Stories and Perspectives from the Mind and Heart

NEVILLE CLOUTEN

Copyright © Neville Clouten 2022

The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of all facts and quotations cited in this book.

Proudly published and printed in Australia by
Signs Publishing
Warburton, Victoria.

This book was
Edited by Lauren Webb
Proofread by Nathan Brown
Cover design by Shane Winfield, based on a photograph taken by Neville Clouten of the interior of Thorncrown Chapel, Eureka Springs, Arkansas, by architect E. Fay Jones FAIA.
All photographs and illustrations are by the author, unless otherwise credited.
Typeset in Berkeley Book 12/15 pt

ISBN (print edition) 978 1 922373 82 3
ISBN (ebook edition) 978 1 922373 83 0
ISBN (audiobook edition) 978 1 922373 84 7

PREFACE

In 1955, the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto wrote: "There are many situations in life in which the organisation is too brutal; it is the task of the architect to give life a gentler structure."[1]

This statement still carries truth—if not more truth—today. The corporate model influences our thinking on finances, education, politics—and everything in between. It was the belief that architecture could give life a gentler structure that turned my attention towards paying more than lip service to designing for human activities.

The eight essays in this book tell stories from my life experience as a student, an architect, an academic, an artist and a traveller. Tied together by a common theme, the stories in each essay explore issues "of the mind"—as in my academic journey into research and teaching—or "from the heart"—touching emotions in the same way that art adds to the compass of life.

The first essay, on the Sydney Opera House, does both. As I commenced studies in architecture at the University of Sydney in the 1950s, the controversy around the Opera House gave me to understand the prevalence of the view that "art for art's sake" was definitely to be avoided.

Writing on the Sydney Opera House, the American architectural critic Lewis Mumford claimed that "the vaults serve no other purpose than that of demonstrating the aesthetic audacity of the designer."[2] In general, the Australian public seemed to agree. Many had little interest in mere art being built on the shore of Sydney Harbour. Instead, they were fascinated by the threat of out-of-control building costs and changes in political leadership. New South Wales government elections were beginning to be won and lost on practical issues surrounding the construction of the Opera House. The consensus seemed to be that the Opera House should be built

on the same basis as any commercial project.

Culturally competitive debate between Sydney and Melbourne, and the question of the population's preference for beaches or opera, was carried in newspaper opinion columns.

But in the midst of the turmoil, architect Robin Boyd wrote: "By accident, unexpectedly, reluctantly, Sydney is creating one of those heart-warming non-material ornaments of society which happen throughout history once a century or so."[3] And he was from Melbourne!

My life was enriched by being in Sydney during the first decade of the Opera House construction. Its influence projected me on a course that led to Europe, to further study and an academic career. These, in turn, shaped my life in other ways.

The importance of art and the emphasis on creativity within the design process are central to several essays. In others, an academic focus on research joins with a celebration of artistic quality. This is the case in the essay on Australian Aboriginal art. My interest in the scientific principles of obtaining measurements from photographs led to the experience of visiting galleries of rock paintings. A particular example near a large gallery of paintings in an isolated location in Cape York became symbolic for me.

In another essay, I describe my philosophical understanding of the importance of the three community pillars of home, church and school through examples of high-quality architecture I have visited.

The essay on Andrews University focuses on students in the Department of Architecture and design workshops. This essay also concludes with some examples of architecture—in this case churches that I consider to be of outstanding quality. I also suggest some principles that can guide in experiencing and designing appropriate church architecture.

One of the essays introduces our Kenyan daughter, Faith. She visited us in Australia in 2020. It was while she received lessons in piano and musical theory from a close friend in Martinsville, New South Wales, that the essays in this book were written with pen in hand.

For an hour and a half on two days each week, I drove to a special place nearby in one of the valleys of the Watagan hills. There I transferred indelible memories of art, architecture and travel onto paper, later fleshed

out with details from my diaries. But the memories of visiting building locations around the world provided a venue to think about more than architecture. As I took the opportunity to recluse myself amid the forest luxuries of grey eucalypts and bird symphonies, I reflected on my life's journeys.

Some experiences may read as happy coincidences. But there are times where there seems to be a better alternative—a larger plan for my life.

It is a pleasure to share these memories and reflections from my life journey with you.

---

1 Cited in Aarno Ruusuvuori (Editor), *Alvar Aalto* (Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1978), page 50.

