

The Southern Yarn

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

Dec. 2019/Jan. 2020

downundercalendar

FEBRUARY 2020

Waitangi Day and Australia Day

Saturday, Feb. 1st at 5pm
Scandinavian Cultural Centre
764 Erin St, Winnipeg.

This year's bake-off theme is "Pavlova" – always a favourite. Other potluck contributions will of course be welcome/needed. Come and celebrate our national days with games, food and brainteasers.

Help bushfire-affected Australian wildlife

Aussie **Phoebie Peters** has launched a local endeavour to raise money for Australian wildlife impacted by the bushfires currently ravaging the land down under.

Phoebie is an apprentice tattoo artist at Rising Phoenix Body Art at 462 Sherbrook Street. She hails from Hervey Bay, Queensland, and was inspired to launch this fundraiser by her love for Australian animals and concern as the fires edged closer to her home there.

Money in Winnipeg is being raised through the application of tattoos from a selection of six Australian wildlife designs, and donations at the store. Funds raised are being donated to WIRES – NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc. – which has been caring for native animals for more than 30 years.

Direct donations can also be made through www.wires.org.au.

The fundraiser will continue "... until Australia is no longer burning."

For more information or to book a tattoo session, contact Phoebie Peters at Rising Phoenix Body Art (204) 417-4441 or (204) 588-3248 (mobile).



On s'amuse bien à Resto-Gare/ A Fun Evening at Resto-Gare

Twenty-two Down Under Club of Winnipeg members and guests (including two couples from out of town) arrived at the old Gare St-Boniface, now Resto-Gare, on Saturday, 26 October to enjoy an evening of fine French cuisine and typical Aussie-Kiwi-Canadian conviviality.

Seated in the train carriage, we enjoyed pleasant bilingual service from our two servers who had no trouble comprehending Aussie and Kiwi accents nor bits of down under slang. The club provided a glass of red or white wine to accompany our pre-selected meals. How difficult the choice had been! Chicken Parma? Lamb shank? Boeuf bourguignon? Atlantic salmon? The chatter ceased except for the oohs and aahs as we all tucked into our mains.

President Peter Munn suffering from near-loss of voice (except to comment on the NZ rugby loss to the UK) handed MC duties to Catherine Bowering who welcomed everyone. She dedicated our gathering to the memory of our dear friend, Gordon Keatch, whom we will always miss and remember. "Thanks" were expressed to the organizers of our Not-So-Formal Dinner: Judy Powell with help from Margaret Munn, and Charlie Powell who provided our souvenir worthy place cards complete with meal selection notation.

All enjoyed the opportunity to chat and catch up with one another.

If you missed being part of our annual dinner, plan to attend next year. Watch for details in *The Southern Yarn* or on the website as next autumn approaches.

New Zealand High Commissioner

Thanks to New Zealand High Commissioner **Daniel Mellsop** who has finished his posting in Canada and returned to NZ with his family. Great to see you in Winnipeg, Daniel, although once is never enough.

The next High Commissioner to Canada is diplomat **Martin Harvey** who will be arriving mid-January. That might seem like a difficult month to arrive in Ottawa from the southern summer, but Mr Harvey is by all accounts up for the challenge.

Mr Harvey has held a range of senior positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He has more than 25 years of experience as a trade negotiator, most recently as the lead negotiator on NZ's Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, and was head of the Ministry's Trade Negotiations Division from 2012 to 2017. Mr Harvey has also served as New Zealand High Commissioner to Singapore, and Deputy Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization.

Welcome to Canada, Martin, and we look forward to getting to know you in Winnipeg whenever you have the time and opportunity to stop in and see us.



online



find us on facebook or the web
www.downunderclub.mb.ca
email: info@downunderclub.mb.ca



A Bush Christmas

"C.J. Dennis"

Herald, 24 December 1931, p4

This poem was also published in the collection: *More than a Sentimental Bloke*.

The sun burns hotly thro' the gums
As down the road old Rogan comes —
The hatter from the lonely hut
Beside the track to Woollybutt.
He likes to spend his Christmas with us here.
He says a man gets sort of strange
Living alone without a change,
Gets sort of settled in his way;
And so he comes each Christmas day
To share a bite of tucker and a beer.

