 6: ...

Lee comments:

The essential feature of this process is that the initial action is never heard. This enables Black's balance sheet to record an otherwise dubious debt at face value, which, in conjunction with the combined attractions to his legal advisors of a rural holiday and the South Bandicoot taxation system, has guaranteed a full legal calendar for the foreseeable future. Experts regard the process as the legal equivalent of pyramid selling.

The *Dingo* has built an annexe, commonly known as the *Bald Eagle*, with year-round accommodation for up to 75 QCs and 200 support staff, fully equipped with telephone, fax and broadband internet links via satellite, an extensive law library, a wig-repairer, and a wine bar. The *Litigant*, a first-class express railcar, leaves Thylacine at 9.40 a.m. daily for South Bandicoot, returning after the end of the day's Dispute Resolution proceedings, at approximately 4.10 p.m..



South Bandicoot's foreign exchange earnings from litigation now constitute 36% of the gross national product, and are increasing.

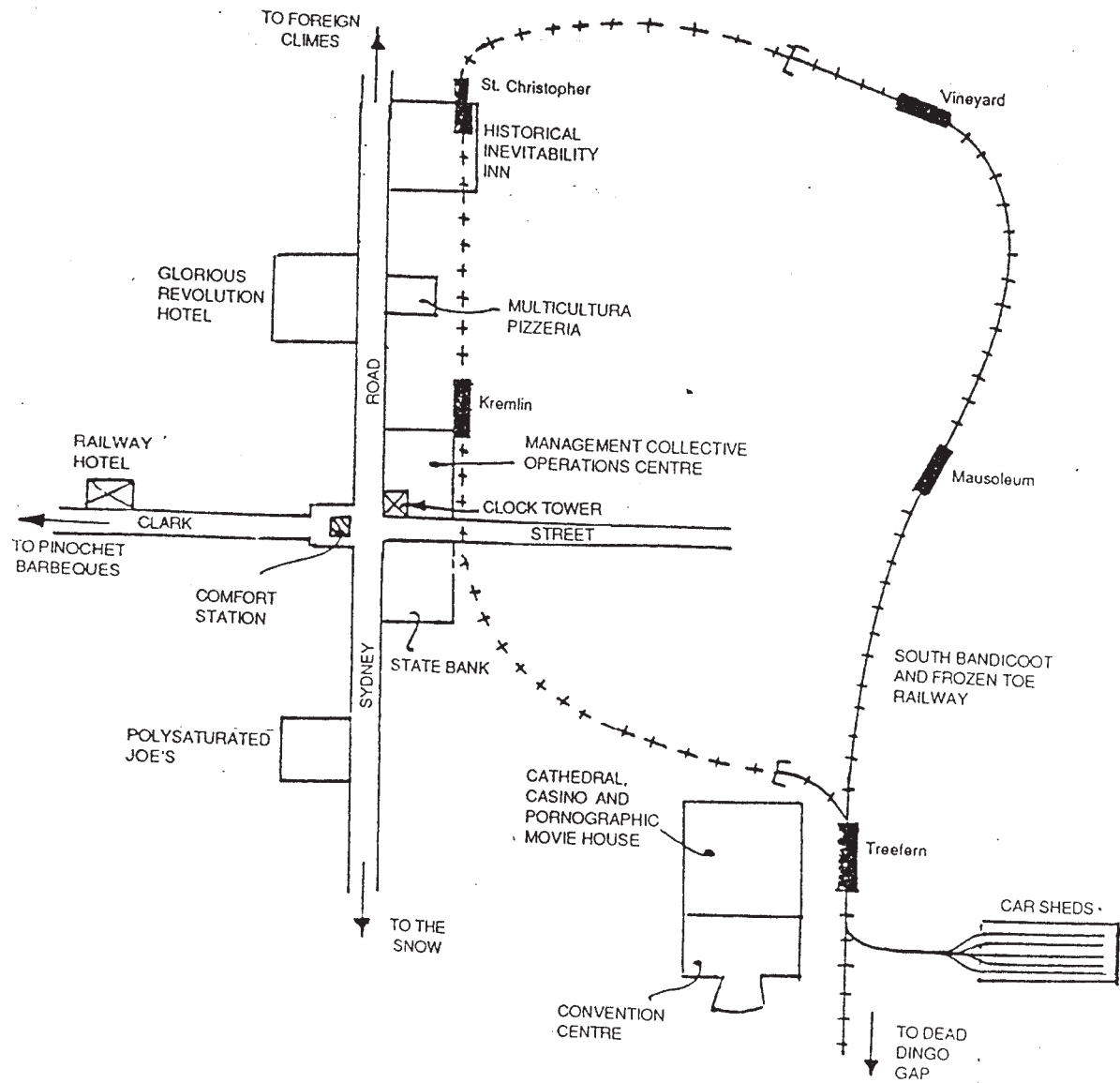
In the meantime, Simon Rafferty is working on an adventure game called *Slavering Bailiffs*. The player is a bankrupt entrepreneur, his sole possessions three gold taps salvaged from the wreck of his mansion, a very conspicuous Rolls-Royce and a faithful accountant. One version dresses the entrepreneur in a loud check jacket. He is trying to escape to an offshore tax haven where his last hundred million is stashed, but to do so must avoid the clutches of bailiffs, receivers, liquidators, financial journalists, retrenched executives, redundant workers, destitute investors and abandoned lovers, each of whom has a unique and horrible fate in store for him.

