A special remembrance

Perhaps the highlight of the year’s events for the Down Under Club is the annual remembrance of Anzac Day, and the gathering on Saturday, April 29 was no exception. The event consisted of the formal parade, followed by a potluck dinner, guest speaker and social evening.

The formal parade was organized by parade marshal, Gordon Keatch, and attended by approximately 50 club members and guests. Special guests included the Hon. Consul for Turkey, Mr. Gurcan Kocdag, Ms. Louise Murray representing the Australian Embassy in Ottawa, LCol (ret’d) Art Brown RCAF from the Memory Project and several members of the General Monash Legion. The Club President, Peter Munn, was host for the evening and Padre Brian Flower officiated at the parade. Wreaths were laid at the cenotaph by Mr. Kocdag, Ms. Murray, and Peter Munn (on behalf of the Down Under Club of Winnipeg).

Art Brown’s presentation, “Canadians at Gallipoli”, enlightened us on the involvement of and the role played by the Newfoundland Regiment at Gallipoli and subsequent campaigns. He pointed out that since Newfoundland didn’t join confederation until 1949, they were not actually Canadians when serving alongside the ANZACs.

Thanks to the many folk who provided delicious dishes for the meal following and to Debbie Griffiths for, once again, making and decorating a special cake. Thanks also to the helpers who stepped up to set out the meal and to assist with cleanup afterwards. The three two-up games were fun - we have a few new “converts” to the game - and Aussie chocolates were hotly contested prizes.
New Zealand sent more men to fight in the First World War per head of population than any other nation. Of those killed, almost a third were buried half a world away in unmarked graves. Following the war, subscriptions were raised to construct the Auckland War Memorial Museum. The Museum opened in 1929 and became a symbolic meeting place for Aucklanders to honour and commemorate the fallen. [Link]

Guest speaker, Art Brown, at our DUCW ANZAC remembrance this year mentioned that last year he biked across Australia – all the way down to Albany. He highly recommends the award winning National Anzac Centre – “one of Australia’s most important cultural pilgrimages. Located within Albany’s heritage listed Princess Royal Fortress, the centre overlooks the actual harbour from which over 41,000 men and woman departed Australia for the Great War. Immerse yourself in the Anzac Legend and follow personal stories through state of the art technology, multimedia and historic artefacts. Prepare to remember, learn and explore.” [Link]

This month we get to know their excellencies Daniel Mellsop, of New Zealand, and Tony Negus of Australia, our High Commissioners to Canada, on page 4; as well as “troglydotes” (Birds I view, p.6). Thank you to our contributors this month: Judy, Jenny, Peter, Murray and our advertizers.

what’s on
Aussie and Kiwi books, tv shows, movies and other things in Winnipeg and Manitoba

Online
Darryl: An Outward Bound Story (web series – NZ) – not sure when this one might be available generally online, but keep an eye out for it and let us know if and when you see it.

Please email us at info@downunderclub.mb.ca with other suggestions to include in this monthly column.

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OzHarvest doing their bit
Food Australia reports that the Australian food charity has opened the country’s first ‘rescued food supermarket’, located at 147 Anzac Parade, Kensington, New South Wales.

OzHarvest is inviting anyone who is in need of food, but low in cash, to shop at the supermarket by “taking what you need and giving if you can”. Founder and Chief Executive Officer of OzHarvest, Ms Ronni Kahn, said the supermarket is a way for the charity to provide food to those who might be missed their existing services.

The supermarket will be stocked with surplus food donated to OzHarvest by the public. [Link]

‘Every Man and his Dog’
If you’re in the neighbourhood of Gundagai on May 20, you will see their Tractor Man event happening out front of the famous dog.

The aim is to roll out a canvas or two and invite the community and their pets to make paw prints on the canvas and of course have fun, say hi and spread a little awareness on how to help unwell children in need. Then on the 28th there’s the Sundy in Gundy Terrier Races. [Link].

