

The Southern Yarn

January 2015



NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

downundercalendar

JANUARY

Australia Day and Waitangi Day Annual bake-off

Saturday January 31st, 2015, 6 PM

Scandinavian Cultural Centre, 764 Erin

This is a fun social event where we celebrate our roots and enjoy great food prepared by some of the finest chefs in Winnipeg – YOU! So accept the challenge: Bake up your best Meat Pie and compete for 1st Prize, Grand Champion, Best in Show and/or bring a salad, veggie dish or dessert. There might also be a fun trivia quiz on Australia and New Zealand knowledge – and more prizes! And don't forget – the Bar will be open.

WANTED!

Members to renew their membership! If you haven't paid your dues yet for 2015, please go to the website link below and make it happen. It is super easy now with Pay Pal, or you can mail a cheque. Or just bring the cash to the next event. Phone Peter Debenham at 204-955-0393 if you would like assistance.

RSVP

If you let us know you are coming, we can be ready for you! RSVP to 204-228-9959 or social@downunderclub.mb.ca.

NOW IS THE TIME to renew for 2015

Individual \$20 ... Couple/family \$30 ... Mail your cheques to the Club at the address on the back of this issue, pay in person at the next event, or take advantage of our new PayPal link on the website for faster and more secure payment. Any questions or comments, please contact Peter Debenham at peter@pdclactg.ca or 204-955-0393.

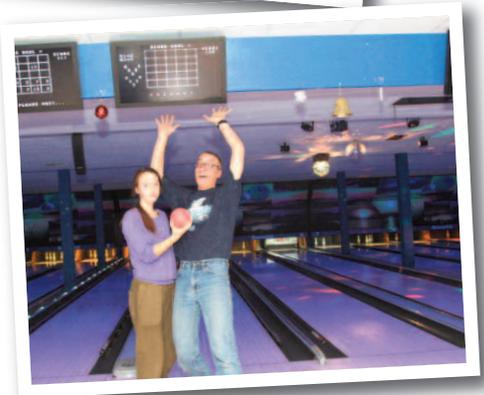


Christmas at the Bingo Bowling

The Club held its annual Christmas children's party at Windsor bowling lanes on Saturday December 6. There were close to 40 people there, enjoying the Christmas spirit, friendship, bowling ability at all levels, and a visit from Santa.

The Bingo Bowling was fun, and all the children joined in with their siblings and parents. The anticipation for Santa was extended, as apparently he was stuck in a chimney for a while. But he arrived with a bag of gifts, and the younger children delighted in the attention from the Jolly old man. Following Santa's departure, there was pizza for everyone, and more bowling, and for some, more pizza. A great time was had by all, and it was great to see such a good turnout of members.

Photos: St. Nick and a startled but happy recipient of a gift. The cheer was widely shown. And the best thing about bingo bowling is that the most unlikely bowlers can win, even the Hydsmiths.



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editorially yours

Charlie Powell



G'day -

Long, long ago in a distant land, I used to write a nature piece for The Echo, the local newspaper for the Brisbane suburb of Sandgate (Moreton Bay area). I called it "In the Wild" and described birds that could be easily seen on the local mudflats, lagoons, parks or backyards. Very soon thereafter, a very popular TV series by the same name appeared on the ABC, hosted by Harry Butler, a noted Australian naturalist and environmental consultant. I'll give the ABC the benefit of the doubt, but it kind of put me off a bit even though my interest in nature never dimmed. Anyway, it's taken 40 years, but I've come up with another title, so I am going to have another crack at it. Yarn readers will be the first exclusive recipients of "Birds I View" - see p.6. Before you get to that, there is lots of other interesting info thanks to all the others who have contributed to this edition!

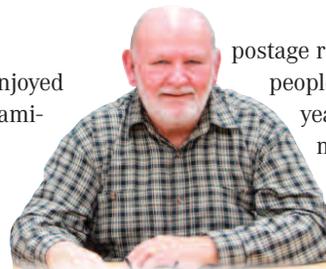
Enjoy!



Learn more about these two familiar characters on page 6.

Hi there,
Like most of you, we enjoyed Christmas with our family. Our younger son Tyler flew in from Toronto with his young lady for a 10 day visit, both with us and his many friends in the city. So Margaret and I had our 4 children and assorted sons-in-law and grandchildren for many family events and dinners. Santa was kind to all of us, and I am sure to you as well. Our elder daughter Kimberly exchanged marriage vows with Richard in our sunroom on Boxing Day, a quiet but very happy event followed by a small reception afterward.