Pirated copies of the beta test version, which crashes horribly just as the faithful accountant is turned into a vampire by a former business associate of the entrepreneur, are already in constant demand at video arcades throughout western Sydney.

**A VISITOR'S GUIDE**

**TO**

**SOUTH BANDICOOT**



South Bandicoot Town Centre

## ABOUT SOUTH BANDICOOT

### Location

The People's Republic of South Bandicoot occupies an area of 50 km by 20 km in the heart of the Great Dividing Range in Eastern Australia.

### Population

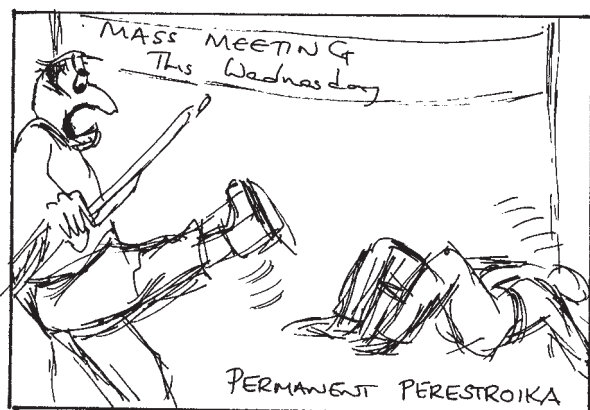
South Bandicoot is undergoing rapid growth, with housing developments at Bandicoot Heights (at the top of Sydney Road), Thylacine and Moa Mansions providing an additional 26 residential units in 2004. There are 3287 permanent residents, swelled by tourists, diplomats and students to well over 4000 in peak seasons.

### Government

South Bandicoot's unique system of Collectives, which report regularly to Mass Meetings of the People, provides an administration that is uniquely receptive to the needs and desires of the People. The current Management Collective, chaired by Sandra Clark, has been in office a record four months, and is planning a long stay.

### Economy

South Bandicoot is a leader in the third world economic stakes. With a foreign debt of \$100 million per head of population, a notional interest repayment rate of 200 times the gross national product, and a depressed world market for gumnut bacon, bogproof tractors, pesticide free mulch and organic farming software, South Bandicoot is in the vanguard of the campaign to bring the world banking system to its knees.



