



alumni news

Sydney University International House Alumni Association

August 2026

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from the executive

Welcome to the August 2026 SUIHAA Newsletter.

As usual, there is an abundance of news to convey. As usual, there is an abundance of news to convey. Please check out the Table of Contents, so you can start with the articles that most interest you.

No matter where you start in the Newsletter, you won't want to miss:

- ✳ Save the date for the upcoming IH alumni reunion on Saturday 7 November
- ✳ Discussions of two interesting books read by the SUIHAA Book Club
- ✳ Photos of distinction from the 2025 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition
- ✳ Save the date for the 3 October AGM (Annual General Meeting)
- ✳ A fascinating alumni highlight from Bernard Delcourt (IH 1972-73)

Enjoy the various articles in this issue of the SUIHAA Newsletter.

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committee

We acknowledge and thank the members of the SUIHAA Committee who keep the IH vision and mission alive, and organise the different SUIHAA supported events:

President
Dennis Schatz

Secretary
Louise Trott

Treasurer
Joshua Lee

General Committee
Anne Gotsis
Sen Ganbaatar
Michael Hirschhorn
Margaret Lemoh
Ros Madden
Taz Rahman
Liz Wong

contributions

We welcome comments and inquiries regarding items in the SUIHAA Newsletter, plus encourage suggestions for content.

Please send your correspondence to the SUIHAA Newsletter editor, Dennis Schatz, at schatz@pacsci.org.

REMINDER: SUIHAA Alumni Reunion

Saturday 7 November 2026

from Taz Rahman



Top: The Duck Inn

Left: Greg Houseman, Mirk Hirschhorn, David Rowed and wife at the previous IH alumni reunion at The Duck Inn in March.

After the success of our Pilot Spring Reunion last year during the USYD Community Festival, we welcome all IH alumni to attend our 2026 Spring Reunion this year at The Duck Inn while enjoying this year's Community Festival.

When: 7th November 2026, 12pm-2pm

Where: The Duck Inn, 74 Rose St. Chippendale NSW

And don't forget, the University of Sydney is opening its doors to welcome back all USyd Alumni for The Community Festival on Saturday 7th November from 11am-4pm

It's free, so register your Early Bird interest today at <https://www.sydney.edu.au/engage/alumni/reunions-and-events/community-festival.html>.

Looking forward to seeing you at the IH Alumni Reunion!



SAVE THE DATE:

SUIHAA AGM - Saturday 3rd October

Please join us for this year's AGM to be held on Saturday, 3 October from 11:00am to 1:00pm Sydney time. The URL for this virtual meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87468210484>.

Get the latest update on the redevelopment of International House and the many activities of SUIHAA. This is also the opportunity to give input into future activities and to elect the members of the SUIHAA Committee.

A formal announcement of the meeting will be sent in mid-September.

Photographs of Distinction

Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition 2025

from Dennis Schatz

The top four winners of the 2025 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition were announced in the last two newsletters. As mentioned previously, the three judges were sorry they had to choose just four from the many outstanding submissions. Below are two more photos also deserving of recognition. We hope you enjoy these beautiful worldwide images from your fellow IH alumni.

The Carpeted Pathway (featured page 5)

Darryl Small (IH 1975-77)

Lake Kawaguchi, Five Lakes District, Fuji-san (Fujiyama), Japan - October 2024

Darryl Small lived in IH from 1975 through mid-1977 completing his PhD in Agricultural Chemistry. He and his wife Nipa, who he met at IH have lived in Geelong, Victoria for the past thirty-seven years. After long and varied careers, they are both fully retired and busy caring for their two grandsons now aged 10 and 7.

"I met my wife Nipa at International House at the beginning of 1975, when we were both commencing our postgrad studies in agriculture. Since then, we have climbed many mountains together, but had only dreamed of seeing Fuji for ourselves. So finally, during 2024, on the second day of waiting for the cloud cover on Fuji to lift, we climbed a hill above the lake seeking a good vantage point. Walking along the trail, we were enchanted by the glorious thick, spongy carpet of autumn leaves, where this photo was taken."