2 "Architecture: The Fifth Facade," *Time*, December 10, 1965, page 86.

3 Robin Boyd, "Editorial: Introduction," *Cross-Section*, 157, November 1, 1965, page 3.

1
THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Wednesday, January 30, 1957. I had been accepted into the architecture program at the University of Sydney and on this day during my first week in the big city, the morning newspapers carried headlines that the winner of the Sydney Opera House competition had been announced.

Sir Eugene Goosens, conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, initiated the idea of a significant concert hall in 1947. The premier of New South Wales, J J Cahill, took up the charge and an international competition was held for the design of an opera house. Bennelong Point was the site chosen—remarkable in that it was a large area on the harbour close to Circular Quay. It was also remarkable as it was the location for Sydney's tram sheds.

The prize-winning design was by Danish architect, Jørn Utzon. A jury of four assessors had considered 217 entries from around the world and concluded their report: "The white sail-like forms of the shell vaults relate as naturally to the Harbour as the sails of its yachts."

I was not surprised to read that Jørn Utzon was the owner of a sailing boat back in Hellebaek, Denmark. The prospect of designing a major cultural building in a beautiful harbour setting half a world away—with year-round sailing—had taken hold of his imagination. More than this, he was a young architect interested in searching for poetic solutions to design problems.

As I entered that first year of study in architecture, I became aware that H Ingham Ashworth, dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sydney, had served as chairman of the Opera House competition jury. With him was lead juror Eero Saarinen from Cranbrook, Michigan, an architect whose roots were in Finland—a country seen as a significant leader in architectural design in the 1950s. The other assessors were Sir Leslie Martin

from Cambridge, England—the designer of 1952 Festival Hall in London—and the New South Wales government architect, Cobden Parks. The jurors' report issued a unanimous decision, but it was one that had not come easily—or without embarrassment.

Dean Ashworth was responsible for organising the competition entries so that the international architects on the jury could do their work of evaluation efficiently. One of his roles was to eliminate submissions that did not comply with the competition conditions. A specific requirement in the conditions was that architects should include in their submissions a rendering of the proposed building as seen from Sydney Harbour.

Dean Ashworth dutifully sorted the entries into two groups. Those that met the competition conditions were displayed on the main level of the Sydney Town Hall. Those that did not were taken to the basement—no longer in consideration. He would not waste the time of his fellow jurors. Utzon's entry was one of those that went to the basement. There was no rendering of the building from the harbour. Yet his design was not destined to remain in the discard pile.

Exactly how Utzon's design for the Opera House came to be considered with the compliant entries was the subject of many reports and rumours after the winner of the competition was announced. Newspapers and radio hosts wanted stories to share with a public who were sceptical of the design and suspicious that it would be a white elephant. One report given credence was that during the lunch break, Eero Saarinen visited the basement, pulled Utzon's submission from the stack of rejects and carried the drawings upstairs where the other three jurors had re-assembled.To his surprised associates he announced, "Gentlemen, this is the winner!" There could be little argument with the eminent juror.

With the selection of Utzon's submission for first prize, Dean Ashworth had to circumnavigate Utzon's failure to meet all the competition eligibility requirements. He secured the expertise of one of his faculty members to render the perspective of the building from the harbour that was missing from Utzon's submission. With a group of fellow students in the architecture program, I could look through the partly open door of the faculty member's office and see an incredible rendering of Utzon's Opera

House taking shape. It was this rendering that accompanied Utzon's drawings when they were later presented to the public as the winning design.

The London engineer Ove Arup joined the design team soon after the winner of the competition was announced. His skills would be needed. He later described Utzon's drawings for the competition as only sketches blown up photographically to the required size. He believed Utzon had thought a good deal about the competition, "visualising the site and scale, and arriving at his basic solution, but only in the last minute had he got down to making some drawings and he really thought it would be quite useless to send them in, and he nearly didn't."[1]

It was good that he did. Modern architecture was about to take a change in direction, and the strength of Utzon's ideas would become even more important in the following decades. In the 1950s, the foundation for functional architecture of the 1960s was being carefully laid. Form was said to follow function. It was unusual for an architect in 1957 to describe a building's design in poetic terms as Jørn Utzon did. He believed the building as a whole, with the shell vaults, had only one function—"to prepare the audience for a festival."