One View of  
South Bandicoot's  
Government

### Organised Crime

The centre of organised crime, and the hub of South Bandicoot's financial affairs, is the *Banco Laundromatique de la Bandicoot Midi*, in the basement of the laundromat in Sydney Road, managed by Carlo Goldoni. At the Dingo, at Thylacine, Trevor Clark and Arnold Hume continue to pay selected female employees at below award wages, claiming that there is no award for the relevant occupation.

### Education

The University of South Bandicoot is the country's premier educational institution. The 2 hectare campus at Thylacine epitomises the tasteful arrangement of portable facilities, which are in themselves of considerable historical significance as the last extant remnants of the Braithwaite Construction empire, which is combined with the imaginative use of redundant swine housing for student accommodation.

The interdisciplinary Faculty of South Bandicoot studies is at the forefront of pioneering work which places South Bandicoot at the centre of human evolution, and which establishes beyond doubt that the local aboriginal tribe (the Nganfui) migrated from Troy via Hong Kong. The staff of the University's state of the art genetic engineering laboratory are intimately involved in a series of on-going experiments on the aerial spraying of purple dyes which are yielding promising results. South Bandicoot High School operates from its traditional site at the bottom of Sydney Road. There are primary schools at South Bandicoot, Thylacine and Moa Mansions, and the South Bandicoot Catholic Education Office's school, St Brendan the Rafferty, in Clark Street.

## GETTING THERE AND GETTING AROUND

Road access to South Bandicoot is by the Gurrnaji exit on the Thredbo Freeway. The road from Gurrnaji encapsulates the challenges of Australian country driving at its best: loose gravel, soft edges, blind corners and yawning potholes. Improvements to the road are a condition of the peace treaty with Australia, but no time limit has been placed on the work.

The new bridge over One Mile Creek is passable in all weathers, however drivers should take care due to the rough surface of the deck. This is due to the action of Southern Tablelands Safaris' driver



South Bandicoot University Campus

Guido Stromboli, who removed the barriers and drove a bus across the bridge while the concrete was still wet. Stromboli is currently saving up for a new bridge.

South Bandicoot International Airport, located on Arnold Hume's property at Thylacine, has a well-drained strip of high quality couch grass, a modern well-equipped windsock, powerlines at only one end, a qualified mechanic on duty, and a complimentary supply of tentpegs for anchoring aircraft in high winds. A sealed runway, capable of landing two jumbo jets simultaneously, has been under construction for the last five years and is expected to be completed at some point in the future.

The South Bandicoot and Frozen Toe railway operates a regular service between Treefern station,

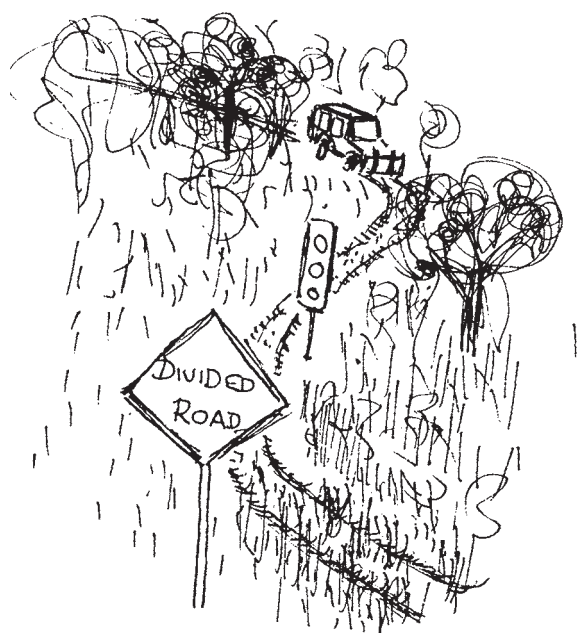
at the edge of the town centre and the snowfields, passing through Thylacine on the way. The first railway in the world to be dubbed a historical relic immediately on opening, it is operated by an ex-New South Wales government "red rattler" that "fell off the end of the line" at Tumut.

The Bandicoot Internal Omnibus System (BIOS) has achieved timetabling nirvana through the operation of a comprehensive route network of byzantine complexity with a single bus. A map and a calendar of services is available from the Alien Registration Centre in South Bandicoot.