Dad and the boys have nought to do,
Except a stray odd job or two.
Along the fence or in the yard,
"It ain't a day for workin' hard."
Says Dad. "One day a year don't matter much."
And then dishevelled, hot and red,
Mum, thro' the doorway puts her head
And says, "This Christmas cooking, My!
The sun's near fit for cooking by."
Upon her word she never did see such.

"Your fault," says Dad, "you know it is.
Plum puddin'! on a day like this,
And roasted turkeys! Spare me days,
I can't get over women's ways.
In climates such as this the thing's all wrong.
A bit of cold corned beef an' bread
Would do us very well instead."
Then Rogan said, "You're right; it's hot.
It makes a feller drink a lot."
And Dad gets up and says, "Well, come along."

The dinner's served — full bite and sup.
"Come on," says Mum, "Now all sit up."
The meal takes on a festive air;
And even father eats his share
And passes up his plate to have some more.
He laughs and says it's Christmas time,
"That's cookin', Mum. The stuffin's prime."
But Rogan pauses once to praise,
Then eats as tho' he'd starved for days.
And pitches turkey bones outside the door.

The sun burns hotly thro' the gums,
The chirping of the locusts comes
Across the paddocks, parched and grey.
"Whew!" wheezes Father. "What a day!"
And sheds his vest. For coats no man had need.
Then Rogan shoves his plate aside
And sighs, as sated men have sighed,
At many boards in many climes
On many other Christmas times.
"By gum!" he says, "That was a slap-up feed!"



Remembering Christmases past

As you read this, you will have already decided upon at least one Christmas gift for a loved one, a friend, or a colleague, to give them as an expression of love, or recognition of their place in your life. My family is like yours, we have traditions at Christmas, we like them, and it is what makes Christmas for us a special time.

However, Christmas with us has always had odd things happen, and other simply brilliant occurrences that will stay in our memories forever. In no particular order, the Munn Christmas festivities include:

Going to Margaret's Aunt Kay's on Christmas Eve with all our children, listening to the world travels of Santa from the NORAD control centre in our car as we travelled to and from Aunt Kay's. This was an every year MUST.

My Mother, the kids' Nana, coming over from Oz every second year for many years, adding a special spice to the festivities.

The year three kids had chicken pox over Christmas, thought they may have been forgotten, but at 7pm, they were told to gather at the front window, and lo and behold, red-garbed Santa was walking down the sidewalk outside the window, pointing at his watch to say it was time for bed.

We have orange juice every Christmas morning, and one of the jugs ALWAYS has a bottle of Bubbly in it. The first year of offer-

ing OJ, Margaret's Mom, Grandma to the kids, was given a glass of the OJ with champers, rather than the regular OJ. She enjoyed it immensely, and asked if it was from her regular store. From that point on, Grandma's orange juice was a legend, still enjoyed today.

There is a history with us of 'THINGS' breaking around about now when they really should not, eg., in the past years, we had to replace a furnace two days before Christmas, and joy-of-joys, clean out a blocked sewer line on Christmas Eve.

With four children, there was a constant stream down the stairs from their upstairs rooms on Christmas Eve to 'go to the washroom', which was code for 'I will see what Santa has brought.' To let us as parents get some sleep, we erected a sheet to cover the front room containing the tree and presents, and the sheet was known as 'The great Wall of Christmas.'

Another tradition started about 20 years ago is our tree decoration and Christmas cookie decorating. Margaret and I, four kids, three grandkids and sometimes an extra body, decorate our tree, and after a brunch, everyone decorates with Bulk Barn's finest the many cookie imaginings of Christmas images. Margaret and I remember vividly our first grandchild Grace at two months old, placed in the middle of the table observing but not understanding what was going on. This year, as for many years past, Grace remembers, and would never miss this family event.

Have a very Merry Christmas, enjoy your traditions with family,

Peter

Then, with his black pipe well alight,
Old Rogan brings the kids delight
By telling o'er again his yarns
Of Christmas tide 'mid English barns
When he was, long ago, a farmer's boy.
His old eyes glisten as he sees
Half glimpses of old memories,
Of whitened fields and winter snows,
And yuletide logs and mistletoes,
And all that half-forgotten, hallowed joy.

