

# The Southern Yarn

September 2015

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

## downundercalendar

### SEPTEMBER

*Wine and Cheese*  
*Saturday 12th September, 7pm*  
*Scandinavian Cultural Centre,*  
*764 Erin St.*

We get back in the groove with this favourite event. There will also be an opportunity to view the video of our historic ANZAC Day ceremony.

### OCTOBER

*Formal Dinner*  
*Saturday, October 24th 6pm*  
*Scandinavian Cultural Centre,*  
*764 Erin St.*

This accessible venue proved popular last year. Bonne Cuisine by Michael will be providing the culinary artistry. Please INVITE YOUR FRIENDS to join us.

### NOVEMBER

*AGM*  
*Friday, November 27th*  
*Scandinavian Cultural Centre,*  
*764 Erin St.*

Details to follow..

### DECEMBER

*Children's Christmas Party*  
*Saturday, December 5th*

Details to follow..

### RSVP

If you let us know you are coming, we can be ready for you! RSVP to (204) 487-0067 or [social@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:social@downunderclub.mb.ca).

### Advertise in The Southern Yarn.

Contact Jenny (228-9959, [info@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:info@downunderclub.mb.ca)) for all the rates. Send your submission by email to [info@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:info@downunderclub.mb.ca) or mail to PO Box 1655, Stn Main, Winnipeg MB R3C 2Z6.



Familiar faces and guests from high places. **Top photo:** Murray Burt, Jenny Gates, Catherine Bowering, New Zealand High Commissioner Simon Tucker, Liz Hydesmith, Gordon Keatch, Penny Hetcher, Judy and Charlie Powell and Peter Munn. **Lower photo:** Ian Bowering, Australian Deputy High Commissioner Adrian Morrison, Liz Hydesmith, Lynley Davidson and Judy Powell.

## The High Commissions visit

In the past few months, members of the DUCW got to know representatives from the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions in Ottawa.

On April 22, a group of us met with Simon Tucker, the New Zealand High Commissioner, at the Radisson Hotel downtown. Simon was visiting Winnipeg and meeting with local folks before heading west.

And then on June 8, we met with Adrian Morrison, the Deputy Australian High Commissioner, downtown at The Met. Adrian was meeting with the Winnipeg Chamber and

then heading to Investors Group Field to watch Australia's Matildas play in the FIFA Women's World Cup.

Both were excellent opportunities to meet the HCs, hear what's happening in Ottawa and beyond, and to let them know what the DUCW is all about.

We look forward to welcoming Tony Negus, the Australian High Commissioner, in the near future.

Thanks to those who were able to join us in warmly welcoming Simon and Adrian to our part of the country.

online



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## editorially yours

Charlie Powell



G'day -

Gordon Keatch was coaxed out of retirement and jumped (not literally) at the opportunity to interview some new members - the Goffi family - meet them in "Getting to know .." on p. 4.

We used to have pet budgerigars when growing up. Obviously many people still do - they are third behind dogs and cats as the world's most popular pet. Budgies belong to the parrot family. Their popularity and the common sight of so many of their various cousins throughout Australia (bush and suburbs) probably result in a false sense of the species wellbeing. Truth is many members are critically endangered. So this month I have featured a few in this month's "Birds I view" p.6. Sadly, despite our pride in our unique wildlife, Australia actually has the highest extinction rate of any nation.

Thank you to contributors this month: Jenny, Gordon, Ed Powell, Roger Livsey, Peter, Brian and Murray.

Enjoy!

## Young Kiwi film-maker wins big in Japan

Tomairangi Harvey, 12, has become the youngest recipient of an award in the 25-year history of the Japan Wildlife Film Festival, held in Tokyo.



Tomairangi, from Christchurch, picked up the Best Young Film-maker gong for her short film Te Ao o te Tuturuatu (The World of the Shore Dotterel) on Monday.

It features colourful drawings she made of the New Zealand shore dotterel, or shore plover, and a story about how it came to be endangered and living primarily in the predator-free Chatham Islands.