## WHERE TO STAY

The Tourist Boom has placed considerable strain on South Bandicoot's limited accommodation facilities. Although the People of South Bandicoot are making every attempt to make their visitors as comfortable as possible, five-star luxury is seen by the People as an ideologically unsound imposition by the Capitalistic Oppressor, and thus not a desirable objective.

The South Bandicoot Alien Registration Centre, located in a disused barn on Ord's Farm just south of Thylacine, provides a booking service for all accommodation in South Bandicoot, including University Colleges, homestays and the cells at the headquarters of the South Bandicoot Paramilitary Thugs. The centre is not currently on the telephone, nor is the planned on-line reservation system yet available, but e-mail may be sent to [alien@thylacine.bc.sb](mailto:alien@thylacine.bc.sb). Some hotels also accept bookings direct.



## Places with Roofs

### Glorious Revolution Hotel

Formerly the Commercial Hotel, the Glorious Revolution remains the benchmark for South Bandicoot hotel accommodation. All rooms are heated and have their own bed. Air-conditioners are available on request. Rooms in the annexe have access to bathroom and toilet facilities.

Location: Sydney Road

Rates: Main building, \$300/double, Annexe: \$400/double

Reservations: Bandicoot 525

### Historical Inevitability Inn

Built in the style of a coaching inn, the Historical Inevitability's plumbing was installed with the help of Soviet Technicians, but plentiful running water is available on wet days.

Location: Sydney Road

Rates: Mit bett, \$210 per person/night, Ohne bett, \$150 per person/night (min. 10 per room)

Reservations: Bandicoot 717

### Railway Hotel

The Railway has the statutory minimum of six bedrooms.

The body of the last known guest, Mrs Isabella Cohen-Hume, was discovered in Rafferty's Creek on the morning of 1st January, 1925. The police file is still open.

Location: Clark Street

Rates: By negotiation

Reservations: See Mick Kelly

### Dingo

The terrazo foyers and plastic palms of The Dingo herald the unparalleled luxuries of real beds, doors that close, and heating in winter and air-conditioning in summer. Directed at the discerning unaccompanied businessman, tariffs are inclusive of a management-supplied companion.

Location: Gap Road, Thylacine

Rates: From \$600/night. Extras extra.

Reservations: Thylacine 15

### Rising Sun

The bare concrete walls of the motel-style accommodation at the Rising Sun provide an excellent introduction to the decor of the Top Secret Defence Installation. Large french windows facilitate the garaging of cars in residents' rooms, an advisable precaution since the local children collect foreign numberplates with little concern for the attached car.