Darryl and Nipa are happy to have you contact them at small.darryl@gmail.com.



Above: The Small family taken in December 2025 (with daughter Pim, her husband Chris, as well as grandsons Hamish and Lachie)

Below: Ian Gutierrez

Spring in Her Step (featured page 6)

Ian Gutierrez (IH 1996-97)

Hiroshima, Japan - 8 April 2025

Ian Gutierrez lived in IH in 1996 and 1997 where he studied for a Master of Economics. He currently lives in Brisbane where he is enjoying a slower paced life doing purposeful work in a not-for-profit organisation and his involvement with the Queensland Writers Centre and the Royal Historical Society of Queensland.

"My spouse and I spent an afternoon at the Shukkeien Garden in Hiroshima to relax and admire the cherry blossoms. An elderly woman in traditional Japanese kimono, walked by and stopped to look at and admire the trees herself. She had a youthful exuberance about her. In my head, I wished we will have the spring in her step when we get to her age."





The Carpeted Pathway - Darryl Small
Finalist, Rosemary Berrick Photo Competition 2025



Spring in Her Step - Ian Gutierrez
Finalist, Rosemary Berick Photo Competition 2025



Adrenalin Waves (above and featured on front cover)

Bernard Delcourt (IH 1972)

Vernazza, Italy - January 3, 2024 (5pm)

Bernard Delcourt lived in IH during 1972 as a postgraduate in mechanical engineering. For the last 10 years he has lived in Lasne, 15km south of Brussels, Belgium. He is retired, keeping active with tennis, trekking/travelling, grand-children, skiing, photography, reading novels, revising Feynman's lectures, etc...

“Vernazza, a fishing village of the picturesque "Cinque Terre" trail in Liguria, Italy. The sea plays with children, daring them with wavelets to approach its shoreline, then chasing them with furious waves that make them retreat with excited cries.”

Bernard is pleased to have people contact him at bdelcourt@compuserve.com, and also writes:

“I do hope that some of the 1972 IH residents will take the step to contact me. I made really good friends down there in my single year of residence in Sydney, but lost track of them... (the world is big). Yet, two improbable encounters happened later on: In 1975 or so, crossing a bridge in Innsbruck, I came across one Italian IH resident (whom I did not know very well). In 1984, I came across another 1972 IH resident, a friend I used to play soccer with, Peter Vukmirica. He walked out of an elevator; I was waiting to go up to my office and start another working day in Brussels (this is a small world).”

Right, top: Bernard pictured today

Right, bottom: Bernard in 1972



IH Redevelopment Update

from Dennis Schatz and Taz Rahman

The International House Council - the official University of Sydney board that provides advice to the University regarding the redevelopment of IH - met in mid-July. IH redevelopment planning continues, although the University is not yet ready to announce the location and potential opening date. While the IH redevelopment process moves slowly, the Chair (Greg Houseman) and Vice Chair (Craig Collie) of the Council assured Council members that the University is committed to the redevelopment. Both Greg and Craig are SUIH alumni and actively involved in the redevelopment process.

SUIHAA leadership had hoped that IH would reopen for the 2027 academic year. It now appears it will be during the following year. The Council will meet again in September to review more details about IH redevelopment. Hopefully, we will have more information to share in the November SUIHAA Newsletter.

SUIHAA Book Club update

from Margaret Lemoh and Dennis Schatz

The SUIHAA Book Club continues to meet every two months and has a strong group of regular participants. We still have space for a few more people. If you would like to join the group, please contact Liz Wong at wongoonoo@hotmail.com.