A feature of Tomairangi's film is that she narrates the story in te reo Maori. [More]

This summer has seen a mix of heat and rain. Both are good in moderation, but I take objection when rain ruins a game of golf. Which was the case recently when we had to cancel the DUCW golf tournament scheduled for The Players course on August 22nd. Over the years, we have held what is a fairly small tournament, on different golf courses, for members of the club. We offer a choice of playing 18 or 9 holes, to cater to those who don't play so often. So all skill levels are catered for, no one gets too serious, and refreshments always taste good after the game. But Mother Nature came to play this year, and even though there still seemed to be some hope of decent weather



## president's ramblings

Peter Munn

at the start of the week, the forecast degenerated each ensuing day, and we eventually cancelled the tournament on the evening before. Which was a good thing, as 4 inches of rain fell on the course on the Saturday. It reminded me of the movie "Caddyshack", and Bill Murray's quote as Carl Spackler, "I'd keep playing, I don't think the heavy stuff's gonna come down for quite a while."

Enjoy the rest of the summer  
Peter

An overgrown Australian merino sheep affectionately named Chris has set a new unofficial world record following a hair cut from five shearers.

It risked death because it was so woolly from living in the wild for several years. More than 40kg (88lb) of wool was removed in what the RSPCA says is the heaviest wool haul from one shearing.

In 2004, Shrek the New Zealand sheep was found after six years on the loose. The animal - also a merino - later lost his giant 27kg (60lb) fleece in a televised shearing broadcast live around the world. [More]



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## OK, get back to work...

The cost to Australia's economy of alcohol and other drug related (AOD) absenteeism has soared from \$1.2bn in 2001 to more than \$3bn, according to analysis published by Flinders University's National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA). "Often people will have a lot to drink on Friday or Saturday and then have diarrhoea or gastro type symptoms on a Monday morning that are a direct result of the alcohol, but they don't connect these with their drinking," said Professor Ann Roche, lead author of the study. [More]



## Speaking of addiction...

Based on a 40,000 person survey, Australian diets are not making the grade with an addiction to junk food largely to blame, according to findings from the CSIRO Healthy Diet Score Survey.

The country's diet quality was given a rating of 61 on a 100-point scale when assessed using the CSIRO Healthy Diet Score - a scientifically validated survey

which assesses people's diet quality against the Australian Dietary Guidelines. [More]

## Selling Australia

Reuters reports that Australia has tightened rules requiring overseas investors to declare holdings of agricultural land in order to strengthen oversight, amid concerns that Australia is losing control of its own food security.

Foreign ownership of Australian land has become a touchy issue. Official estimates put foreign ownership at 10 percent, but there are concerns that it is far higher.



Since July 1 foreign owners are required to declare their interests with the country's tax office. The tax office will collect information on the location and size of property, size of interest acquired and country of origin of the foreign investor.

The information will be entered in a national register that will be made available to the public. [More]

## newszealand

source: NZ Herald, unless otherwise noted

## Dambusters pilot Les Munro

The last surviving Dambusters pilot, Les Munro, has died at the age of 96, the New Zealand Bomber Command Association has said.

Sqn Ldr Munro died in hospital in his native New Zealand on



Tuesday following heart problems, the association said.

The legendary World War Two Dambusters operation flew from RAF Scampton, near Lincoln, in 1943 and successfully used "bouncing bombs" to attack German dams.

There are now only two surviving crew members of the Dambusters missions.

Out of 133 crew, only 77 returned. [More]

## NZ company looks to Montana to help reduce car crashes

The New Zealand manufacturer of a new, ice-road warning technology has selected a Montana firm to represent the innovative device in the United States.

Solar Bright Limited of Christchurch has selected Angry Minnow Marketing, LLC of Bozeman to direct the U.S. market development of PATeye™, a real-time visual warning system that alerts motorists to ice-road conditions. Ideally suited for use on roads, bridges, parking facilities and sidewalks, the solar-powered device detects the formation of frost and illuminates a blue LED flashing light, which alerts motorists that road surface conditions are ripe for ice formation.