New weapon to defend coral
Australian Geographic reports that vinegar has been approved to combat the crown-of-thorns starfish. Field trials at the Great Barrier Reef showed that other reef life is not affected by the vinegar. [Link]

It’s amazing what’s out there growing in the dark..
Meadows Mushrooms is saving a ton of energy while producing mushrooms. The Christchurch company produces 200 tonnes of mushrooms a week, mainly for the New Zealand market, with each one incurring an energy cost.

Meadows have already banked savings of almost 4.8 GWh per year from its energy efficiency plan - worth almost $500,000. The company has saved about 20 per cent of its annual energy spend while increasing production.

They have done so after, in 2014, partnering with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and working with energy experts Enercon to identify energy consumption and savings opportunities. [Link]

Nowhere near Gundagai …
The Sign of the Kiwi, originally called Toll House, is a small café and shop at Dyers Pass on the road between Christchurch and Governors Bay. It was built in 1916–17 by Harry Ell as a staging post and opened as a tearoom and rest house. It has a Category I heritage classification by Heritage New Zealand and is a popular destination for tourists and locals alike. The building was closed some time after the 22 February 2011 Christchurch earthquake and it wasn’t until 23 January 2017, six years later, that it opened again. Although located within the burned area, the building was not damaged by the 2017 Port Hills fires a month later. [Link]

The video that blew away the crowd at Dairy Awards
An inspiring video from 2017 New Zealand Dairy Trainee of the Year Clay Paton blew everyone away at Saturday night’s New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards... and it’s easy to see why it picked up Best Video Award for Clay too! Check it out and learn his Canadian connection to Nelson BC. [Link]
Our High Commissioners

Following are the official bios for our High Commissioners in Ottawa. We look forward to welcoming them both here to Winnipeg so we can get to know them even better.

His Excellency Daniel Mellsop, New Zealand High Commissioner to Canada

Daniel Mellsop was appointed New Zealand High Commissioner to Canada in February 2016. He is concurrently High Commissioner to Jamaica.

A career diplomat, he previously worked in the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, working on a wide range of issues from trade negotiations to counter-terrorism. Previous appointments included postings to the New Zealand embassies in The Hague and Seoul, and Head of the International Branch at the Ministry of Defence.

Mr Mellsop attended the University of Waikato in New Zealand where he studied Korean and Economics, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Management Studies with honours.

Mr Mellsop is joined in Ottawa by his partner Jane Hooker and two children. He and his family are passionate about embracing the great Canadian outdoor lifestyle.

His Excellency Tony Negus AO APM, Australian High Commissioner to Canada

Tony Negus took up his appointment as Australian High Commissioner (Ottawa) in February 2015. He previously served in the Australian Federal Police for 32 years and most recently as its Commissioner from 2009 to 2014.

In 2016 Mr Negus was named in the Australia Day Honours List as an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO). He has also been awarded the Australian Police Medal (APM) in 2005.

Mr Negus has been awarded several international awards, including the INTERPOL Medal in 2014 in recognition of his significant contribution to global safety and security, the Indonesian National Police Meritorious Service Star in 2012, and the International Police and Public Safety 9/11 Medal (USA) in 2012.

Mr Negus holds a Masters of Public Policy and Administration from Charles Sturt University, a Graduate Diploma of Executive Leadership from the Australian Institute of Police Management, and has attended a Harvard University leadership program. Mr Negus is married with three children.

THANK YOU to Louise Murray, Second Secretary and Consul, Connie Reid, Consular and Passport Services, and Akshata Rao, Manager Public Diplomacy, all from the Australian High Commission (Ottawa), who organised the Australian Alumni Outreach Event and passport interviews that were held here in Winnipeg on Thursday April 27 and Friday April 28. Louise stayed an extra day to be part of our ANZAC Day celebrations. We sincerely appreciate your efforts to connect with Aussies in Manitoba and provide us with important information and timely passport services. And special thanks to Jenny and Steve and everyone at Miss Browns for a wonderful evening of outreach and friendship. Photo: Jenny Gates.