Location: Moa Mansions

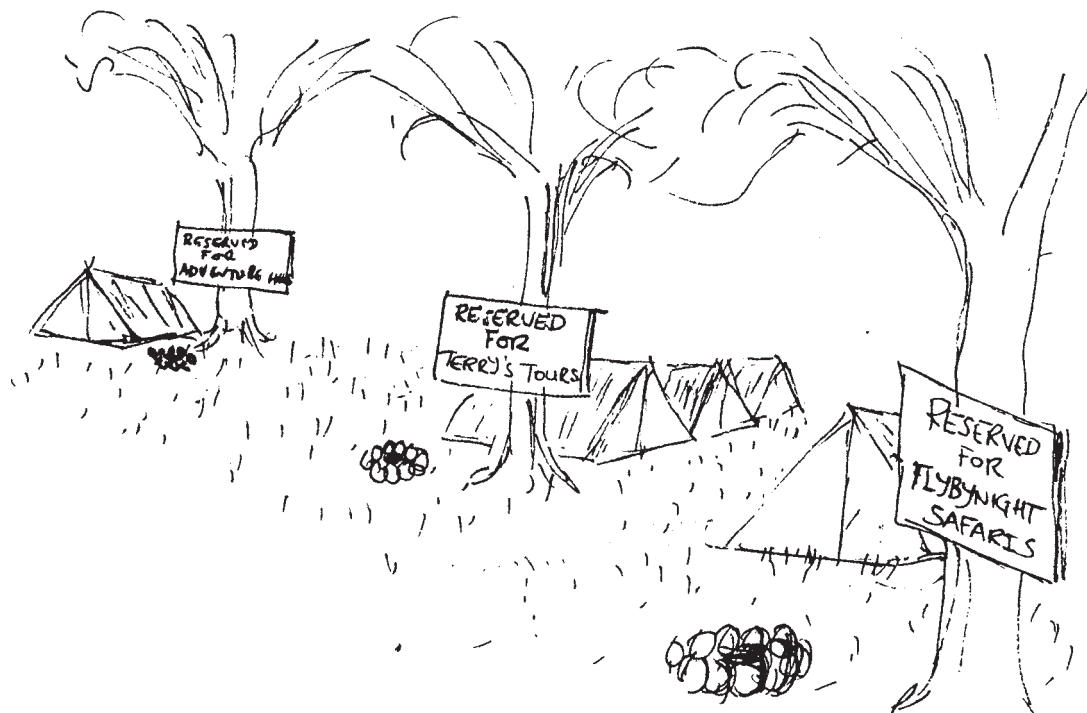
Rates: Double - \$200 per night

Reservations: Moa Mansions 4

## Affordable Accommodation

### Greenham Common

Greenam Common is so named because of the daily confrontations between campers and con-



Greenham Common

struction workers when work on the railway was still in progress.

Location: Clark Street East, adjacent to the fence along the railway line

Campsites: \$50 per night

Water: \$10 per bucket

Garbage: \$5 per item

Reservations: South Bandicoot Alien Registration Centre

### **Soweto**

Cooking facilities are provided by the Pinochet Barbeques. There is also a toilet block and a tap. Cardboard shacks are available at moderate rentals.

Location: just across Bandicoot Creek on the Moa Mansions road.

Campsites: \$70 per night

Reservations: South Bandicoot Alien Registration Centre

## **WHERE TO EAT**

There is a lively debate among South Bandicoot restauranteurs about the nature and content of Revolutionary Cuisine. Traditionalist, Marxist, Environmentalist and Revisionist approaches combine in a culinary kaleidoscope which makes up in variety and enthusiasm for its occasional lapses in execution.

### **Town Centre**

#### **Polysaturated Joe's Gourmet Gutseteria**

Joe's strives for authenticity in its recreation of traditional Australian cooking in its prime. The fish and chips are fried in genuine lard, coated in a snowstorm of salt, left to stand in their own grease until lukewarm, and wrapped in yellowing copies of the Bandicoot Herald that otherwise would be collectors' items. Seventeen kinds of fish are available, all from the same shark.

Location: Sydney Road

Bookings: Not required

#### **Multicultural Pizzeria**

The imposition of customs and quarantine checks on imported pizzas from Gurrangji has left Guiseppe Morgan as the unchallenged leader in the South Bandicoot take-away market. Try the Amoroso (oysters, avocado, fresh chilli, garlic and gorgonzola).

Location: Sydney Road

Bookings: Not required

### **Lee Dynasty**

From farm to table, with only a quick dip in hot oil intervening, the Lees' cuisine is based only on ingredients found naturally in South Bandicoot, or those whose importation has been hallowed by time. Highlights are the crisp-skin cockroach in guano, honey prawns individually formed from the comb, and noodles so intricately knotted that five years in the Scouts is not enough.

Location: Clark Street

Bookings: Bandicoot 511

### **Fidel's**

Joe Castro, the Chef at Fidel's, learned Revolutionary Cooking in the jungles of Bolivia. His baked anaconda (special orders only) is magnificent, tasting just like tiger snake, but his tour-de-force is beans: lima beans, quito beans, bogota beans, beans la paz, medellin beans, ...— a bean feast that the replete ingester will recall for many days.