Critics were swift to dismiss the Sydney Opera House shell vaults—the white sail-like structures—as "art for art's sake." This was only the beginning of the criticism that would be levelled at both the design and the architect. Utzon had yet to work out how the freehand lines on the competition drawings could become structural segments of three-dimensional shell vaults, thereby making construction of the building possible. This proved to be a significant problem—requiring hundreds of hours of computer time and creative collaboration between Utzon and engineer Arup.

In fact, it was Utzon who found the answer. Arriving at London airport from Copenhagen, he announced to the waiting Arup, "I have the solution to the shells." Utzon took a wooden sphere from his briefcase, disassembled it and placed the pieces on the office table. They formed a model of the vaulted roof of the Opera House, with the geometry of the sphere keeping the same curvature for each segment of the vaults. With

this defined geometry, the building could be built.

During my five-year architecture program, we were taken on various field trips to significant buildings in Sydney, and we visited the Opera House more than any other building. The first part of construction was the piling—some 700 steel-cased shafts, almost a metre (3 feet) in diameter—which would support a platform as a visually strong base. The superstructure would later spring from this base. Spectators would sit on the platform, beneath the shell vaults, and participate in the completed work of art. Beneath the platform, every preparation for the opera production would be made.

The Sydney Opera House, completed in 1973. Architect: Jørn Utzon.

On our Opera House field trips, we were introduced to aspects of construction, including high-tensile steel, and off-the-form concrete perfected by labourers from Italy. In addition to the field trips, I periodically walked to the viewing platform at the Sydney Opera House site. The concrete base of the building was starting to appear like a giant open-air Greek theatre.

I collected all the written material I could find concerning the Opera House—the file of press cuttings alone became several inches thick. One of the most common headings for a news article about the construction was "Blunder." On one front page, the lettering for this word was more than five centimetres (two inches) high. All headlines were designed to catch the public's attention. Here are a few examples:

"Blunder! Govt. loses control of Opera House"

"Behind the Opera House blunder"

“Oops, look what’s happened now!”
“The great Opera House controversy”
“The most comic Opera House”

This last heading serves to introduce an extensive body of cartoons. An early example was of a whale in the shape of the building accepting loads of pound notes into the openings of the shell vaults. The caption quoted Dean Ashworth, “We all know that a building today is never built for what you say it is going to cost.” That was when the cost estimate was $4 million. In the decade following, it rose first to $50 million, then to more than $100 million.

Not all the cartoons were critical of the project. George Molnar, a member of the architecture faculty at the University of Sydney, strongly supported Jørn Utzon during the continuing controversies at the Opera House. Some of his best cartoons were insightful portrayals of labour strikes, cost overruns and the public’s ignorance of the significance of one of the world’s great buildings being created at Sydney’s front door.

George Molnar was the final-year studio teacher. I was fortunate to attend his design lectures and my admiration for him expanded way beyond his humour in cartoons and cryptic captions. His German education revealed itself in his accent, and I found that he loved the northern parts of Europe as well as Mediterranean countries. He particularly appreciated the architecture of Alvar Aalto in Finland.

“But why have an inside? We’ll never use it.” A cartoon by George Molnar, which

appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald *in March, 1966. Reproduced with permission.*

Together with other students, I would often watch as he strode back and forth across the quadrangle between the Great Hall and the old Fisher Library. Struck by inspiration, he would suddenly stop and head back to his office. We watched at a distance as he effortlessly drew figures on paper. Then we looked for the result in the following morning's newspaper.

Molnar's ability to come to the essence of an idea with minimal line-work was exemplary. For the cover of an issue of the *Current Affairs Bulletin* he created a symbol of the Opera House: a canary singing in a yellow cage with two hands sheltering it, as if it was under a vaulted ceiling.

Despite the controversy that surrounded the project, Jørn Utzon held to his poetic descriptions of "the dramatic moments" that would connect views of the Opera House roofs from the Sydney Harbour Bridge with patrons' entry to the building and experiences within. His response to media criticism was to speak of the building as a whole. He told of how the shell vaults would tie the spectator's view of the building to the drama produced inside. A building is usually referred to as having four facades—or sides—but Utzon consistently referred to the view of the shell vaults from above as the "fifth facade."

The public was yet to understand what the architect meant by his vision for a building that would "prepare the audience for a festival."