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Australia needs to rethink its relationship with China. In addition to small but important policy changes, this also means thinking big — strategically and for the long term.

It is an undertaking that requires the full engagement of Australian society: politicians, public servants, military officers, business leaders, educational institutions, youth groups and community associations. China matters to Australia.

Australia is the G20 country that is most dependent on China in terms of export revenue. Nearly one-third of Australia’s exports by value are sold to China. Chinese tourists are the largest group of visitors coming to its shores — more than a million each year — and estimated 54% of Chinese demand for iron ore is met by Australian exports. Nearly one-fifth of Chinese students abroad choose Australia as the place to pursue their studies.

Chinese immigrants have been part of Australian society since the early 19th century. Today there are 482,000 Australian residents who were born in China and Mandarin is the second most commonly spoken language. Over the past four decades, 115 sister-city and sister-state relationships have formed between Australia and China; the list even includes a partnership between Wagg Wagga, a town of 63,000 residents, and Kunming, a provincial capital with 100 times that population.

But there are also downsides to closer interaction: the Chinese government can exert pressure on Australia’s political leaders and citizens to accept its point of view, sometimes in ways contrary to Australian values. For example, the Chinese government is known to monitor Chinese visitors to Australia and even Australian citizens of Chinese descent — such as Chinese international students or adherents of Falun Gong — as to their activities, which might run contrary to Chinese interests.

So is Australia ready for a future where China presents enormous opportunities and challenges for Australians, and what would it look like?

Making China the focus of a regular whole-cabinet meeting would be a start. A meeting of this kind, which would focus on a comprehensive approach to China, has not been convened for over a decade. While the Australian government’s National Security Committee has approved a new China strategy, it is imperative to bring all federal ministers together to exclusively discuss China. Key federal government department secretaries, in turn, should regularly focus on China — Source: Bates Gill & Linda Jakobsan, China Matters

China tempts NZ to boost infrastructure

There has been good debate in Wellington as to whether China’s One Belt One Road Initiative (B&RI) is relevant to New Zealand, how New Zealand can engage with it and for what purposes. The Belt and Road Initiative is clearly a great ‘enterprise’ with significant implications for the global economic order but how does it relate to New Zealand?

To the extent that its scope and operational mechanisms have been made clear, B&RI is largely a network of partnerships for infrastructure, production and service projects between China and countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt to the northwest of the East Asian continent and the Maritime Silk Road to the south. The Belt and Road will presumably connect East Asia and Europe. But not everyone was certain about whether the Belt and Road would extend down under.

The B&RI comes at the time when New Zealand is well ahead among ‘Western, developed countries’ in forging dynamic trade and economic relations with China. In the words of Prime Minister Bill English, China is ‘New Zealand’s second-largest trading partner, its biggest market for export goods, a fast-growing services market and a small but increasingly important source of foreign investment’. Products, services, capital and people movement from China have become important to the working of the New Zealand economy.

New Zealand was the first among Western, developed countries to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China, and first to join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), to name just two indicators of New Zealand’s advanced economic relations with China.

Yet the strength of economic relations with China has led to debate in Wellington about how New Zealand is balancing its relations between China and other countries, particularly its traditional economic, political and security partners. Intensified strategic competition between the United States and China appears to take this challenge to a higher level. New Zealand has been under pressure to take a position on issues such as the South China Sea tensions and other regional security issues.

Australian citizenship crackdown threatens the vulnerable

The Turnbull government’s proposed changes to citizenship laws, including tougher tests and a focus on social cohesion, could unfairly punish vulnerable migrants, community groups have warned.

Late last month Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Immigration Minister Peter Dutton unveiled tough new hurdles for prospective Australians, including a stricter English language requirement and an “Australian values” test. Applicants would also face a longer wait before being eligible for citizenship.