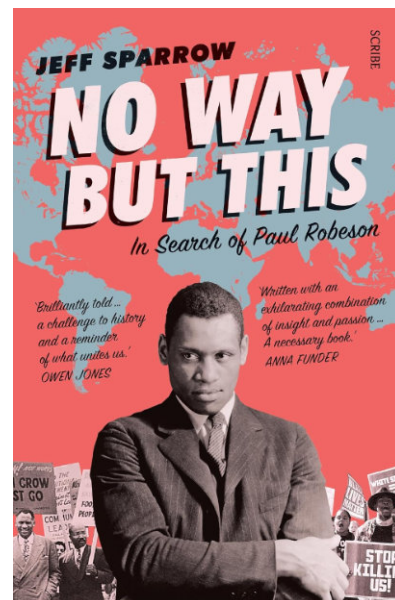
***NO WAY BUT THIS: In Search of Paul Robeson* by Jeff Sparrow**

as discussed by the SUIHAA Book Club in May 2026 - summary by Margaret Lemoh

An old video clip of Paul Robeson giving a performance on the site of the future Sydney Opera House in 1960 had caught the attention of Australian journalist, Jeff Sparrow. Robeson was singing his signature song "Ol Man River", the song of a slave working on a boat on the Mississippi River, to an audience consisting mainly of construction workers. Sparrow was intrigued by the rapt attention Robeson's rich deep voice commanded from the workers as it resonated round the scaffolding and decided to find out more about this legendary figure.

The result is a moving biography, an intimate sympathetic portrait of this charismatic singer whose extraordinary bass voice touched so many, not just in theatres, concert halls and movies, but in street rallies and public spaces. Born in 1898 in Princeton, New Jersey, USA, the son of a former slave, Paul Robeson grew up in the era of segregation, lynchings and targeted racial violence when racial discrimination limited everything a black person did. Somehow Paul, a highly gifted man, won a scholarship to the all-white Rutgers University, graduating with honours and prizes and later qualifying in Law at Columbia University. He also became a professional basketballer and an outstanding footballer. Later he became a box-office hit as an actor, on stage in London and New York and on screen in Hollywood.

However, it was his remarkable voice that made him internationally famous. His experiences as a child and a young man in the US had made him a passionate advocate for equality and justice for all people who were disadvantaged by race or class. The negro spirituals that he sang, the songs of his enslaved people, and folk songs from other cultures, delivered in his distinctive rich deep voice had a powerful impact on his listeners.



In Britain he sang at rallies in support of Welsh miners striking for better pay and conditions in the Depression years. A visit to Moscow convinced him that communism promised a new and fairer social order. When civil war broke out in Spain in 1937, Robeson performed at rallies and benefit concerts raising money to help the resistance movement fight the fascist forces of General Franco. He even went to Spain himself to sing for the resistance fighters.

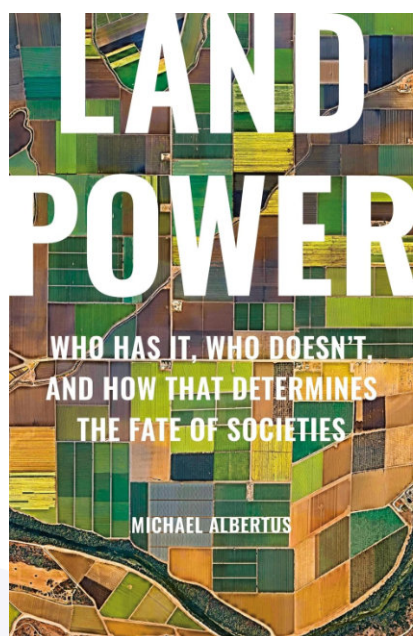
Unfortunately, his outspoken stand for equality and justice made him a target of the House Un-American Activities Committee, hunting down communists in America in the Cold War years after World War II. Though he never joined the Communist party, his stage career was terminated and his name erased from historical records.

Beginning in the USA, Sparrow takes us with him on Robeson's journey, from his childhood in Wilmington, Delaware, to New York, London, Wales, Moscow and Spain. As he talks with people connected with Robeson, or the historical events of his time, readers feel part of the conversation - listening to the descendant of a slave-owning family, or a black activist reminiscing about the Harlem renaissance of the 1920s. We meet the curator of a museum in a Welsh mining town, an old man in Spain recalling Robeson singing at a resistance meeting, a Russian activist in Moscow, and many others.

It is these interviews that make this book so compelling. Not only do they illuminate the life of Paul Robeson whose commitment to equality for all cost him a stellar career, they give us a deeper insight into the sweeping social changes of his times and their repercussions in today's world. Jeff Sparrow refers eloquently and insightfully to "wounds covered over and forgotten, but never fully healed" - the legacy of slavery and colonialism, fascism, the Cold War and Stalinism.