Defending the Opera House

Before leaving the University of Sydney, I sat the final examinations for the Bachelor of Architecture degree. The venue was the Great Hall of the university, and we sat beneath the hammer beam trusses replicated from Cambridge in England.

The last examination was in professional practice and as I entered the Great Hall, I noticed an advertisement pinned to the door. It was for a job of six months' duration. The heading was "Sydney Opera House: Researcher and Official Guide." I wrote down the telephone number and called it after the examination.

At the interview, concern was expressed that media criticism had reached

an all-time high. The Stage One platform was completed and a fabrication plant for casting the sections of the shell vaults was in production on site. Stage Two—the erection of these vault segments—had not yet begun. Even though the technology and its applications to construction were new to the world, it was seen as yet another delay in the project and as evidence of further incompetence on the part of the government's leadership.

Then the stage director for the Royal Opera House in Covent Gardens arrived from London. At the time, anyone with opera or theatre production credentials was met at Sydney airport and offered a microphone to comment on the Opera House. There followed another scathing criticism, which was duly published.

The New South Wales government public relations committee decided it was time to stop the deluge of misinformation. They hurriedly composed the advertisement I had seen at the entrance of the Great Hall. To avoid any apparent conflict of interest, it was decided that the engineer, Ove Arup, would pay the salary for the position, but the person appointed would work closely with the government committee and with Jørn Utzon.

I was offered the position. It was an honour to have my first post-graduation job in research and public relations—especially at the Sydney Opera House. I began by studying the backstage dimensions of all major opera houses around the world. This type of objective information was important to make comparisons with Sydney's project. Then there was a need to know what the completed building would be like—and who better to tell of this than Jørn Utzon.

The state government's idea proved to be a good one. Newspaper and magazine readers, radio listeners and television viewers were hungry for objective information about the project from a third-party source. There was also the opportunity to guide dignitaries and the public on the building site in construction downtime.

Four public tours each weekday for the next few months were quickly filled, and I found myself becoming the mouthpiece for the project. In addition to objective information, there was the opportunity to share the anticipated experiences of patrons who would visit the completed building. My descriptions of the spatial sequences from arrival at the

ceremonial stairs to being seated in one of the auditoria were directly obtained from conversations with Jørn Utzon. I came to appreciate both his creativity and passion.

Scandinavia calls us

The influence of university teachers who encouraged travel, combined with my experience with Utzon's Opera House project, made it important to look for work abroad. So, my wife Norene and I made definite plans to go to Europe by ship at the end of my term in the Opera House position and gain architectural experience in Scandinavia.

I heard from architectural associates that the ambassador from Denmark was returning to his homeland on the same ship on which we were booked. The long journey was likely to provide opportunities to make his acquaintance, and I was hopeful he might provide contacts in Denmark.

A group of 12 family and friends crowded into our cabin—cabin 417—on the Italian ship *Fair Sky* on June 4, 1963. Then all visitors were required to return to shore, and we held on to streamers as the ship slowly moved from the wharf. Norene and I stayed outside for the few minutes it took to leave Circular Quay and sail past the monumental base of the Sydney Opera House. Then we turned our backs on the lights of Sydney Harbour and went to dinner.

Ships coming to Australia in the 1960s were crowded with immigrants, but the return itinerary to Europe was more like an early version of a cruise ship. The report from my associates that the ambassador from Denmark would be on the *Fair Sky* proved true. We met the honourable gentleman playing quoits on the upper deck. His friendship with Jørn Utzon, my work at the Opera House and my interest in working for an architect in Denmark were reason enough for good conversations.

Five weeks later, we arrived at Naples and boarded a train bound for Paris. A Renault car with tourist plates was awaiting our arrival. For three months, we camped in central and southern Europe. Then we began to see signs that summer was beginning to end. We noticed this particularly as we collected our daily supply of fruit and vegetables at the open-air markets. We knew winter was coming, but our lack of experience made us unaware

of the time when it would reach the northern reaches of Europe. We started to drive north, through Switzerland, to the East German border.

At this border, the customs official seemed interested in a portfolio of architectural drawings, which were kept beneath our belongings in the back of the Renault. The array of plans, sections, elevations and perspectives was placed against a fence and scrutinised as if they represented some future incursion of modern architecture into the Soviet bloc.

Fortunately, they returned them to us—which was important. The architectural portfolio was intended to enable me to find work in an architectural office in Denmark. Danish design was recognised for its leadership in the 1950s and into the 60s. But Sweden was already overtaking it.