We are noticing now with increased



president's ramblings

Peter Munn

postage rates around the world, that more people are considering, and ending the yearly tradition of mailing Christmas cards, and sending electronic cards instead. Like most members in the club, we have friends we met while travelling that reside literally all round the globe, and at \$2.50 plus tax per stamp, the trip to the post office can be expensive.

So now it is time for the New Year. May it be prosperous, and more importantly a healthy and Happy New Year for all of us. Looking forward to seeing you all throughout the year, and especially the upcoming Australia Day and Waitangi Day Celebration.

Peter



Our Christmas party in Dec. 2013

Happy New Year!

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas reconnecting with family and friends.

We have had the honour of partnering with the Downunder Club of Winnipeg for many years now. We have assisted many of your members and got to know you all at the same time, developing a deeper relationship. We look forward to building this relationship with members and the DUC itself for many more years to come.

Thank you to all for your support of our company.
We wish you all a Happy & Prosperous New Year! (Stay Warm)

Jason, Sherry & Taryn,
Angie & Minnie

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More than 40 years' South Pacific experience



“girt by sea”

There is growing interest in the underwater garden that surrounds Australia. Seaweed is now being recognized as a ‘super food’ due to the many potential nutritional benefits: more iron than red meat, more vitamin C than citrus fruit, more vitamin D than milk, and good levels of insoluble fibre, omega-3, protein, zinc and iodine. Expect to see more use of this rich resource in coming years. [Link]



Study points to positive effect of red meat for elderly

An Australian piece of research has suggested that a red meat-rich diet helps preserve the health of the elderly.

The study was done with elderly women and demonstrated that, despite their age, by combining resistance training and consumption of lean red meat, they could slow the typical loss of muscle and mental ability. [Oli Haenlein] [Link].

On the other hand ..

A study by Scientists at the University of California has demonstrated a cause for the con-

nection between red meat and cancer in humans. It seems that the human body views pork, beef and lamb as a foreign invader, because they contain a sugar not naturally present in our system, thus prompting a toxic immune response. They have discovered that the sugar, called "Neu5Gc", is produced by other carnivores but not by man. When humans eat red meat, the body generates an immune response to the foreign sugar, producing antibodies that cause inflammation, and eventually cancer. [Link]



newszealand

source: NZ Herald, unless otherwise noted

Rugby

Following the All Blacks’ huge win (74 - 6) over the USA team on November 1st, as reported by Katrina Epp in the December Yarn, they continued on to Great Britain and posted the following wins:

- November 8 24 - 21 over England
- November 15 24 - 16 over Scotland
- November 22 34 - 16 over Wales.

Following this match, **Brodie Retallick** (pictured above) was named World Rugby Player of the Year, the sixth and third consecutive All Black to achieve the award, the All Blacks were named World Rugby Team of the Year for the eighth and fifth consecutive time, and Steve Hansen was named World Rugby Coach of the Year for the third consecutive year. [Link]



Eleanor Catton signs a copy of “The Luminaries” for Liz Hydesmith. Photo: Jenny Gates

Meeting Eleanor Catton

Back in September, Canadian-born New Zealand author Eleanor Catton took the stage at the Thin Air Festival in Winnipeg. Winner of both the Governor General’s Award and the Man Booker Prize, Catton was introducing us to her latest book *The Luminaries*.

Set in New Zealand’s 1860s gold rush, the book was described by Robert Macfarlane, the chair of judges for the Man Booker Prize, as “a magnificent novel: awesome in its structural complexity; addictive in its story-telling; and magical in its conjuring of a world of greed and gold.” Not only was Catton reading from *The Luminaries*, but she engaged in an on-stage conversation with Thin Air Festival Director Charlene Diehl, and signed and sold copies afterward.

With all that on offer, how could we resist? Which is why Liz Hydesmith, Murray and Betsy Burt, and I decided to attend for ourselves and on behalf of the DUCW.

It was a great night, and we got the chance to meet with and talk to Eleanor – and snap a few pics to share with you all.

If you want your own copy of *The Luminaries*, it is available at McNally and everywhere else great books are sold.

Jenny Gates



(l-r) Jenny Gates, Liz Hydesmith, Eleanor Catton, Murray and Betsy Burt.

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Leanne Foley

Congratulations to Aussie Leanne Foley on being named the new Arts and Learning Manager of the Manitoba Arts Council (MAC).

Leanne was a classroom teacher in Australia until she returned to college to train as an actor. She later became teacher-in-charge at KITE Theatre (Brisbane, Queensland), which created theatre exclusively for the early childhood years.