***Land Power: Who has it, Who Doesn't and How that Determines the Fate of Societies* by Michael Albertus**

as discussed by the SUIHAA Book Club in July 2026 - summary by Dennis Schatz



As the book title implies, the major thesis of this book is that those people who own the land have the power to control society. The book primarily focuses on the reallocation (the author called this the reshuffle) of rural lands in the 1700s, 1800s and 1900s. This is when settlers sanctioned by the government took land from the indigenous populations (e.g., First Nations in Australia, Native Americans in the United States), and many land reforms by governments transferred large land holdings by a few individuals to small land holdings by the tenant farmers/serfs that worked the land (e.g., China, Peru, Mexico).

The reshuffle did make a difference to many farmers' incomes and lives, although at times the fightback from the big landowners was often successful because of their existing power and wealth associated with their land ownership.

While I expected to have a discussion regarding how much power this gave the landowner of small farms, the book focused more on how racism, gender bias, economic inequality, politics and population pressure affected what happened during reallocation of land. I suggested that a better book title would be *Land*

Power: How Racism, Gender bias, Economic inequality, Politics and Population pressure Determines the Fate of Societies.

Racism led to white settlers displacing indigenous populations. Gender bias resulted in the land (even small land holdings) being typically put in the husband's name, and politics often derailed even the best-intentioned reshuffling of land as national leaders changed policies to stay in power. The reshuffling did result in some reversal of environmental damage, although with very mixed success.

The book was well researched and an interesting read. We did not find it an uplifting book and often hard to keep reading, given the problems with the issues cited above, plus the resulting environmental degradation that occurred as a growing population moved into less populated areas. It seems that the best of intentions often went awry.

As mentioned earlier, the book focused mainly on examples dealing with rural and agricultural lands, and not with land allocation in urban and suburban settings where 80% of the world now lives. We wanted to know how the theme of the book relates to this more modern situation. As AI seems to be dominating current events, the group also wondered if the role of technology, rather than land power, is now determining the fate of societies.

Future Book Club titles and meeting dates

- ✿ **26 September 2026:** *Truganini: Journey Through the Apocalypse*
by Cassandra Pybus; Allen & Unwin 2021. Winner of the National Biography Award 2021
- ✿ **28 November 2026:** *Patriot*
by Alexei Navalny

Bo Children's Hospital update

from Margaret Lemoh

The hospital continues to provide services to children in the Bo district. It's now 14 years since the official opening on June 2nd, 2012. Thank you to all of you in SUIHAA who have supported it so loyally with your donations.

It is the rainy season in Sierra Leone now. Typically, it goes from early May to the end of August. It is usually a time of scarcity, and the rain and poor roads make travel more hazardous. Consequently, there tends to be a drop in attendance at the hospital. However, mosquitoes are undeterred by the weather and malaria is still very prevalent.



In June, the hospital outreach team went to Bandajuma, a village on the highway east of Bo. They saw 139 children aged under five. Over half needed medication for malaria. There were a number of cases of children with respiratory conditions, including a two-year-old who had been having severe breathing problems for several days and was near death on arrival. Sadly, emergency care failed to save him. Staff spent much time emphasising the need to seek medical help early and describing symptoms to watch for in order to avoid such tragedies.

Above: Mothers and children waiting in outpatient clinic

Left: Child being examined by nurse



Two children were suffering from acute malnutrition and were taken to the Government Hospital for specialised treatment. Lactating mothers were given special attention and instructed on feeding practices.

These clinics are very valuable. They provide an opportunity to share information about preventing illness and giving guidance on managing sick children. Many villagers do not have the means of buying medications for sick children so these visits can also provide medicines, like antibiotics to children who arrive with an acute illness.

The team regularly bring a supply of mosquito nets impregnated with insecticide which they distribute. This is a very effective way of helping to prevent malaria.

Health education is one of the most important missions of BCH. While there is very little internet coverage in the rural areas, many villages have radio reception. The Hospital is planning to implement a regular program on children's health to be called BCH Hour. We hope this will increase community awareness of basic health care practices such as hydration for children with fever, vomiting and diarrhea, plus the importance of a protein rich diet and handwashing.