The children listen, mouths agape,
And see a land with no escape
For biting cold and snow and frost —
A land to all earth's brightness lost,
A strange and freakish Christmas land to them.
But Rogan, with his dim old eyes
Grown far away and strangely wise
Talks on; and pauses but to ask
"Ain't there a drop more in that cask?"
And father nods; but Mother says "Ahem!"

The sun slants redly thro' the gums
As quietly the evening comes,
And Rogan gets his old grey mare,
That matches well his own grey hair,
And rides away into the setting sun.
"Ah, well," says Dad. "I got to say
I never spent a lazier day.
We ought to get that top fence wired."
"My!" sighs poor Mum. "But I am tired!
An' all that washing up still to be done."

Enjoy yours,

Annual General Meeting

The Club's Annual General Meeting was held on Friday, November 29th at the Scandinavian Club, with 16 people in attendance. Reports were given from members of the Board of Directors, reporting on the activities of the club throughout the year. Judy Powell listed the social activities held this year, all of which were supported by club members. Thanks were given to **Judy** for her work in pulling these events together. Other members thanked and given special recognition for their work on the *Yarn* newsletter, and Media activities were **Charlie Powell**, **Brian Hydesmith** and **Jenny Gates**. The President, in his remarks to the meeting, thanked all members of the executive for their work throughout the year. The financial report tabled from the treasurer showed a similar picture to the past few years, with the numbers showing a steady reduction in the assets of the club needed to support the level

of activities enjoyed by the members.

The election of officers of the club was overseen by the distinguished member **Ian Bowering**. The listing follows of the new Board.



President: **Peter Munn**

Vice President: **Terry Roberts**

Secretary: **Margaret Munn**

Treasurer: **Peter Debenham**

Social : **Judy Powell**

Newsletter: **Charlie Powell**

Membership: **Catherine Bowering**

During the AGM, there was general discussion on the passing of one of the club's founders, **Gordon Keatch**, and what will be the way of the club going forward. It was stated that the executive had discussed this issue, but no resolutions had been reached.

Following a period of discussion on general club matters, the meeting was closed, and was followed by a social evening.



The other "Smithy" arrived in Darwin 10th December 1919

On 19 March 1919 Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes announced a competition for the first Australian aviators to fly from England to Australia within 30 days with a prize of £10 000. South Australian brothers Ross Smith (pilot) and Keith Smith (navigator) with engineers Walter Shiers (SA) and James Bennett (Vic) were the first successful crew [more online].

Vickers entered a converted Vimy bomber (the registration G-EAOU being whimsically said to stand for "God 'elp all of us"), crewed by Captain Ross Macpherson Smith with his brother Lieutenant Keith Macpherson Smith as co-pilot and mechanics Sergeant W.H. (Wally) Shiers and J.M. (Jim) Bennett. The Vimy left Hounslow Heath at 8am on 12 November 1919. It flew via Lyon, Rome, Cairo, Damascus, Basra, Karachi,

Delhi, Calcutta, Akyab, Rangoon racecourse, Singora (Songkhla) (in Siam unscheduled in heavy rain), Singapore, Batavia and Surabaya where the aircraft was bogged and had to make use of a temporary airstrip made from bamboo mats, reaching Darwin at 4.10 pm on 10 December 1919. The flight distance was estimated as 17,911 kilometres and total flying time was 135 hours 55 minutes (131.8 km/h). The prize money was shared between the Smith brothers and the two mechanics. The Smith brothers each received a knighthood for this exploit, and the company presented their aircraft to the Australian government. It is now displayed at Adelaide Airport.

Learn the fate of the other 5 teams that took on the challenge, here: [link](#).

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Aus walnuts, almonds owned by Canadian pensioners

[Source: Australian Food News: 3 Oct, 2019] Webster Ltd. (WBA.AU), one of Australia's biggest growers of walnuts and almonds, said it has agreed to be taken over by Canada's Public Sector Pension Investment Board in a deal valuing it at A\$724 (US\$485 million). Webster said the pension investment board, or PSP, is offering A\$2.00 in cash for each share that it doesn't already own and that it expects the transaction to complete in the first quarter of 2020. PSP currently owns 19.1% of Webster's stock. Webster owns orchards in New South Wales and Tasmania states, and runs other forms of agribusiness including cattle rearing. [Read more online]



