

It was at the Atomic Conference in Geneva in 1964 that I met the Australian Lord Casey, the head of the team of Australian scientists at the Conference. He had a distinguished political career as Churchill's Minister representing him in Cairo during World War II, and later he became Governor General of Australia. I had no difficulty in talking to him, as I had lived in Australia for years and as he was interested in the communication of science. I told him that, in my opinion, Australia had many interesting scientific stories to tell the world, but that they had never been properly reported. "I shall see what I can do" he told me. I was very skeptical if he could, or would, do anything.

But I was wrong. It was on 1 March 1966 that a group of British science correspondents including Anthony Tucker of *The Guardian*, Nigel Calder of the *New Scientist*, Ronnie Bedford of the *Mirror*, C.L. Boltz of the BBC and myself set out (first class) on Qantas QF 752 for Sydney, stopping in Bangkok on the way. During our two-day stop in Thailand I was able to watch the national sport of Kite-Fighting, where the male and the female kites try to ensnare each other and endeavour to crash down together on either the male or female side of a rope in a large field. Heavy betting takes place. I wrote a brief story about this and it was published in the 'Mandrake' column of the *Sunday Telegraph*.

I also reported about Thai science based on a talk with Frank Nicholls, an old Australian friend, who was then the Special Governor of the Applied Scientific Research Corporation of Thailand. He was not very optimistic.

On arrival in Sydney we were taken to the Menzies Hotel in Carrington Street and given a small reception by representatives of Qantas. It was one of the Directors of the Australian National Airline who made the unforgettable, welcoming speech to us: "I am sure that we can't offer you science mates the same exciting stories you are used to in Europe. There is only one field where Australia is leading and that is Radio Astrology." We were polite enough not to correct him, but some of us thought it a bad omen. Wrong again.

The next day, being a Sunday, I saw my ex-wife again after 12 years and we had a friendly, but rather formal reunion as our divorce had only become legally valid a few years before. In the evening Mervyn Scales, an old friend of mine from scientific film days [See Title 53] gave our group a party and we were joined by Dr Peter Pockley, the outstanding Australian science writer, then the Science Correspondent of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Both Mervyn and Peter quickly corrected our first impressions based on the Qantas speech and told us about some of the interesting Australian science that was awaiting us.