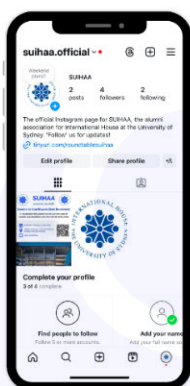


Above: Nurses with vaccination kits

Right: Child receiving vaccination

REMINDER: Connect with SUIHAA via Social Media

from Sen Ganbaatar



We're making it easier than ever for you to stay connected with the International House community. SUIHAA has launched an official Instagram account and would love for you to join us!

Follow us on [@suihaa.official](https://www.instagram.com/suihaa.official) on Instagram and [@suihaa](https://www.facebook.com/suihaa) on Facebook to catch up on alumni news, find out about upcoming events, and relive some of your favourite IH moments. Additionally, we are seeking stories from our community. If you would like to share your updates or memories from your time at IH, please send them to suihaasocial@gmail.com.

Alumni Highlight: Bernald Delcourt (1972-73)

I am grateful to Dennis for suggesting I write an article for the SUIHAA Newsletter. I quickly realized that the task I gladly accepted wasn't as easy as I thought. First, I had to immerse myself in the atmosphere of 1972, a real exercise in personal, professional, and social archaeology. Then came the anxiety of the blank page, with its unsettling questions. Who would read my article? How could I hope to interest both the residents nostalgic of the 70s and also their successors from Generations X, Y, and Z? What topics should I include? What themes should I avoid? What tone should I adopt?

I immediately dismissed the academic approach of a conventional résumé and finally opted to offer an account of a few events that took place at the IH in 1972-73, using anecdotes, comments about the nature of the world in the 70s, and reflections illustrating how much my year-long stay at the SUIH were to influence the course of my life over the following years.



Before embarking on a sentimental journey, allow me to introduce myself. I was born (and currently am) a Belgian citizen. I just turned 77 years old, a fateful age in Belgium! I hear everyone telling me that this is my last year for reading the *Adventures of Tintin*, our world-renowned reporter (a reminiscence of the weekly Belgian comics magazine *Journal de Tintin*, launched in 1946 as *le journal des jeunes de 7 à 77 ans*). Well, time has passed since 1972.

Travelling to Australia

I was 23 years old in March 1972 when I departed from Belgium to Australia, leaving home for the other side of the world. It was both thrilling and scary. The year before, I had completed my degree of "Ingénieur Civil Physicien" at the University of Liège, then worked one year at the University Computing Centre. A letter from the Registrar of the University of Sydney informed me that I was awarded a postgraduate research scholarship, exempt of university fees. This was unexpectedly generous money (about \$2000 AUD) that would cover accommodation, food, textbooks and lifestyle expenses, even the cost of rare phone calls to Belgium (see below) My knowledge of English was purely bookish. There were indeed challenges ahead.

I could not afford flying to Australia on Qantas or BOAC. I searched and identified a "Jet-Ship package" that was cheap and had an adventurous side to it. I was to travel on board the Singapore-based "Saber Air" Douglas DC-8 for a 20-hour multi-stop flight to Singapore (the Air Leg), spend a couple of days in a mid-tier Singapore hotel (the Layover), then sail for five days across the Indian Ocean to Fremantle, Western Australia, on board the "Khabarovsk" liner (the Sea Leg). I was to realize later that this line was the Soviet state-owned "Far Eastern Shipping Company".

The multi-stop Air Leg flight took me from London Gatwick to Singapore in 20+ hours (!), via Athens, Bahrain and Karachi. The layover leg turned out to be a welcome rest-and-sightsee experience.



Above: Map of Europe with Belgium shaded in dark green (via Wikipedia)

Belgium is that tiny, often unnoticed, country in the middle of the European Union. Brussels, its capital city, is also the capital of the EU (180 nationalities; 100+ languages). There are 12 million of us Belgians. Modern Belgium exists since 1830. It is a parliamentary democracy (voting is compulsory) with a constitutional monarchy. Our present King Philippe has a representative function with no executive power. Belgium operates as a federal structure with 3 regions: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital. The Belgians are proud of their chocolates, waffles, beers, good humour and plentiful food - especially their fries which are Belgian, not French. We are also proud, occasionally, of our national football team.