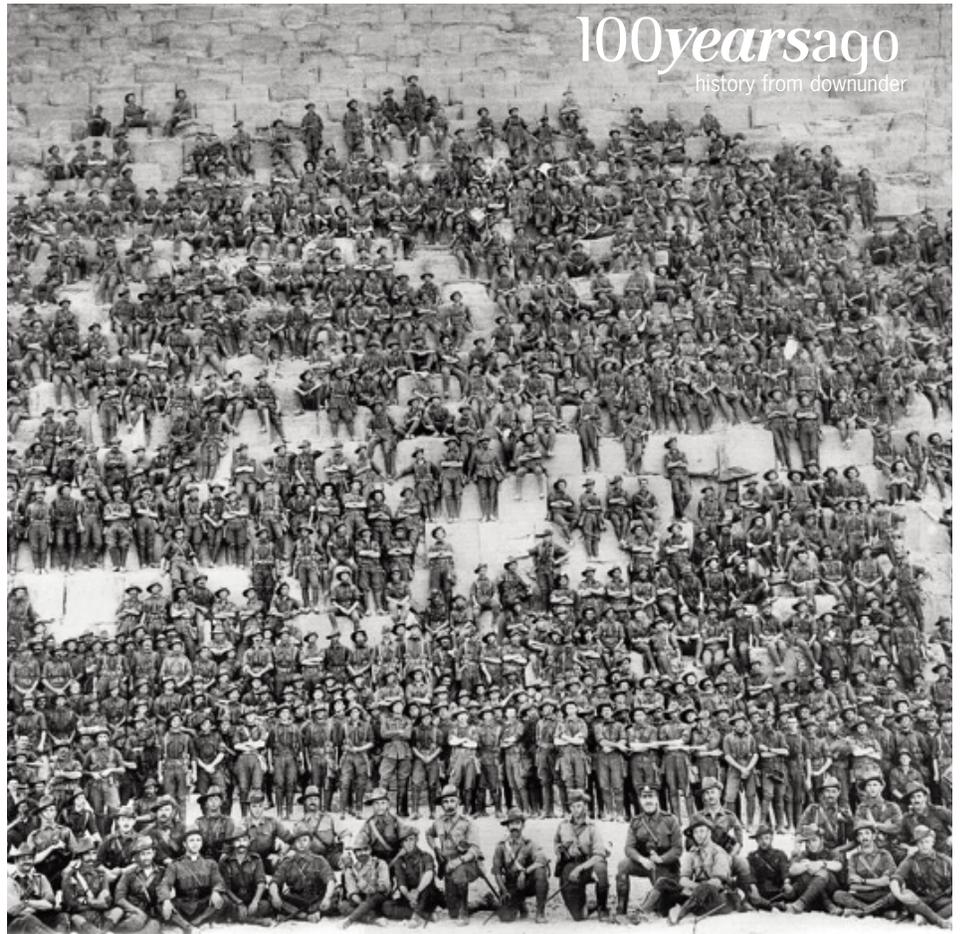
Some folks in Winnipeg may know Leanne from her work at Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP) where she was Theatre School Administrator, and later the Artistic Associate for Artistic Director Leslee Silverman. For the past 15 years, Leanne has worked in Winnipeg as a theatre (costumes and sets) and film production designer. Leanne is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada. She was nominated for a Sterling Award in costume design for A Year with Frog & Toad (Edmonton) and a Blizzard in production design for The Nature of Nicholas. She received MAC's Major Arts Award in 1997. Leanne was the Communications Manager at MAC, and will start her new position in January 2015.



Photo: Leanne Foley (courtesy of Manitoba Arts Council).



Pizza was provided by the club at this year's Christmas party.



Australian 11th (Western Australia) Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force posing on the Great Pyramid of Giza on 10 January 1915, prior to the landing at Gallipoli.

The 11th Battalion was an Australian Army battalion that was among the first infantry units raised during World War I for the First Australian Imperial Force. It was the first battalion recruited in Western Australia, and following a brief training period in Perth, the battalion sailed to Egypt where it undertook four months of intensive training. In April 1915 it took part in the invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula, landing

at Anzac Cove. In August 1915 the battalion was in action in the Battle of Lone Pine. Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt where it was split to help form the 51st Battalion. In March 1916, the battalion was deployed to the Western Front in France and Belgium where it took part in trench warfare until the end of the war in November 1918. [Link.]

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Home slaughter of 8 kids, and Sydney hostage horror double shakes Australia

The children in a Torres Islands family – seven brothers and sisters and a nephew, aged from 18-months to 15 years old – were assassinated in a house in Cairns, Australia, late last month.