Aerial search for water in NSW

[Source: ABC Western Plains: Jennifer Browning and Olivia Ralph, 6 Oct, 2019] The New South Wales Government has funded a large aerial search for groundwater in the state's central west in an attempt to secure drinking water for regional communities at risk of running dry. The aerial electromagnetic survey searches for groundwater and minerals about 500 metres beneath the earth's surface. The survey is covering 19,000 square kilometres – an area about one and a half times the size of Greater Metropolitan Sydney. A daily helicopter mission traces the region, from south to north on east-west lines up to 5km apart, covering areas from Cobar to Rankins Springs. [Read more: [online](#)].



Another way to get water ...

[Source: ABC News: Nick Martin, 7 Nov, 2019] Adelaide's little-used desalination plant will be cranked up as part of a deal to provide relief to drought-ravaged farmers in the eastern states.

The bargain between State and Federal Governments will provide up to 100 billion litres of water for farmers to grow fodder, silage, and pasture – enough to produce 120,000 tonnes of feed for animals. The decision to build the desalination plant came in 2007, when Adelaide's drinking water supply was under threat at the height of the Millennium Drought. It was originally designed to provide up to 50 gigalitres of water a year, but a deal between former SA premier Mike Rann's government and Kevin Rudd doubled its output to 100 gigalitres, taking the total cost of the facility to \$1.8 billion dollars. [Read more: [online](#)].

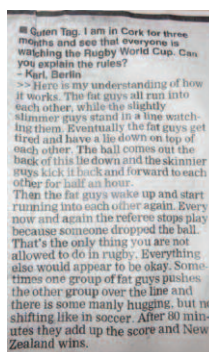
newszealand

various sources, see web links in online edition

Rugby rules

[Source: Facebook, Bill Day, 18 oct, 2019] Karl, in Berlin, asks: I am in Cork for three months and see that everyone is watching the Rugby World Cup. Can you explain the rules?

[the answer] Here is my understanding of how it works. The fat guys all run into each other, while the slightly slimmer guys stand in a line watching them. Eventually the fat guys get tired and have a lie down on top of each other. The ball comes out the back of this lie down and the skinnier guys kick it back and forward to each other for half an hour. Then the fat guys wake up and start running into each other again. Every now and again the referee stops play because someone dropped the ball. That's the only thing you are not allowed to do in rugby. Everything else would appear to be okay. Sometimes one group of fat guys pushes the other group over the line and there is some manly hugging, but no shifting like in soccer. After 80 minutes they add up the score and New Zealand wins.



Sometimes one group of fat guys pushes the other group over the line and there is some manly hugging, but no shifting like in soccer. After 80 minutes they add up the score and New Zealand wins. [Ed. Except they didn't this year!]

Tongariro National Park

[Source: Revolv] Tongariro National Park is the oldest national park in New Zealand, located in the central North Island. It has been acknowledged by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site of mixed cultural and natural values. Tongariro National Park was the sixth national park established in the world. The active volcanic mountains Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and Tongariro are located in the centre of the park.

There are a number of Māori religious sites within the park, and many of the park's summits, including Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu, are tapu, or sacred. The park includes many towns around its boundary including Ohakune, Waiouru, Horopito, Pokaka, Erua, National Park Village, Whakapapa skifield and Turangi.

The Tongariro National Park is home to the famed Tongariro Alpine Crossing, widely regarded as one of the world's best one-day hikes. [Read more online].



Better beesness

[Source: NZ Herald: Jenny Ling, 30 Nov, 2019] A Far North electronics company is buzzing about a new business concept which will help apiarists care for their bee colonies during winter.

On2It Electronics is normally in the business of fixing agricultural machinery and industrial equipment like tractors, diggers and trucks but recently sidestepped into the bee-keeping industry with an idea for an electronic hive monitoring and automation product.

The idea came about after a conversation between business owner Daniel Inglis and his wife's cousin, a beekeeper in Kaikohe, about 18 months ago. "He was explaining how labour intensive it could be at certain times of the year, especially winter," Inglis said.

"He basically called the bees 'needy' because if the conditions aren't right, they'll leave the hive.