We crossed on a ferry to Gedser in southern Denmark and, as darkness fell, we found a deserted campground. The proprietor was surprised to see us the next morning—perhaps because of the cold temperature—but he dutifully collected the fee. We continued north to Copenhagen.

We decided that the first point of call would be the office of the Danish Society of Architects to obtain a list of architectural offices in Copenhagen. In response to my inquiries, the secretary told me what I already knew. Obtaining work with an architect in Denmark would be difficult—many foreign architects were wanting the experience. There was also a shortage of apartments in Copenhagen. The secretary concluded her appraisal of conditions not being favourable to foreign architects with a reference to the cost of car registration in Denmark.

It was all just as we had been told. I returned to the car and shared a report of the conversation with Norene. Suddenly, what we had thought to be our journey's end was superseded by the idea that perhaps Sweden—and Stockholm in particular—was our new destination. We had been in Copenhagen for only a couple of hours. We conferenced for a few minutes and pointed the car in the direction of Sweden.

It was not that we expected that finding work in an architect's office in Stockholm would be easy. Or that housing would be more attainable, or less expensive. As we discussed our options, it simply felt good that

Stockholm would be our home.

It was already late in the day when we crossed by ferry from Helsingor, Denmark, to Halsingborg, Sweden. Then we drove through the night the 560 kilometres (350 miles) from the ferry crossing to Stockholm. The new day was Friday, October 4, and we celebrated our arrival in Stockholm by staying at a hotel in the city centre. Camping was over—for now.

It was time to prepare for winter and work. That meant finding an apartment and the right architect's office. But that agenda must wait until after Sabbath. We carried a couple of bags into the hotel room, commented on how wonderful it was to be in the security of Scandinavia, then sighed, showered and slept.

The next morning, we confirmed at the hotel reception how to find our way to the *Adventkyrkan*—the Stockholm Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was not far away, but it was more comfortable to drive, using the car that had become so familiar to us during the past three months.

We were welcomed at the door of the church, and almost immediately an American couple introduced themselves and invited us to sit with them. Sitting together also allowed us to benefit from the Swedish church member who translated the texts and sermon into English during the service.

Our new American friends, Dr "Reggie" Register and his wife Helen from Loma Linda University, California, graciously invited us to their apartment for lunch. We followed them across the bridge to the island of Lidingo and entered the second floor of what appeared to be a single-family dwelling. We learned that they had rented the second floor of the house for the duration of the academic year and that the owners were out of town for a few weeks. After our long journey, it was wonderful to relax in the luxury of a Swedish home with English-speaking hosts.

Then they shocked us with an invitation.

"You should come and stay with us," they said. "There's a small apartment in the attic. It will be fine with the owners."

We felt it would be the height of indecency to move into a house when we had not met the owners, and it seemed to us to be audacious for the renters to offer the owner's attic apartment. We thanked Reggie and Helen

for their kind offer and we declined.

But that night our car was broken into, and we were left with only a portfolio of architectural drawings and the clothes we had taken to the hotel room. We thought the better of the Registers' offer.

The invitation to drop in anytime was acted on that first Sunday morning in Stockholm. We simply said, "If the offer to stay in the apartment upstairs is still open, we'd like to accept it." The explanation was simple, as was the move in. We had little to carry up the stairs.

Two activities occupied the next two weeks. One was apartment hunting; the other was job hunting.

Real estate rentals were no more available in Stockholm than in Copenhagen, but we were told that the design and comfort standards were so high that we could accept an apartment on the telephone, sight unseen. We did not get the opportunity to test this, however, for there was always a long waiting list. We were serious about apartment hunting for we did not want to impose unduly on Reggie and Helen's hospitality or their vacationing landlord.

Finally, we found a small *stuga*—a cabin—in a forest. It was a red wooden summer cottage, with a hand-operated water pump looking like a piece of sculpture in the front yard. There were no other landscape elements except the surrounding pine forest. Posters of dangerous mushrooms hung in the entry porch, but there were no mushrooms in sight. It was now mid-October and the locals spoke of the approaching winter. We had already noticed that the days were growing shorter.

With our accommodation settled for the time, we could focus on job hunting. Our *stuga* was located on a spur of the Stockholm archipelago, quite a distance from the city. That meant our little Renault tracked back and forth each day as I took my portfolio of drawings to a select group of architectural offices.