On average in the United States, icy roads cause 154,580 crashes per year resulting in 45,133 injuries and 580 fatalities (Source: Ten-year averages from 2002 to 2012 analysed by Booz Allen Hamilton, based on NHTSA data). [More]



## Travelling Cook Strait, by ferry?

Were you on the Santa Regina? She was Blueridge's first, starting the run in 2002, but has now been replaced by Strait Feronia. Perhaps you would like to tell us your story. [More]

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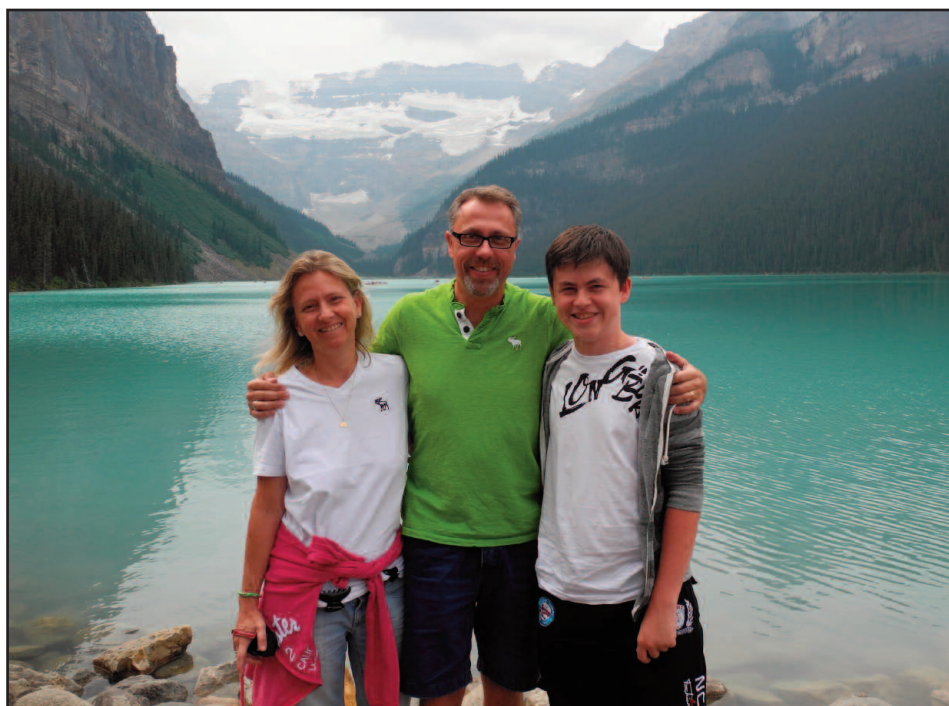
## Emmanuel, Christine and Thomas Goffi

Most Yarn readers will know that after spending 15 years editing a column called 'getting to know', which highlighted new and older members, I decided to retire last year. Well, Charlie Powell had different ideas and urged me to write another. So, here it is.

Emmanuel's father moved around Europe quite a bit, and Emmanuel was born on the way in Switzerland to his French-born mother. He went to school in Montpellier in the south of France, just west of Marseilles, completing his Bachelor's Degree. This qualified him for a job at McDonald's! He also did a stint with IBM before joining the French Air Force, where for eight years, he was an N.C.O. Electrical Technician. For the next 14 years, he was a Captain in International Relations – drones, robots and military ethics.

Emmanuel went on to earn a Master's Degree in France, and during that time, was required to spend one semester outside the country. He chose Australia and spent six months at the University of Queensland.

He holds two Master's degrees in Political Sciences, and is currently working on a PhD from France. This requires a thesis that is taking up most of his spare time (which was his reply to my question about any hobbies, sports, etc., he might enjoy.)



Christine was born in Maisons-Alfort, near Paris. Her father was from London, England, and moved to the south of France. She also served in the Air Force for 20 years as an N.C.O. Administrative Assistant. It was during her time in the military that she met Emmanuel, and they were married in France in 1996.

Their son, Thomas, now 15, is with them in Winnipeg and attends an all-French School in St. Vital. He plays basketball and the drums.

The family came to Winnipeg in August 2014. Why? Emmanuel applied for work at several institutions and the only offers were from U of Winnipeg and U of Manitoba. He chose U of M, and for the past year, has been teaching International Relations and Security Studies. Next year, he will be at Brandon University as well.

The family has travelled extensively – San Diego, Texas, Washington (D.C.), Colorado Springs, West Point, New York, Boston, Florida, Los Angeles and Seattle in the US; Vancouver, Calgary, Banff and Montreal in Canada; Sydney and Melbourne in Australia; and Japan, Israel, Spain, Germany, Qatar and Oman. They hope to stay in Canada for several years, with a final destination in Australia.