"We put our heads together and came up

with AutoBee, an electronic way to save the beekeeper time in the field, bees from unnecessary stress and ultimately increase the amount of honey they produce.” Though Inglis and his wife Kimberley are keeping mum about the details of their invention to protect their intellectual property rights, they said it’s a small unit that will fit on to the hives to “automate some of the labour-intensive tasks of winter beekeeping”.

On2it Electronics was this year’s recipient of Top Energy’s \$30,000 Business Development Fund. [Read more online.]

BushYarn

Swaggies use every trick in the book to get a handout, but one knot-carrier I met was the kingpin of all cadgers. He used to embarrass the lady of the house into generous rations. One day, he met his match. He had lazily walked through the property, carefully closing the gates after him, and he stood at the front door and loudly knocked twice.

The station owner’s wife opened the door and suspiciously eyed the sundowner.

“Yes?” she enquired.

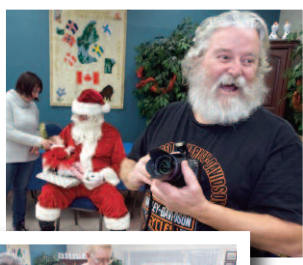
He took a sweeping bow.

“Good evening, Missus, and a lovely one it is, too. I wuz wondering if youse could spare me some margarine?”

As he delivered these words, he thrust a hardened, old, dried-out cow’s turd towards her. “Some margarine, Missus?”

She looked at him and curtly grabbed the ‘meadow cake’ and tossed it away, saying: “Oh, you poor old traveller. Don’t you worry. You go around to the back of the house, there’s some fresh ones there!”

[Source: “Classic Bush Yarns” by Warren Fahey]



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Looking back

Thank you to **Tess Shelton** for these lovely photos. Tess and her husband Russ, who passed away 12 years ago aged 84 of an aortic aneurysm, were early members of the DUCW and dear friends of Gordon Keatch. Tess remembers that on the old Thursday nights, no women were invited to the meetings. Lucky for us, those times have changed. Tess has two daughters – Amahra and Lisa – one son Alan, and two grandsons – Jordan and Raffaele. She currently lives in West Vancouver. Thanks also to Amahra for emailing the photos to us, and sharing notes back and forth between us and Tess.

Enjoy these photos, and if you are able to identify the unidentified people in these photos – or if we've got any of these wrong – please let us know. All captions are L-R.



1. Lloyd and Peggy Laver, Rod Scott, Anne and Gordon Keatch, and Tess and Russ Shelton.



2. Myrtle Scott and Tess Shelton.



3. Rod Scott and Ken Coad.



4. Russ Shelton and Lloyd Laver (?).



5. Unidentified man, Russ Shelton, unidentified man and Lloyd Laver.



7. Tess just had her 94th birthday and, judging by this photo, is doing pretty well and looks amazing – Amahra, Lisa, Tess and Alan.



6. Two unidentified people.



Photo: Ruth Bonneville, Winnipeg Free Press

Say hello to The Ruby West

Moving on from their success with and reputation for excellent cuisine at one of our favourite hangouts, The Billabong Bar and Bistro on Osborne, DUCW members **Erin and Peter Keating** have joined forces with friends and co-owners Laura and Jamie Hilland to establish The Ruby West.

Located at the site of the former Neighbourhood Bookstore and Café on Westminster, The Ruby West features a wide variety of items, including Adult Grilled Cheese, Sausage Rolls, Fish Tacos, Chicken Tacos, salads, soups, sushi and sweets, and a selection of beverages, beer, and liquor.

For more information about this latest addition to the Wolseley district, visit <https://ruby-west.com/> or email 898westminster@gmail.com.

And [follow this link] to read the *Winnipeg Free Press* article that shares more info about the lead-up to launching this little gem in Wolseley – See you at The Ruby!



NZ to split criminals from guns

New Zealand's government on Nov 11 proposed legislation to ban certain criminals from being anywhere near guns even if they don't own them, a measure that politicians acknowledge has significant human rights implications.

The proposed law would make it illegal for some criminals to live or visit a house where a gun is present or to travel in a car that has a gun inside. It could also prevent them from being around guns at other places including at work, on a farm or at a clubroom.

The proposal is the latest gun-control measure introduced by the government since Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in March vowed to overhaul gun laws in the days after a gunman killed 51 people at two Christchurch mosque.

