

*Photograph Album*

The fourth biennial Nevil Shute gathering was held from 2nd to 6th October 2005 at the Cape Codder Resort hotel in Hyannis Massachusetts. These Gatherings all began when an event was originally planned to mark the author Nevil Shute's centenary in January 1999. For that event DanTelfair envisaged a small gathering but in fact over 100 people turned up for that special occasion and they decided to continue the party in 2001 in Australia. The trend being set, the next gathering was in June 2003 in Portsmouth, England and by logical continuity the latest gathering on Cape Cod followed in October 2005. Sixty-five dedicated Shutists assembled in sunny early fall weather to talk about, and share views on, the life and work of our favourite author.

#### Registration.

On the Sunday afternoon all those who registered received a tote bag containing a wonderfully produced programme of events, guides to the area, notepads and a mysterious envelope marked "Do not open but bring to the evening reception". The envelopes contained a sticker with the name of a character in a Shute novel. Without looking at the name the stickers were placed on our backs and the object was to find out who the characters were by asking different people one question at a time. If the purpose was to get people circulating it certainly did so but there were some puzzled looks and one person I asked said they had only read about four of the novels and hadn't heard of my character. To the accompaniment of music from Shute's novels played by Lillian Ruiz and Gail Shoemaker on violins, people chatted, ate, renewed old acquaintances and made new ones.

#### Day 1.

Art and Joan Cornell, our wonderful hosts, who had organised and planned the whole event, warmly welcomed us to the Gathering and read out a message from Heather Mayfield Norway, President of the Nevil Shute Foundation and Nevil Shute's elder daughter, wishing us good luck.

Dan Telfair, Foundation Secretary, (El Supremo to his friends) gave the opening address, recounting how these Gatherings had progressed from the Centennial to the present. He re-told the amusing story of his frantic efforts with a colleague, in the days before VCRs, to find a motel in Atlanta that had PBS television in order not to miss the latest episode of the miniseries "A Town Like Alice"

As with all the Gatherings, tea breaks offer the chance for chat and discussion and to view the exhibits that were on show. The exhibits this time did not disappoint and ranged from a collection of dust jackets to a book stall, fine models of the R-100 airship and its shed and copies of documents related to Airspeed obtained from the UK National Archives. Of course the inscribed stone, with its runic Haki and Hekja was in pride of place. This stone, we learned, was discovered by Art on April 1st 2001. Not content with displaying this trophy, Art had loving inscribed smaller stones for every registered member.

After tea break Graham Fricke gave a presentation entitled "Holding a Mirror Up to Life" describing how Shute's novels accurately reflect the customs and language of three distinct periods - pre war England, the second World War in Britain and post-war Australia.

An extensive self-serve buffet lunch was provided in the ballroom. The catering throughout the Gathering was of an excellent standard. Suitably replete, we convened for the afternoon's presentations.