Mr Turnbull has challenged Labor to back the changes, framing it as a test of belief “in the values that have made Australia the remarkable nation that it is”.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten dismissed the Prime Minister’s “desperate” challenge and renewed focus on immigration as politically motivated. However, he suggested Labor was open to supporting some of the proposals, including the English language emphasis and increased waiting period.

The new citizenship test could ask applicants whether they think female genital mutilation, family violence and arranged marriages are acceptable. —Source: Sydney Morning Herald

Fiji serves rural, maritime areas

Fijians living in rural, maritime and semi-urban areas now have easier access to social services thanks to three buses commissioned under a rights empowerment and cohesion project for rural and urban Fijians.

The ministry has been working closely with the Commissioner’s office and the Provincial Council to identify hot spots where the services are needed most.

The buses are expected to be in one particular area covering several communities and villages in one district for two weeks.

People who use wheelchairs will have access to the services as well. Each bus has at least three average sized meeting rooms along with a rest room.

Last year, the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission joined the project. A partnership of the Fiji Police Force was established recently.

The Government of Japan provided a funding of about USD$2.67million (FJ$5.56m) for three years in support of the UN Development Program which facilitated the project. —Source: Fiji Sun
I think I had previously only heard the word “troglodyte” used as a term of derision. After deciding to “view” wrens this month, I now know that it is the genus name for our northern house wren. The word has a Greek root and basically means cave-dwelling, hence the derisive “neanderthal” connotation. Obviously it was applied to wrens because of their preference for holes to nest in, eg, ones made by woodpeckers, nesting boxes, tins cans, old boots, etc.

For several years now we have enjoyed the return of this small bubbly songster to our backyard each spring to take advantage of one of the bird-houses. If you don’t see them at first, you can identify house wrens by their musically joyful bubbly outburst. Cute as they are, Mrs wren is known to pierce the eggs of other birds who nest too close – less competition for the grubs, bugs, beetles and spiders. They winter in the southern States and Mexico.

Ten species of wren breed regularly in North America, including the winter wren, Berwick’s, Carolina, long-billed, marsh, sedge, rock and cactus wrens.

While in the Adelaide Hills back in February, I watched a superb wren family exerting their territorial rights. They are among the more commonly seen in Australia, although there are about 20 other species. New Zealand had six known species of wren-like birds. Some have become extinct since predators arrived with humans. The rifleman wren is still found on both North and South Islands while the New Zealand rock wren is restricted to alpine areas.

by Charlie Powell


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Maori survivor surprised at NZ gov't's stance on child abuse inquiry

A Māori state abuse survivor says the government’s refusal to hold an inquiry into historical abuse of children in state care is yet another let-down for the victims still dealing with their childhood trauma.

Eugene Ryder was only 11 years old when he went into state care, where he was beaten and abused. When he attended a panel discussion held at Victoria University in Wellington, calls for an independent inquiry were renewed. It followed high-profile calls for an inquiry by the Human Rights Commission, Iwi Leaders Forum, Māori Women’s Welfare League and every political party, except National.

Prime Minister Bill English has said he doubted an inquiry would achieve anything. Mr Ryder said it showed the government still did not have his back, just as it did not when he was a child.

"I have never expected to feel any love from the government," he said. "I was surprised by their reaction given the amount of support and publicity for an independent inquiry.

"I take the current government as somewhat pragmatic and given that they announced $2 billion going into what I would consider unfair treatment of care workers, that they would take the same stance with those that have been abused in state care."

Since Mr Ryder went public about being beaten and abused as a child in state care, he said a lot of people had been messaging him on Facebook offering support, but also sharing their own stories about how state abuse had impacted them and their whānau. He described his response as "shock and horror".

Between the 1940s and early 1990s, about 100,000 children were in state care.

Source: RNZ