Their mother and aunt, Mersane Warria, 37, in a bedside hearing at a hospital, was charged with eight counts of murder. She was taken to hospital with stab wounds to her chest.

It was a pile-on horror following so soon after the Sydney killings of two young people in a 16-hour hostage-taking by an Iranian-born faith extremist who himself was shot and killed when police moved in. Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, with the Sydney episode just hours behind him, was left to lament publicly again that “these are trying days for our country.”

The gruesome scene in Cairns was discovered by a 20-year-old brother, who arrived home to find the eight dead children. Police had not characterized the mass murder as terrorism-related.

Abbott called it a “heartbreaking... unspeakable crime” which, with the Sydney trauma, has plunged Australia into national mourning.

The mother had several stab wounds in the chest and from the beginning police said they were not looking for an attacker. Cairns is a northern coastal city and popular holiday destination in the state of Queensland. A cousin of the family said the victims were all siblings from a family that was “mostly” indigenous.

While the siege at a Sydney café was still unfolding, Rupert Murdoch’s Australian tabloid, *The Daily Telegraph*, released a special 2 p.m. edition with a headline highlighting the country’s anxieties in an era increasingly defined by counterterrorism raids, debates about multiculturalism and concerns about extremism.

“Death cult in CBD attack,” its front page read in bold, assuming someone allied to Islamic State militants had hostages in the central business district of Australia’s financial capital, close to Sydney’s opera house and various government buildings.

The headline, as it turned out, was technically wrong. The gunman apparently had

no formal links to IS. But the assumption that terrorists linked to IS were striking in one of the country’s most recognizable areas was hardly unreasonable in Australia’s tense new political and security climate.

–Sources: LDM, AAP

Oz spies and army get new powers to fight ISIS abroad

Australia’s spies last month were accorded new powers to help the troops in military operations against Islamic State in Iraq.

The lower house approved the third element in the nation’s suite of counter-terrorism laws. They permit the Australian Secret Intelligence Service to gather data on foreign fighters overseas without having to wait for written approval by a senior minister. Those powers – which the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organization and Australian Signals Directorate have also been handed – would be valid for only 48 hours and in circumstances of “extreme emergencies”.

The government determined displaced rules for approving emergency missions in Iraq had been unacceptably slow and threatened opportunities to collect vital intelligence. –Source: AFIO weekly intel notes

Two Kiwis killed in glider crash in remote area of Namibia

Two Kiwis from the Queenstown area died in a gliding crash in a remote area of Namibia last month. Entrepreneur Morris William “Bill” Walker and David Speight died in what was called a reconnaissance flight about 50km from their base. Gliding New Zealand president Karen Morgan said:

“The people involved are respected pilots within the gliding community, and our thoughts are with their families and friends. The New Zealanders were flying with a Namibian commercial operator. Namibia has a reputation for good gliding conditions. Its Bitterwasser glider airstrip was popular with pilots from around the world, particularly between Nov. 1 and Jan. 31. – Source: NZME

Startling popularity shift threatens Sri Lanka’s President Rajapaksa’s reelection

With a Sri Lanka election in the works next week (Jan 8), speculation is stirring that President Mahinda Rajapaksa may not win. A major sign of his fall in fortune was his recent betrayal by a group of longtime aides. But in addition to that, a number of opposition parties are daring to talk more openly about likelihood of the president’s political demise.

This talk has dented the optimism that led him to call the election while he still had

a respectable majority and two years remaining in his second term. Some of his closest ministers caught him unawares when they abandoned support for him just days after he called the vote.

This change of mood has seen teams of Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) members and supporters launch an intense campaign for the SEP’s presidential candidate Pani Wijesiriwardena in a number of areas across the country during the past two weeks. There are 19 candidates contesting the presidential election, including the opposition “common candidate” Maithripala Sirisena.

People have more recently expressed their hostility to the Rajapakse government over the increase in prices for consumer items.

Sources: AP, NYT, SEP

Malta gears up again, this time for the 2015 CHOGM

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), is being hosted by Malta again. It was first the host in 2005. The high-level summit, scheduled for November, is held every two years and attracts the presidents and prime ministers of all Commonwealth countries.

Malta’s President, HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, and Foreign Minister Dr George Vella are Malta’s host executives. The main events will take place against a backdrop of Malta’s historical locations including Fort St Angelo.

Malta joined the Commonwealth in 1964, and has been an active member and supporter ever since, especially in its championing of the interests of small states. The last CHOGM was held in Sri Lanka in a controversial atmosphere because of that country’s handling of human rights leading to boycotts, most notably by Canada. Source: Secretariat

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. Enjoy.