I was soon to realize how big Australia is. Belgians live in a territory 250 times smaller than Australia. There are 2.34 Australians for each Belgian; yet Belgium is 100 times more densely packed than "Down Under". Australians enjoy a coastline that is 400 times longer than our 41-mile straight-lined shoreline facing the coast of England across the North Sea. Remarkably over six decades, the economies of both countries have scaled with the population sizes.

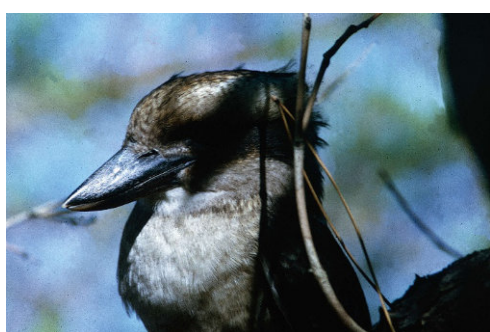
So much for this geo-political digression.

Then came the 5-day cruise on the *Khabarovsk*. Traveling on the *Khabarovsk* felt like stepping directly into Soviet territory. The vessel was fully staffed by Soviet crew members. The onboard atmosphere had an almost military flavour. The dining saloon served traditional Russian fare: heavy black bread, borscht, stews, and tea served in metal glass-holders.

The budget cabins (where I was) used communal washing blocks and tier bunkbeds. I did not really enjoy the cuisine, the facilities and the social pleasures of the ship. Seasickness hit me unexpectedly upon departure from Singapore; it stayed with me persistently for five days and nights, with short spells of rest. A nightmare. Someone told me the ship's bar was selling incredibly cheap Soviet vodka and caviar. A painful nightmare! It was a relief to learn later that the *Khabarovsk* had reached its end of life in 1989, when it was broken up for scrap.



9 March 1972, just before disembarking from the *Khabarovsk* in Fremantle. I had not fully recovered from the cruise on a USSR vessel.



9 March 1972, Perth Hyde Park. The first wild, genuine Australian that I meet on the Australian soil. The bird looked at me, flew away to a neighbouring tree and started to laugh. I thought this was his way of welcoming me, no doubt an auspicious omen.

It was 54 years ago that I set foot on the Australian soil in Fremantle. Then went to Perth for a few hours of sightseeing in the city while waiting for my flight to Sydney. The flight passed without a problem without a problem.

The taxi driver who brought me to 96 City Road, Darlington, asked me where I was coming from. He must have been impressed by my English accent, as he immediately addressed me in the dialect spoken in Charleroi, one of Belgium's coal mining the areas, to tell me he had been working as a minor in Belgium prior to migrating to Sydney - astonishing world it is.

International House

My boarding at International House had been arranged prior to my leaving home. I got introduced to the House Director Mr. Graeme de Graaff and to the Deputy Director, the much-appreciated Mrs. MacCutcheon. I expected and received, a furnished single bed-study room, 3 meals per day served in

the communal dining hall, and access to recreational areas (TV room, table-tennis room) and student-run cultural events. All this for about \$700AUD for the year... (about \$9100 AUD today!)

My scholarship was attached to the Department of Mechanical Engineering, led by Professor "Sam" Luxton. As a "free" student, I was allowed to choose (naturally under Prof. Luxton's supervision) the courses I wanted. We defined a working programme that kept me fully busy, attending lectures and selected seminars, and getting involved with fluid mechanics laboratory work under the kind guidance of Dr Robert "Bob" Antonia, who introduced me to some of the secrets of hot-line anemometry in turbulent boundary layers.

There were no Internet, smartphones or WhatsApp in 1972. At the time, calling Europe from Australia was quite an affair: you had to plan it and be patient. From a home "rotary phone" (or at the post office), you would dial the "international operator" to book your call. He/she would ask details - names, numbers, cities, call type etc., before asking you to hang up and await their call back ("when your line would be clear").