Emmanuel joined the DUCW following our 100th ANZAC Day service at which he was a panelist in the roundtable discussions that followed.

We look forward to meeting them at some of our functions.

Gordon Keatch

### Photo contest

The DUCW is holding a photo contest and invites all members to take their best shot. We will be choosing the best six (6) images to use for our Club cards. We are looking for images that relate in some way to the following themes: Australian scene; New Zealand scene; celebration; bereavement; general; miscellaneous. Details in last Month's Yarn and online. The contest will run from August 1 until December 31, 2015. Any questions? [info@downunder-club.mb.ca](mailto:info@downunder-club.mb.ca) or 204-228-9959.

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## Tuvalu looks to Aus, NZ as water rises

Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of Tuvalu says his country is considering buying land in New Zealand and Australia to grow food and prepare the population to migrate as the seas slowly claim the islands.

Tuvalu and Kiribati both say upcoming climate talks in Paris are vital as rising sea levels threaten their existence.

Fourteen Pacific Island nations have been meeting in Jaipur in India to discuss the issue. Sopoaga says failure is not an option. He says the nation may be able to purchase land elsewhere.

However, he says that won't stop climate change and its impact on Tuvalu, whose nine coral atolls are home to about 11,000 people.

Australia was viewed as easy entry point for Cold War Russian mole

A Russian "mole" infiltrated Australia's spy agency during the height of the Cold War, according to a British-born Australian intelligence agent who has revealed her concerns for the first time.

Molly Sasson, 92, worked for the Royal Air Force intelligence and MI5 before moving to Australia to work for ASIO the domestic spy agency. She has now gone public with her claims that a spy infiltrated ASIO in the 1970s but the agency ignored warnings from its own operatives and from the CIA station chief in Canberra.

It is believed Russia considered Australia an easier path to accessing Western intelligence than via agencies in the US or Britain. –Source: The Telegraph

## Kiwis hiring spies, not Bond types

New Zealand's spy boss Rebecca Kitteridge is on a recruitment drive but is not looking for double-oh-seven types. One of her top sought-after qualities is life experience.

"We have people who used to be school principals, lawyers, retailers, engineers, whatever – very diverse backgrounds," she said.

Kitteridge is director of the country's Security Intelligence Service.

The recruitment drive comes after the government pumped an extra NZ\$7-million into the intelligence agency following the introduction of legislation targeting foreign fighters. In other words, Kiwis attracted to

the Islamic State cause.

She told the publication the agency had been "recruiting as fast as we can" to keep ahead of the foreign fighter threat, and on the "operation enablement side," which included listening devices and "other kit".

Any would-be recruits were warned to expect the unexpected from a job interview.

Kitteridge put herself through the assessment process to see what applicants might face and found herself in a role-playing situation where she was expected to elicit certain information from people without raising any red flags. – Source: The Recruiter; AFIO

## Vegemite: a mighty booze start?

Vegemite, the favorite breakfast spread of Australians and New Zealanders for decades, is facing a government curtailment of its spread into the illicit booze business.

The Australian government has warned that people in rural communities are using Vegemite to make homemade alcohol. The dark brown food paste, containing vegetables and spices, is traditionally spread on breakfast toast.

A government minister warned that people are brewing their own alcohol from it due to a yeast extract which it contains, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion told the paper that the problem has become 'prolific' among aboriginal in Northern Territories with reports of people buying up to 20 jars of the food paste at the time with brewing purposes in mind. One report said were often too hung-over to go to school.

He urged local businesses and communities to be vigilant and to report any suspicious Vegemite purchases which looked like they could be related to homemade alcohol brewing.

Vegemite began as a war-time substitute for Marmite, which has British origins, and continues to be a popular food stuff for Australians. It is estimated that eight out of ten Australians have a jar of the paste somewhere in their home.

## Girl on quad chased by koala

They are mythologized as cute and cuddly – but one koala's "very unusual" behavior has shown the animal's scary side.

The koala gave chase to Australian dairy farmer Ebony Churchill as she fled on a quad bike at a property near Heywood, in western Victoria.

Churchill caught the chase on camera and posted it to Facebook. There it garnered more than 25,000 shares and 1.2 million

views. The soundtrack is an odyssey of fear that underlines how this unassuming marsupial can be terrifying when in full flight.