Joan and Art Cornell - our superb hosts



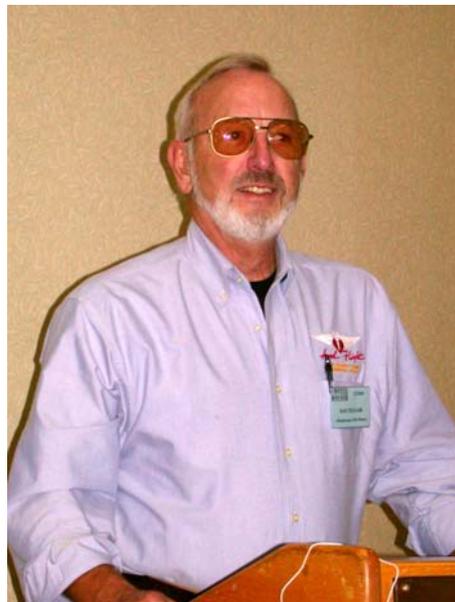
The registration team



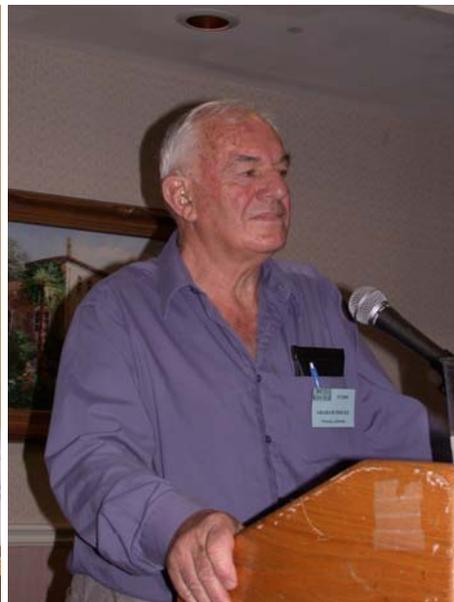
Sunday evening reception



Art welcomes us all to the Gathering



Dan Telfair - Opening address



Graham Fricke - Holding a mirror up to Life

The first of these was given by Fred Erisman entitled "An Old Captivity and the Early Days of Atlantic Flight". Fred is an eminent professor who has given presentations at previous Gatherings and he gave a fascinating comparison of the flight in Old Captivity with contemporary flights such as that of Lindbergh, Amelia Earhardt and the MacRobertson race. The final presentation was given by Lillian Ruiz and entitled "Kids reading Shute". Lillian is Art & Joan's 16 year old granddaughter and, with maturity and self-assurance, she related how she had been introduced to Shute's novels. To test our knowledge of the novels she set up a version of "Who wants to be a Millionaire" game. After some elimination Bob Wester and then Andy Banta "won" \$250,000 answering questions on "On the Beach" Andy was all set to leave the country with his winnings then remembered he had a presentation to give later.

## Day 2. Excursion

Early on a rather overcast morning we boarded 2 buses to our day-long excursion around the Cape Cod area. First stop was at Captain Bangs Hallet's house to view a 150 year old weeping English beech tree; then on up the Cape to Provincetown. The energetic climbed the 250ft Pilgrim Monument whilst others raided bookshops where some first editions of Shute books were bought. Yet others shopped for souvenirs or explored the sea front area.

On then to Michael Shay's for our pre-ordered lunches and then back down the Cape with a stop at Nauset Beach - Wonderstrands to Leif Ericsson and his crew, where the foolhardy paddled and the more sensible admired the view. The next stop was at the entrance to Cotuit Harbour where the seaplane landed in "An Old Captivity". Sure enough, right on cue, a seaplane appeared in the distance. We waved and cheered but Donald Ross decided not to land that time. We then backtracked to Prince's Cove where Ross landed the seaplane.

Finally we were all invited for tea and cherry cake in Art & Joan's back garden. This was the best tea I drank all week and the home made cherry cake was absolutely delicious. Whether Art & Joan's neighbours had been forewarned of two bus loads of folks arriving in their street I don't know. However the tea and cake outdoors on a sunny fall afternoon provided a great finish to a superb day.

## Day 3.

I began the day with a presentation on "Shute, Burney, the Toraplane and Landfall" This brought together material from the archives with a film of the Toraplane (gliding torpedo) trials. I was delighted to share this research with fellow enthusiasts.

After tea break Babette Hills chaired a panel discussion on Shute's novels. The panellists were Dan Telfair, Laura Schneider and Andy Burgess. Each brought their own point of view to questions on books, characters and favourites and the lively discussion was only brought to a close by the call to lunch.

After lunch we continued with Robert Wester's presentation "A contemporary Interpretation of OnThe Beach", a thought provoking interpretation of perhaps Shute's most famous novel. Bob is a doctor of obstetrics and gynaecology and a member of the Colorado chapter. He and his daughter Annie attended the UK 2003 gathering.

After forcing more tea, scones, jam and cream down our reluctant throats we convened for the last presentation of the day. Andy Banta presented his research of Nevil Shute's unpublished novels, entitling his talk "The Alpha and Omega of Nevil Shute"



Fred Erisman - An Old Captivity and the Early Days of Atlantic flight



Lillian Ruiz - Kids reading Shute



Bob Wester and Andy Banta answering questions on "Who wants to be a Millionaire"



Andy Banta receives his "cheque" for \$250,000

A detailed study of Shute's manuscripts enabled Andy to analyse four early stories and also "Incident at Eucla", the book Shute was working on at the time of his death. Andy is a retired Professor of Engineering at California State University. He has extensively researched Shute's writings and this included a bus trip in Australia across the Nullarbor with a stop at Eucla.