Waiting was at least 30 minutes, often more. It was smarter to fix a call time for the next day. The Australian operator would call you back at the agreed time, connect with their European counterpart, who in turn connected the line to your correspondent. As a student, I would place a "collect call" requiring my family to agree to cover the cost of the 3-minute long-distance call (\$12 AUD, nearly a full day's take-home pay for an Australian worker at the time). Then would come the long-awaited operator's "I have your call to Belgium, go ahead please", finally allowing me to talk to my parents on the radiotelephone or cabled connection.



My room (347) was overlooking the roof between the main building and the Rotunda.



Students relaxing on a lawn at Sydney University, a luxury that was unknown to me at the University of Liège.

It was not long before I took on the (irreverent?) habit of relaxing on the greens of the University at lunch time, like most students did on the campus. There was not much grass in the 70's on the campus of the University of Liège, with its buildings scattered all over the town.

The social life at IH was very much active. It became easy to interact with other students. At the time, IH maintained roughly a 50/50 split between Australian and overseas students. Students from India, Iran, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Ghana, Uganda, China, Korea, Fiji, Vietnam, Solomon Islands and other European countries were happily interacting in a community that was a melting pot of cultures.

A lot of smiling faces around. Inter-cultural exchanges, every day and everywhere, spontaneous or organized by students individually or in groups, took many forms in many areas - breakfast conversations, cuisine, music, clothing, art, dancing, formal debates, sports, occasional encounters...

Snooker was a popular game at IH. One always found someone to challenge in the pool room. I also rapidly found myself playing ping-pong with residents from Singapore. They were good at the game (I was bad) and liked to cook Chinese duck late in the evening. We became friends and took the routine of meeting almost daily to enjoy their Peking duck.

Football also brought me in contact with other students. Every Sunday morning, someone had arranged a match, and we would drive to a district of Sydney, near the sea, to play a real game on a real football pitch. The game was between Europeans, Australians and Asians (still the case today?!). I did also take part in the Greek dancing lessons organized by a remarkably nice young lady teacher (Fani); these sessions were times full of joy and happiness.

The most memorable event during my stay at IH turned out to be the "Candlelight Ceremony". The Ceremony was meant as a symbolic ritual representing the spread of peace and friendship around the world. Light passing from candle to candle depicted the commitment of students from diverse nations to live together in harmony.

The precisely orchestrated ceremony took place 24 November 1972 at 1830 sharp, inside the circular dining-room of the Rotunda. All the electrical lights were switched off. The large, central International House Candle was lit at the centre of the room. Everyone attending the event would remain seated, holding an unlit, small candle in hand.

The House Director called the overseas country names in alphabetic order. Each call prompted the country delegate (and his/her countrymen) to approach the central Candle in the darkness. As Belgian delegate, I was the first in line. I lighted my candle from the central Candle and read the IH pledge in French, my native language: *"As light begets light, so love, friendship and goodwill are passed from one another. We who have come from many nations to live in one fellowship at International House promise one another to pass the light wherever we go"*. The next delegates, from China to Vietnam, similarly read the IH pledge, lighted their candle, and passed on the central flame to their countrymen's candles.

With all overseas candles lit, the Australian representative moved on to light his candle to the central flame. He then asked his sitting countrymen to light their own candles with the nearest lighted candle. The flame passed from person to person along the tables until the room walls glowed solely by the light of tens of flickering candles. The ceremony ended with the Australian representative reciting the IH pledge.



Bernard reading the IH Pledge at the Candlelight Ceremony on November 24, 1972.



Friends relaxing together after the Candlelight Ceremony. From left to right: Photographer, Shaw Peng Chuang (Singapore), Bernard Delcourt (Belgium), Mervin Sirisena (Singapore), King-Khoong Kuang (Singapore), Julianne Simpson (USA), ?, ?