"Far out, it's coming! Get away, get away," Churchill cries. "Oh my God, now it's coming up on there. I can't move. Where the bloody hell is it?" She dismounts the quad bike to find the rogue koala clutching the rear left tire. "Oh my god, it's on the friggin' bike. P—off!"

Director of the Koala Ecology Group at the University of Queensland, Bill Ellis, described the behavior of the animal as "very unusual".

Koalas would not usually be expected to approach a vehicle or human, especially during daylight hours when they are typically more sedate, he said.

Ellis ventured that koalas may be attracted to the low-frequency sounds or vibrations caused by vehicles such as trucks, which could explain the number of koalas killed on the roads, and called for more research into this area.

"It wouldn't surprise me if it was something to do with the noise that [the quad bike] was making," he said.

The image of the koala as cute and friendly belies the fact that it can be an aggressive and dangerous animal, especially during breeding season, from October to November.

Churchill later told Adelaide's *The Advertiser* one theory for the unusual pursuit: "He [the koala] was in love with me and I rejected him so he chased me."

In December, Churchill was a member of a team that won the inaugural National Dairy Challenge, a competition that tested dairy farmers on skills and knowledge regarding animal health, breeding and body condition. –Source: Sydney Morning Herald.

Enjoy.

Murray Burt writes this column to raise sensitivities to the Commonwealth's value and to lift the curtain on our understanding of a third of the population of the world. The Commonwealth name and significance is rarely mentioned in daily news, he says. It should be.

Burt is president of the Manitoba branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society; past president of the Commonwealth Journalists Association; secretary of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada advisory board; Hon LCol of the 78th Fraser Highlanders; a senator of the 166th Battery RCA (Kenora) and a director of The Intrepid Society. He is retired from more than 50 years of journalism.



## Parrots

A group of birds that certainly add colour to the bush downunder is the parrot family (Order Psittacidae). Too bad we don't see them up here in Canada. In fact North America's only member is the monk parakeet, and it isn't even native! It is thought to have escaped from a shipment from South America at New York's Kennedy Airport in the 1960s and now is a potential pest to fruit and grain growers in the region. Before that there was the now-extinct Carolina parakeet. But nothing north of the 49th!

New Zealand's kea (one of 10 endemic species) has the distinction of being the

In the wild however, there are many dangers, particularly human activity. A recent headline in the Mercury (Tasmania) read: "Logging rings death knell for swift parrot" [More] Locals know them as Swifties and they visit backyards up the mainland east coast to Brisbane, but return to nest in the old trees of the forests in the South and on the East Coast of Tasmania.

There is now a glimmer of hope for another family member, the night parrot. Scientists thought it was already extinct, but blurry images were recently recorded on remote cameras and a specimen was subsequently captured, tagged and released. The area of south-west Queensland where the nocturnal parrot was caught is now to be protected, with the property bought and managed by Bush Heritage Australia. [More]

The Australian Geographic recently reported on another "critically endangered" parrot. "Found predominantly darting through the Victorian and Tasmanian scrub, the orange-bellied parrot is highly endangered. This parrot has been in serious decline since the beginning of the 1900s, with fewer than 90 adults left in the wild. During the 1930s this bird was commonly found on both sides of the Bass Strait. Current threats are human related as its breeding and feeding habits occur almost entirely in small scrub, roughly a metre off the ground. This is the same vegetation that is often cleared for farm land and invaded by foreign plants. Living an average of just over two years, its reproductive cycle further inhibits the parrot's ability to rebuild its population." [More]

The extinction of parrots, of course, is not a happy topic - unless you happen to be a Monty Python fan - watch their Dead Parrot sketch. [More]



world's only alpine parrot. Now protected, these "clowns of the mountains" entertain tourists with their inquisitiveness, although most locals find them destructive. I saw a group of them in action while driving through the South Island in the early 70s. I was

stopped at a narrow one-way bridge and witnessed them ripping into the wooden window frames of a nearby bus. My sister-in-law's friend in Melbourne had a sulphur-crested cockatoo called Hamish. Being a loved member of the family, he lived to quite an age. This also meant that he had lost most of his feathers, so he had a knitted sweater to keep him warm. And of course he could talk.



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