Meanwhile, gun owners must turn over their weapons – for money. Assault weapons such as AR-15-style rifles are recorded in a gun registry to track all such guns in the country through a buyback scheme that runs until year end. So far c 36,000 banned weapons and 132,000 banned parts have been collected.

The new measure is written to allow police to conduct warrantless searches and also raises questions about other human rights enshrined in New Zealand law, including the freedom to associate with other people and the right to be presumed innocent. –SOURCE: Nick Perry Associated

Lessons from Springbok World Cup victory affirm quota policy

Mugabe Ratshikuni says the Springbok victory affirms merit of the quota policy in sport after an epic victory by the Springboks in the Rugby World Cup final last month. It had traces of 1995 in how the whole country got behind the team and how it created a unique feeling of being proudly South African amongst all of us. It showed the capacity that we have as a country to achieve great things if we all pull together.

The Boks showed all the traits that are characteristic of South African rugby: brutal, uncompromising, punishing defence; set piece hegemony; dominating the collisions, excellent tactical kicking. These are some of the basic ingredients that contributed to the Springboks bringing the William Webb Ellis

trophy home and the point to highlight is that this was the Springboks playing to their traditional strengths as opposed to trying to emulate the more open game of other nations, such as the New Zealand All Blacks.

Bangladesh cafe attack leads to death penalty

Bangladesh sentenced seven Islamist militants to death over the 2016 attack at the Holey Artisan cafe in Dhaka that killed 29 people including many foreigners. The seven convicts will be hanged till death, Anti-Terrorism Special judge Md Majibur Rahman said last week.

The cafe attack was the deadliest targeting foreign nationals in Bangladesh. Most of the dead were tourists from Italy and Japan. Though global Sunni Islamist terror group Islamic State (Isis) claimed the responsibility for the attack, Bangladesh said local militant groups were behind it. Of eight people on trial, one was acquitted.

"I want to tell the rulers of Bangladesh that the jihad you see today is not the same that you knew in the past ... The jihad that is waged today is a jihad under the shade of the Caliphate."

Prosecutors said the convicted belonged to Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), accused of planning the attack and providing the attackers with weapons.

The 5-man attack in Dhaka's diplomatic area was on the night of July 1, 2016. The attackers entered the posh cafe with crude bombs, machetes and guns. The 12-hour hostage crisis was ended by commandos killing the terrorists. Two senior police officers also died.

Australia ends human rights partnership with China

Australia's human rights partnership with China has been "quietly" suspended over Beijing's mass detention of Uighurs, its treatment of democracy protests in Hong Kong, and its banning of two Australian MPs critical of its actions.

A Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade says the Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program worth \$7.4 million over three years, aimed at advancing human rights reform, has been suspended after more than two decades. The program was set up between DFAT, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs, The Australian reports on Monday.

The freeze comes amid controversy surrounding the barring of two Liberals, MP Andrew Hastie and senator James Paterson,

who were to travel to Beijing with Labor MP Matt Keogh as part of a study tour organized by think tank China Matters. –SOURCE: 7news.com.au

Drought-stricken South African farmers ask hard questions

As the drought across South Africa continues to threaten farmers, food security has been thrust into the spotlight, with agricultural organisations appealing for relief.

According to Agri SA's 2019/2020 agriculture report, 37.44% of rural communities in South Africa are currently affected by drought.

The Western Cape, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Limpopo have been hit the worst, with real agricultural output 9.2% lower in the first half of 2019 than the same period in 2018, the report stated.

Several industries – including red meat production, maize, horticulture and dairy – have been affected by the drought, which has led to output shortages, financial constraints and a decline in employment figures.

Jannie de Villiers of Grain SA explained that, because of the drought, grain farmers have been late to plant in 2019 – this on top of the fact that the 2018 season didn't produce good yields either. "If we look at the forecast, we are worried. The grain sector cannot take another drought," De Villiers said.

De Villiers said food security must remain the number one priority for South Africa. He appealed to government for assistance. –SOURCE: News24

Read more from Commonwealth Corner on page nine of the electronic versions of most issues of *The Southern Yarn*.

Murray Burt is a retired editor and journalist who is concerned that lesser elements of the Commonwealth get poor media coverage. Burt is president of the Manitoba branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society; past president of the Commonwealth Journalists Association; 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.