And so to dinner - the Cape Codder Shore dinner with huge quantities of steamed lobster, clams, and a variety of salads. Again we were serenaded by Lillian and Gail with their selection of Shute related music. After dinner John Cooper (a.k.a Nevil Shute) presented us with a partial reading of "Vinland the Good" The cast, all dedicated Shuteists, and with limited rehearsal time, produced a memorable performance. The casts was as follows:- Nevil Shute - John Cooper; Prologue Narrator - Sally Rossetti; Thorgunna - Laura Schneider; Hekja - Linda Banta; Major Callender - Paul Shein; Leif Ericsson - Fred Erisman; Haki-Beall Fowler; Tryker - Philip Nixon; Projectionist - Candace Ruiz. The whole thing was enthusiastically performed and received a very warm reception.

The Colorado Chapter had organised a competition, displaying items relating to 10 of Shute's novels, 3 items per novel, the object being to guess the title. After the play the winning entries were drawn. Not surprisingly there were a number of top marks with winners getting to pick the an item to take home. From memory the Brits seemd to do well on this.

#### Day 4.

The first session was an innovation for a Gathering. Introduced by Margo Ganster, eleven of us read short extracts from favourite novels and then saying why they were our favourites. The readers and passages were as follows:-

John Anderson	In the Wet
Susan Batross	Most Secret
Art Cornell	Chequer Board
Graham Fricke	Trustee from the Toolroom
Steph Gallagher	A Town like Alice
Babette Hills	Trustee for the Toolroom
Alison Jenner	Landfall
Shoshana Knapp	What Happened to the Corbetts
Laura Schneider	A Town like Alice
Zia Telfair	Round the Bend
David Weir	Pastoral

All the readings were well practised, but who could forget Art's struggle with his emotions as he read a moving passage from "The Chequer Board"

After the tea break Shoshana Milgram-Knapp treated us to an excellent discourse on "The I in Nevil Shute writing: First person as Narration and Characterization" Shoshana is a eminent professor of English at Virginia State University. Her eloquent style and masterly analysis had the audience captivated.

A final lunch then on to the last presentation by David Weir entitled "The Norway in Nevil Shute: From Cornwall to Cape Cod by way of the northern Seas of Leif Ericsson". David talked about how Shute's choice of William Morris' "The Earthly Paradise" as a University prize was no casual choice but underlayed his search for his Nordic ancestry. David has the distinction of having made presentations at every Shute Gathering from the Centennial. He is a Professor of Management at Ceram in France.



Shutists waiting for the buses



A 150 year old Weeping Beech



Captain Bang-Hallet's House



The Pilgrim Monument



Photographs on the jetty



Provincetown Harbor



Nauset beach



Professor's paddle - others test the waters



Wonderstrand Way



The Entrance to Cotuit Bay



The Seaplane



Shutists at Cotuit



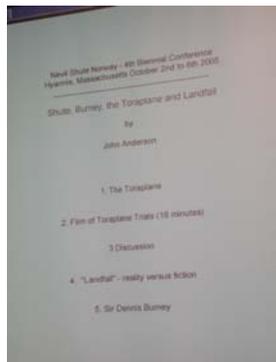
Prince's Cove

TEA AND CHERRY CAKE IN ART AND JOAN'S BACK GARDEN





The entire Gathering



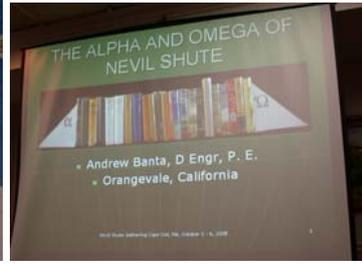
John Anderson - Shute, Borney the Toraplane and Landfall Babette Hills' Panel Discussion



Panellists Andy Burgess Laura Schneider and Dan Telfair



Bob Wester - A contemporary interpretation of On the Beach



Andy Banta - The Alpha and Omega of Nevil Shute



Gail Schoemaker and Lillian Ruiz serenade us Steph Gallagher and the Lobsters  
VINLAND THE GOOD