I lost track of my IH residents over the years. Yet, two improbable encounters happened. In around 1975, while crossing a bridge in Innsbruck, Austria, I came across one Italian IH resident whom I did not know very well. On the IH 1972 group photograph, I found out his name, Ivanhoe Tebaldeschi, Italian citizen. He was some sort of lawyer, possibly a visiting professor, therefore older than most of the students. There are some traces of him (references to book and articles) on the Internet. The other encounter was even more puzzling. In 1984, I came across another 1972 IH resident, a friend I used to play football with every Sunday morning, a Serbian named Peter Vukmirica. One early morning in Brussels, he just walked out of the elevator I was about to take up to my office. IH people are everywhere in this small world.

1975-79 at the University of Adelaide

I was incredibly lucky to meet, by sheer chance, several eminent Australian scientists who took some of their time to guide me and oversee my student work at the Universities of Sydney and Adelaide. I resided at IH in 1972 thanks to the invitation of Professor Luxton. I earned my Ph.D. thesis in Adelaide thanks to his proposition that I should join his "turbulence" team where Dr. Garry Brown had started fundamental work on turbulent shear flows. I am indebted to both for their scientific leadership and constant benevolent, generous attitude towards me. I left Adelaide with a feeling of leaving behind not only remarkable mentors, eminent scientists, but genuine friends. I must also express my admiration to a fellow student at Adelaide University, Dr. Andrew S.W. Thomas, a friend of mine, who was to become the Australian astronaut who took his first trip to space in 1996.

In Conclusion

Back in my native country in 1979, my career unfolded in Belgium and abroad. My Ph.D. degree from the University of Adelaide immediately opened the doors of the prestigious Von Karman Institute which hired me as a research assistant. I eventually moved on to diverse high-tech companies: nuclear engineering (plant safety analysis); information & communication technology (testing and standardization of open systems). Thereafter, as owner of my own consultancy firm, I took on management functions, dealing with quality certification in companies; competence accreditation of laboratories; ending up managing, auditing and evaluating international projects (EU-funded collaboration programmes).

I have now been retired for over 10 years. Contrary to what you may expect, retirement is not an idle, boring period of life. 24 hours a day are not enough to accommodate ongoing activities - occasional business work, recurrent domestic affairs, recreational hobbies. I devote much time to tennis (improving my backhand...), photography (restoring old pictures, sorting thousands of jpg files...), music (mastering tricky guitar chords...), reading (sampling Nobel Prizes in Literature...), hiking, and travelling (soon maybe to Australia?).

When I look back upon my 40+ years of continuous professional career, I am convinced that my 1972 one-year stay at the SUIH had a critical, positive influence on my life's eventual itinerary. It was a cultural shock for the young, naive graduate student to suddenly be immersed in an unknown, complex international environment amongst complete strangers. One year later, I left Australia as another person. My English had dramatically improved - I could understand, if not imitate, the down-under accent. I had faced unexpected scholarship challenges, seen new places, made new friends. I could face other cultural challenges. My resolve to pursue an academic direction was strongly anchored in me. About 3 years later, it would bring me back to Australia at the University of Adelaide for accomplishing a Ph.D. degree (this after completing my 1-year compulsory military service and working another year in Belgium).

Australia gave me a lot. I am forever in debt to her. Besides praising Australia and its scientific excellence to people wherever I have worked and been, I may have found a way to express my gratitude in a concrete manner. My daughter "Barbara Adelaide" was born there. With their inherited Australian citizenship, my Belgian-born grandson (15) and granddaughter (18) may one day return to their second homeland and work for the country that brought so much to their grandfather.



Alumni Correspondence

from Ann Davidson (1980)

My husband Stephen White and I (pictured on the right in the photo) met at SUIH in 1980, when I had a sabbatical from Adelaide to do Australia's first Master of Public Health (and when Stephen was in the second year of his doctorate in astrophysics).

The man wearing the blue shirt is Hans Schmid and the other woman is his wife Heide-Marie Schmid-Borgschulte. In 1980, Hans was in a group of about six German senior veterinary students who were on an exchange program for a couple of months and who used SUIH as their base. We have always been in touch and Hans and Heide have a home in Edinburgh, so they were able to join us for my big family gathering.

I thought that it is worth recording that 46 years later a German, a Brit, and an Australian who were all in SUIH in 1980 met up in Scotland!