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

birds*i*view...

by Marian Livsey

(Charlie's younger sister, still living in the family home!)

Hello, from down under, we live in Brighton, Queensland. This is where Charlie started his bird watching! Over a number of years we have allowed the front garden to grow and tangle and twist and touch! Yes, recently, we read that plants reach out to each other. There have been numerous examples right before our eyes, even among the pot plants.

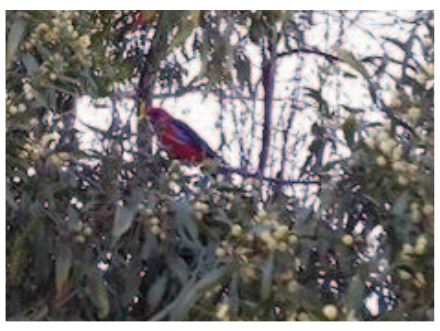
I untangled two and then the stems that had been entwined died! We've even let the nasty thorny asparagus fern proliferate and guess what? It produces masses of flowers. We never see many bees until all the masses of asparagus fern bloom! Isn't nature wonderful!

We've been away travelling to Perth (clear skies meant viewing this vast red land with all the variations first hand - a real birds I view) & Melbourne by plane, to country Victoria by car, to Canberra by train and bus, to Sydney by bus, around Sydney by ferry, bus and foot & jetted home. Ah! The warmth returns to our bones!

Fires had been ravaging S. E. Queensland, so Phil cut back our front tangle closest to the house. It was all very tinder dry and a large branch on the paperbark had sheared off!

Over the years we had seen rainbow lorikeets, friar birds, little friar birds, numerous honeyeaters, fig birds and common mynas, but recent years have seen the proliferation of noisy miners with fewer of the others.

Since the drastic pruning, they're all back. I've even seen a little friar bird chasing a noisy miner from the branches of a flowering red bottle brush.



Rosella in Canberra

We've never seen a scarlet honey eater, but they too have been flitting in and out.

Our grand-daughter was watering plants on the front verandah when she called to us, urgently, "Come, quickly!" A scarlet honeyeater had knocked itself out on the glass door and was lying motionless on a soft chair. Phil gently stroked it, until it recovered and flitted into a pot plant from which it was eventually able to return to the garden and the wilds.

By the way, we saw our first New Holland honeyeaters in Perth. So close. One hovered before Phil's face then decided it was safe to look for spiders around the eaves where he was sitting.

In Ashbourne, not far from Hanging Rock, about an hour from Melbourne, we saw a crimson rosella. I think that might be what was busy in a native Canberra garden, as well.

We recommend Tim Lowe's "Where Song Began", you'll be surprised if you haven't already come across its contents. We met him in country Victoria giving what can only be described as a refreshing positive spin on bird life. Also promoting his latest, "A New Nature". By the way, he's a Queenslander, too!

Go the Maroons!

Aussie Rules with Steve Setka

Steve Setka is a Canadian member of the DUCW who lived in Australia for 2 years from 2015-17 and gained a passion for Australian Rules football.

The weekend of October 12-13, 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the USAFL National Championships which were held in Sarasota, Florida. Steve attended as the lone Winnipegger, joining a team combined from Montreal and Baltimore and played under the umbrella team of the Baltimore Dockers AFC with players from New York, Montreal, and Washington, DC. Tournament participants consisted of about 40% Australian ex-patriots, 55% Americans and Canadians, and about 5% from elsewhere around the world of people who love the sport of Footy.

For those who may be interested in having a kick locally, Steve would love to have you join the contingent of footy loving athletes from the Winnipeg Bears Australian Football Club. So far, the club has organized minor exhibition games with majority Canadians and some experts who played footy growing up in Australia. The club consists mostly of children and adults with limited prior experience to the sport.

Find the club on facebook under "Winnipeg Bears Australian Football Club", or email aflmanitoba@gmail.com or by contacting Steve at 204-955-6131. (Until Next time, go Cats!)



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THE DOWN UNDER
CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

Station Main, PO Box 1655,
Winnipeg Manitoba Canada R3C 2Z6

info@downunderclub.mb.ca

www.downunderclub.mb.ca

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