John Cooper - Producer



Laura Schneider as Thorgunna



Joe Accorocco  
as Boy 1



Fred Erisman and Phillip Nixon  
as Leif Eicsson and Tryker



Paul Shein  
as Major Callender



The cast of Vinland the Good



Colorado Chapter

Readings from favourite passages



Margo Ganster



John Anderson -In The Wet



Susan Batross- Most Secret



Art Cornell-The Chequer Board



Graham Fricke-Trustee from the Toolroom



Steph Gallagher- A Town Like Alice



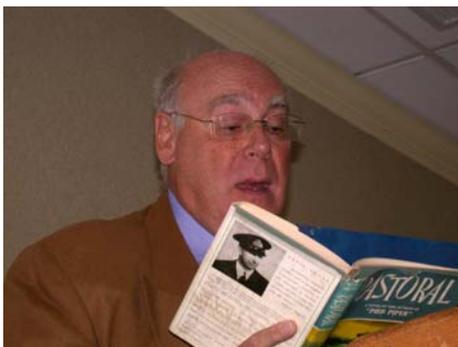
Alison Jenner- Landfall



Shoshana Milgram -What Happened to the Corbetts



Zia Telfair -Round the Bend



David Weir - Pastoral



Babette Hills -Trustee



Laura Schneider - A Town like Alice



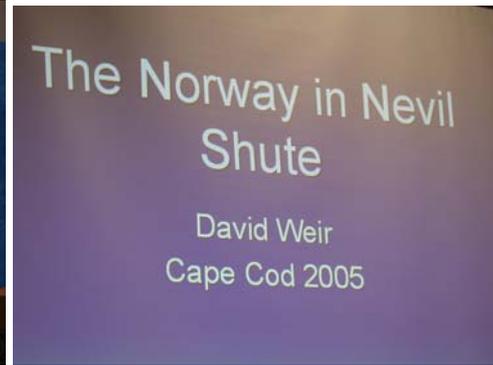
Shoshana Milgram-Knapp



- and a captivated audience



David Weir



The Norway in Nevil Shute



Barbara Niven



Tony Revell reciting "Art's Folly"



Steph and Dan close out the Gathering



Art and Joan receive our ovation

## DISPLAYS IN THE EXHIBIT ROOM



A model of the R-100 and its shed



Dust jackets



Model aircraft



The famous Haki and Hekja stone



Dust Jackets and archive material



Items for the 10 book quiz (Colorado chapter)



Andy Banta's research material

Before moving on to the closing of the Gathering, Barbara Niven gave an almost impromptu account of life in the Norway household at Langwarrin in the 1950's. Barbara is a college friend of Shirley Norway and made an impact by being sick on her first visit to Langwarrin, which caused her great embarrassment but amused "Mr Norway". Thereafter she could do no wrong in his eyes. Barbara was greatly admired for giving this first hand account, which was for many of us a highlight of the Gathering.

Dan and Steph closed out the Gathering. Everyone was in favour of another biennial gathering in 2007 and there was lobbying for this to be held in Alice Springs with Laura volunteering her services as co-ordinator for this.

It only remained for us warmly to thank Art, Joan and their helpers for putting on such a terrific event. We all had a wonderful time, each of carrying special memories home with us. I hope you enjoy this album and that it will help rekindle those memories.

Until the next time we meet.

Best Regards,

John Anderson  
November 2005

#### Acknowledgements.

Photographs were kindly provided by Steph Gallagher, Andy Banta, Gary Swinson, Joost Meulenbroek, Mike Meehan and John Anderson. I haven't individually credited each photograph, but my thanks to them for sharing their pictures.

Arts Folly,

Renamed:-

“An old Norse Saga,” – well, “A Saga for an Old Norse.”

Art Cornell a *Trustee from the Tool Room* and a friend of *Vinland the Good*, took a trip to Australia with his wife Joan. They visited *A Town like Alice* which is *Beyond the Black Stump*.

After this Art and Joan lead a *Chequer Board* existence making many *Pastoral* visits to family and friends. Art was like the *Pied Piper* to his grandchildren, who followed him everywhere especially *On the Beach*.

In 2003 Art and Joan were fed up in *An Old Captivity* at home and decided to take a holiday. Art organised the trip with *Slide Rule* precision. They set off *Along the Lonely Road* to visit *The Far Country*, England.

They left home *In the Wet*, keeping their plans *Most Secret*, only telling their travelling companions that they had hired a narrowboat from *Stephen Morris* of *Marazan* for *Pilotage* around Britian's Inland Waterways because he thought they were good *Seafarers*.

During the trip Art was steering the boat *Round the Bend* when he ran it violently aground, making *A Breaking Wave*. He made *Landfall* where there was *No Highway*. He was *So Distained* by his companions who shouted angrily “That was an *Ordeal*, remember *What happened to the Corbetts!* You could have killed us and that would have meant *A Requiem for a Wren!*”

Art eventually pacified his crew with a glass of beer in *The Rainbow and the Rose* Public House, before returning home via the *Ruined City*.