A book on new Swedish architecture provided the basis for investigating the work of leading architects. Each day, I would select an architect, then Norene and I would visit some examples of the architect's work, obtain the address of their office from the Swedish Society of Architects, and find our way to the office doorstep.

I soon discovered that there was quite a group of foreign architects wanting to work in Stockholm. They also carried portfolios of their design work, and I began to recognise familiar faces as we met on the way in or out of architects' offices.

It did not much matter who was coming or going. If the office had work and needed help, their space was filled quickly. If there was insufficient work on the drawing boards, the principal architect had better things to do than interview.

It was a discouraging few weeks and we began to consider abandoning the Scandinavian dream and heading for London.

Help finding work in Sweden

Then we met Herbert Blomstedt. He had been conducting the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra in the Soviet Union. Already highly recognised, he travelled extensively as a guest conductor to orchestras in Europe. Home for the weekend, he attended the Stockholm Adventist Church where we were introduced.

"So, you're an architect from Australia," he said. "Do you know Jørn Utzon?"

He followed my affirmative answer with a second question.

"You want to work for an architect in Stockholm?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"Would the office of Gösta Åbergh be of interest?"

Gösta Åbergh!

Before I had time to swallow, he went on to tell how, as principal conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, he had participated in approving the competition conditions for the design of a new concert hall in Norway's capital. It was an architectural competition for Scandinavian architects held at approximately the same time as the competition for the Sydney Opera House design. The Oslo project had been shelved for several years so that issues of a small triangular site and funding could be addressed. Now the project had been given the green light. As a member of the competition jury, Maestro Blomstedt knew the architect who had won first prize—Gösta Åbergh.

"I will telephone Gösta on Monday morning and mention that I met you. You should telephone him around two o'clock Monday afternoon."

He handed me a telephone number. And he was gone.

The next day was spent visiting the recent work of the Åbergh Arkitektkontor—Gösta Åbergh's practice office. It was not only an office I wanted to join—I was excited by the possibility of working on another major cultural commission obtained through competition.

I telephoned Gösta as recommended and he invited me to come and visit. The office address he gave brought me to a lake at Sköndal. A large white 18th-century house—the family home—was close to the lake. A short distance away was a 17th-century red wooden two-storey building. On the ground floor was a reception space, Gösta's office, a meeting room and a small woodshop for making models. There were four rooms upstairs. Each accommodated the workplaces of two architects.

As I entered the reception area, Gösta came to meet me and repeated Herbert Blomstedt's words.

"Hello," he said. "You're from Australia. Do you know Jørn Utzon?"

Well, yes, I did. I told him briefly of my work at the Sydney Opera House and the discussions I had had with Utzon. We talked for a while, then I opened my portfolio. He scanned through it, then took me to the one free space upstairs. There I met Ole, a Norwegian architect. We shook hands.

I was hired! Ole's workplace—now also mine—had a window to the lake.

The Registers brought more good news to church the following weekend—a potential lead in our quest for accommodation. They told us of a Swedish couple who were friends with one of their colleagues in the United States. We were taken to their friends' home for a social visit and before we left, this couple had opened both their hearts and their attic to us. The attic apartment had a small living space, bedroom and bath. We would share their kitchen.

The offer was well timed—the summer *stuga* in the pine forest was not suitable for habitation in winter. We moved out as the first heavy snow began to fall. Better yet, our new home was not far from the design office where I would work, and Norene could now begin a serious search for work as a physiotherapist at a regional hospital.

By the end of November, we had both settled into work. Our little Renault provided transportation from our apartment to the railway station where Norene caught a train to the hospital, then I drove along country roads to Gösta Åbergh's office on the lake. Life was good.

We saw the daylight hours shrink as the Christmas season approached and we enjoyed the snow, even if there were moments when our small car proved to be more of a sled than expected.

A "strange guy" who changed our lives

Our appreciation for the company of Reggie and Helen continued to grow, and we became comfortable dropping in to see them whenever we chose to take a drive to the island of Lidingo. One Sunday afternoon in January, our visit to the Registers coincided with that of another couple, the Wallers. They were from Oklahoma and current residents of the Wenigren Center, a community of academics spending a year in research at Stockholm. Professor Waller was a biochemist.

When I was introduced as an architect, Professor Waller mentioned that an American architect and his wife were also living in the Wenigren Center.