An extensive wine list includes both red and white wines, plus an extensive range of imported beers (including VB, Fosters and XXXX).

Location: Glorious Revolution Hotel, Sydney Road

Bookings: Essential, Bandicoot 525

### **Marx**

Borscht, pork schnitzel mit sauerkraut und dumplings, apfel strudel.

Location: Historical Inevitability Inn, Sydney Road

Bookings: Desirable, Bandicoot 717

### **Princess Grace**

Operating from temporary premises in a converted double-decker bus until the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House is complete, Princess Grace offers haut cuisine on elegant cast-iron tables for those with cast-iron pockets. The novel presentation of the oysters natural (the oyster knife is supplied as part of the cutlery) is a guarantee of freshness, the waiters are newly arrived from a tour of duty at a Siberian gulag, and the ham sandwiches have a crunch and a chewiness unrivalled in anything so tiny.

Location: Beside the Railway Yards, Clark Street East

Bookings: Welcome, Bandicoot 998

### **Railway Hotel**

Counter Lunch 12-1.30. If you want to rub shoulders with the Greats over a humble T-bone, this is the place to come. Chef Mary Kelly does a mean





The Museum of the Revolution

dehydrated spud, and the frozen carrot, bean and sweet corn mix is everything that one expects.

Location: Clark Street  
Bookings: Unheard of

## Rural

### Green Dragon

Pandit Singh, proprietor of South Bandicoot's second Chinese restaurant, specialises in Western Chinese dishes. The Vindaloo in Black Bean Sauce, the Sweet and Sour Pappadums and the Noodle Raita are especially recommended.

Location: Rising Sun, Moa Mansions  
Bookings: Essential, as the take-away section seats 3

### Le Grub

The enormous vacant expanses on the plates of Le Grub's *nouvelle cuisine* are matched in the minds and hearts of its exclusively business clientele, and in the faces and eyes of those whose jobs are to keep them company. Proprietors Trevor Clark and Arnold Hume discourage both local residents and mere tourists with dress rules that require tailored business suits, Italian shoes, and ties so tasteless that none but their chosen clientele would wear them.

Location: Dingo, Gap Road, Thylacine  
Bookings: For interview, ring Thylacine 15 and ask for Jasper Morgan.

## WHAT TO DO

### Tourist Attractions

#### The Museum of the Revolution

The Museum occupies a house in Clark Street originally shared two heroes of the revolution, "Bozo" Rafferty and "Bluey" Clark. Every care, consistent with the maintenance of acceptable health standards, has been taken to preserve the house in its original state.

Maps, photographs, original documents and photographic enlargements, tapes of Radio Bandicoot, videotapes and film unfold the drama of the revolution as one moves from room to room.

An on-line computer system, based on a series of touch screens, allows the visitor to explore the significance of items on display in more depth. Touching a highlighted name or place or phrase brings up a more detailed account from which further stories and descriptions can be found, enabling a personal exploration of the colourful characters and mysteries of South Bandicoot's past.

The word *Rafferty* alone provides hours of delight, seducing the user from the drama of the *Battle of One-Mile Creek* to the mysteries of the *Railway Hotel Reading Circle*.



An Atrocity Victim from the Sculpture Garden

## The War Memorial and Sculpture Garden

The traditional pillar of the War Memorial has become the centrepiece for artist Sandra Clark's sculpture garden depicting the horrors of war. Not for the faint hearted, the napalm victims, the executions, the rapes, and the glee on the faces of the brave warriors depict in explicit detail the things that might have happened in the abortive Invasion of South Bandicoot.

## Zimbabwe

The history of South Bandicoot, from the times of the original settlers, is replete with pigs. So is *Zimbabwe*, the distinctive odour greeting the eager visitor while the stys are still a distant glint in the sunlight. Zimbabwe is a triumph of the use of traditional Australian building materials, a riot of fibro, corrugated iron and five shades of colourbond. The remains of the drystone wall that gave Zimbabwe its name are visible between the pig pens.

