



## *Life and Letters*



# THINKING ABOUT PERTH

Professor Walter Murdoch made a cautious approach the other day to that elusive thing, "the Australian way of life," zoomed away like the intellectual flying saucer that he is to discuss life on this planet as a whole, and then finished up most adroitly where he began.

For one reader, at least, this brief and breath-taking flight ended with the essayist's dropping him right at the parish pump, where he was left pondering whether Perth can claim "a way of life" of its own.

Certainly on a summer's morning on the wide pavements of St. George's-terrace there is something in the air—in the unhurried flow of the current of life, in the feeling of being

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By "SINGAPOREAN"

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able to step in a moment from Big Business to restful park-lands and Perth Water, in the

lands and Perth Water, in the expressions on the face of humanity (different, we like to think, from those to be seen in the teeming metropolitan cities on the other side of the Nullarbor), in the pretty frocks and faces of the girls, and in many other signs of wholesome and healthy and happy living—in all this, we claim, there is something that many a larger and more famous city has not got.

Again, the colourful and animated spectacle on our waterfront of Langley Park and the Esplanade on a Saturday afternoon in winter, with a dozen

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different games going on, of every kind and code, and for the youth of both sexes, is characteristic of Perth at its best.

## **Varied Sports**

Newcomers from overseas, if not from the Eastern States are always struck by the great extent and variety of amateur sport in Perth, and especially the number of girls' sporting and athletic clubs; and they say, too, that the people of Perth are peculiarly favoured in the number of playing fields and parks that their forbears have bequeathed them through-

have bequeathed them throughout the suburbs.

Above all, what the newcomer from overseas senses more than anything else in Perth is its sunny serenity and peacefulness, its detachment and remoteness from those storm centres of Europe and Asia where men's thoughts are turning increasingly to the stark alternatives of human annihilation or survival in the atomic era.

## **Prospect**

This is so in Perth, and it is the precious and well nigh unique heritage of over a century untouched by direct contact with war. But is it realistic any longer?

When we think of the possibilities of long-range submarines and guided missiles and atomic warheads in relation to the target that will be offered by Kwinana, our cherished illusions vanish like wisps of cloud driven by ocean gales over the Darling Range.