"He's from Ohio State. A strange guy."

The architecture conversation stopped when it was discovered that we shared an interest in classical music. Professor Waller focused on this.

"There's a string quartet concert at the Wenigren Center in a week or two. Would you like to come?"

We would. And did.

During the concert interval, Professor Waller pointed out the professor of architecture from Ohio State University. His name was Perry Borchers. We were invited to his apartment after the concert and while his wife, Myra, organised refreshments, Perry took me to his study and put a stereoscope in front of me. This optical instrument has two lenses for viewing pairs of photographs—the left eye sees a picture that is taken to the left of one that is seen by the right eye. The brain does the rest and provides a spatial (three-dimensional) model of what was photographed—in this case impressive interiors of Baroque architecture. I found all the spatial models to be exciting, and my response must have been in sharp contrast to the

average visitor to the Borchers' apartment—and definitely more supportive than the response from a certain biochemist.

I found Perry Borchers to be a precise academic and an architect with a passion for research in photogrammetry—the science of obtaining measurements from three-dimensional models of space.

Time passed quickly. Weeks turned into months, and winter to spring. Norene and I made travel plans for the summer. We would drive north through Norway, cross from the North Cape to Finland, drive down to Helsinki and on through the Soviet Union to Vienna. We would camp, and we obtained the necessary permissions from Intourist—the official tourist office in the Soviet Union—to do so.

In general, our travel eventuated according to plan. However, we were delayed for a week in Hammerfest, Norway, due to a collision we had with a truck on the crest of the narrow road. We were towed into Hammerfest and had to wait until the Norwegian coastal ship *Hurtigruten* brought spare parts for the Renault.

Fortunately, we were able to adjust the times of the permit to stay in campgrounds in the Soviet Union. Our last night in the West was within sight of the border towers. Then we crossed and headed for Leningrad.

We had a problem a few days later. We were camping in a Moscow campground, and our little tent seemed rather vulnerable in protecting our few valuables while we went sightseeing. We chose to place our better clothes, slides, books and Norene's souvenir Swedish folk dress underneath the seats of the car. We parked in Marx Prospekt and thought we had successfully exchanged greetings with the policeman directing traffic. Then we visited the Kremlin. When we returned, the policeman was still there. Our valuables were not.

The policeman assisted in directing us to the police station. There we were told we must be mistaken.

"There is no crime in the Soviet Union."

We eventually resorted to contacting the Australian Embassy and received a statement to the effect that it was reported to them that our belongings were stolen. It was a useful document when we later filed a claim with our insurance company.

The delay of several days waiting for a report of the theft needed to be reported to Intourist, and we received new dates for staying at campgrounds between Moscow, Minsk and Smolensk on the way to the Polish border. We enjoyed our travels, although we discovered a problem after arriving at the Poland–Czechoslovakia border. Due to the delays, our visa to Czechoslovakia, as it was known in those days, had expired. We had to return to Warsaw and wait through a public holiday to apply for a new visa. Then we found we could only obtain a transit visa to cross Czechoslovakia in no more than 24 hours. That is what we did.

We arrived in Vienna in the early hours of Friday, August 15, 1964. The date was significant, but we did not know that yet.

On arrival, we parked our car outside the American Express office and waited for it to open at 9 am. In the 1960s, the American Express office would hold mail until it was collected, so before our summer's travels we had given the address of the Vienna office to those with whom we were in correspondence. We were eager to hear news—particularly from our parents in Australia.

We collected quite a stack of mail. One envelope was longer than the rest and was completely unexpected. It carried the logo of Ohio State University. We opened it and read its message in disbelief. On the recommendation of Professor Perry Borchers, I was offered a teaching position for two years. The director of the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture outlined that I would teach in the first-year design studio and supervise fifth-year thesis projects. Our surprise was heightened by the concluding line:

"This offer will be held for you until August 15, 1964."

That day! A significant day, indeed.

Norene and I headed for the hills above Vienna. We re-read the Ohio State letter and read our mail from Australia. We thought and we prayed. Then we found an office where we could send a telegram of acceptance.

The Ohio State University is a Land Grant institution, which meant that salaries were paid only to those who had taken the American oath of allegiance. Accordingly, we decided to go to the American Embassy in Munich—our next destination after Vienna. The officer there slowed us

End of product sample

This product is available at:

AdventistBookCentre.com.au