## Moa Mansions

If you have dreamed of a tour of the Maginot Line, then the Top Secret Defence Installation at Moa Mansions is far from second-best. Mile upon mile of cool concrete tunnels, unspoiled by mushroom farmers, lure the unsuspecting visitor deeper and deeper into the earth, until the appearance of a minotaur or a balrog would be no surprise. Prospectors pan for gold earrings in the dark pools while stacks of tinned caviar line the walls of the cavernous storerooms. On the map in the control room, the Brisbane Line, the Bathurst Line, the Bombala Line and the submarine crew at Eden plainly show the planned strategy for the defence of Australia.

## Sport

South Bandicoot's Sporting Collective is currently striving for international recognition in a wide range of sports, including Test Match status for its cricket team and admission to the soccer World Cup competition. The highlights of South Bandicoot's sporting calendar are listed below.

### Corruption Commission

Hearings of the South Bandicoot Corruption Commission are open to visitors for a small fee. The Commission, consisting of the People's Arbitrator Martin Ord, provides a never failing source of wet day entertainment as multinationals writhe under Ord's incisive interrogation.



The Daily Skiers' Special  
arriving at  
Dead Dingo Gap

## Soccer

Bandicoot United's home ground at South Bandicoot High School Oval has reserved seating for 12 in front of the changing rooms, and adequate grass tussocks and ant-hills for all who wish to attend. The local derby against Gurrnji Croatia, which last year netted a record 22 red cards and 13 on-field arrests in an exciting nil-all draw, is the highlight of the season.

## Skiing

The Mt Clark ski slopes have a nation-wide reputation. A daily train service to Dead Dingo Gap connects with the ski-tow. Refreshments are available.

## Night Life

### Gambling - Legal

Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House, 12 noon - 6 a.m. Spin the bottle, snap and strip poker draw crowds every night. For the gambler that likes to watch, favourable odds are available on the spread of the black mould, and on the appearance of St Brendan the Rafferty, whose very presence chills the beer.

### Gambling - Illegal

Upstairs at *Banco Laundromatique de la Bandicoot Midi*, in Sydney Road, provides fully-equipped gambling premises for the highest of rollers. Glance-sensitive attendants Solomon and Elias Morgan provide that extra thrill of fear for those without their own bodyguards, and require generous tipping by the rare successful player.

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## Film

The posters outside the Regal Cinema are an object of pilgrimage from film-buffs world-wide.

Continuous sessions of blurred and scratched bestiality, panting and violence can be seen at the Cathedral, Casino and Pornographic Movie House from 6 p.m. to midnight every night.

## Nocturnal Excursions

Best visited at night, when the shy nocturnal fauna are at their most active, the partially completed railway tunnels under South Bandicoot city centre provide a geologist's paradise of decaying mudstone, volcanic dykes and trilobitic pterandons, and are a sanctuary for subterranean flora and fauna, both aquatic and land based. For bookings, contact Rat Tours, Clark Street.

## Media

### Bandicoot 1 - Channel 58, UHF

South Bandicoot's TV channel has something for everyone. Tuesday night is a Festival of Capitalist

Decadence, with back-to-back episodes of Dynasty, Dallas and Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. Thursday is Multicultural Night, with seven identical serials about the exploitation of the peasantry by harsh landlords, in Flemish, Portugese, Cantonese, Croatian, Aramaic, Icelandic and Bengali. Saturday night is Classic Movie Night, an open-ended session, often lasting well into the following morning, in which presenter Martin Ord will choose a Hollywood classic, and then show each of its remakes in chronological order.

### Radio Bandicoot - 1540 kHz (AM), 103.5 MHz (FM)

The Voice of the Revolution, Radio Bandicoot's non-stop music, news and debate is a must for anybody who wishes to understand the revolution. For those that don't, it is a must anyway, because its sound permeates every last corner of the country, even the showers at the Historical Inevitability humming to its beat.



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Her main interest in life is breeding silverfish.