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.

birds*i*view...

by Charlie Powell

I thought I would start this series off with a look at **Magpies** - no particular reason except that there is a version up here in North America as well as one down under. Apart from the same name, about the only other feature they share is that they are black and white. In my experience, birds generally are more obvious, numerous and vocal in Australia, and the Magpie is a good example. I've never been dive-bombed by one up here, but who hasn't had a close encounter with a Magpie during nesting season downunder?! One of them made the mistake of attacking a fellow cricketer who apparently ran too close to its gum tree during a high school game back in the 60s. He ducked in time, then turned and took it down with an accurate throw of the cricket ball - surprised both of them!

The North American Black-billed magpie (*Pica pica*) belongs to the Family *Corvidae*, along with Crows, Ravens and Jays. They are not commonly found east of Manitoba and are beneficial in that most of their diet is small rodents and insects - sometimes helping to control ticks and maggots on cattle and sheep. In captivity they can be trained to imitate human speech.

Early foreigners arriving in Australia thought what they were seeing reminded them of the European Magpie, so that's what they called them. In fact it is not a Corvid at all, but belongs to a family called *Artamidae*. *Cracticus tibicen* is one of Australia's most accomplished songsters - right up there with Dame Joan Sutherland and Slim Dusty. These carolers' pitch ranges over 4 octaves and they can mimic over 35 species of birds, and even humans, dogs and horses.

In South and West Australia they have more white on their back than those in the north and east.

While their carolling is musical and enjoyable, unfortunately their seasonal swooping does not endear them to cyclists and pedestrians who have to cross their territory. Attacks have proved fatal, either through infection from pecks or accidents from trying to fend them off while cycling in traffic. Hence helmets with spikes and hats with faces on the top have become common and effective.

I'll give New Zealand poet Denis Glover (1912-1980) the final comment on magpies:

The Magpies

When Tom and Elizabeth took the farm
The bracken made their bed
and Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle
The magpies said
Tom's hand was strong to the plough
and Elizabeth's lips were red
and Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle
The magpies said
Year in year out they worked
while the pines grew overhead
and Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle
The magpies said
But all the beautiful crops soon went
to the mortgage man instead
and Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle
The magpies said
Elizabeth is dead now (it's long ago)
Old Tom's gone light in the head
and Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle
The magpies said
The farms still there. Mortgage corporations
couldn't give it away
and Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle
The magpies say.



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The Great White Shark's image problem is a libel — called myth perpetuated by fear-driven ignorance

The word *shark* is synonym for a lot of personality nastiness. But it's not always appropriate. Take the Great White, which seems to like patrolling the beaches of the South Pacific, especially Australia and New Zealand – but also further. As Julia Baird, author, journalist and a television presenter with the Australian Broadcasting Corp, and a practical expert, the nastiness is a folk libel. The curious thing about sharks, she says, is that the people who have the most to fear from them – surfers, swimmers, paddlers – fear them least.

Ms Baird tells of an incident when the father called to say that an eight-foot shark had glided under him as he was catching waves at Manly Beach in Sydney.

“The adrenaline thinned his voice; it took days for the shock to wear off, but he was back in the water the next day. My older brother has had a great white try to knock him off his board with its tail while surfing on a remote beach in New South Wales. (While terrified at the time, he says he remains “convinced of their majesty” and remains an avid surfer.)

“The Sydney bay where I swim is often crowded with dozens of timid young sharks that leave when fully grown. They do not bother us,” she said.

“I would be terrified, though, if I sighted a great white. Like that of many of our generation who grew up horror-struck with images of the pink gums of the shark in the movie *Jaws*, it's a primeval fear that's impossible to shake. After all, as the words of the trailer went: ‘It is as if God created the Devil and gave him jaws.’”

But in a new book, the Australian author and sea diver James Woodford argues that they just have a public relations problem on an international scale. Great Whites are genuinely global citizens, he says. They travel for thousands of miles, skimming sea floors from continent to continent, wending from Africa to Australia and back again, to the Mediterranean, China, Japan and the Philippines. Scientists call them “the last dragons.” They can grow up to five meters long and live to 70, she writes. Great whites are as misunderstood as they are marvelous, Ms Baird says, partly because the great white



“emerged from a lineage predating dinosaurs and its personality has the ill-deserved reputation of being somewhere between a psychopath and a member of an outlaw motorcycle gang.”

Research has shown that male sharks frequently swim near and around people in areas thronging with swimmers, including Sydney Harbor, without incident.

A recent survey of 557 ocean users in Western Australia found 69 percent had encountered a shark when in or on the sea. The survey, published in the academic journal *Australian Geographer* by the researchers Leah Gibbs and Andrew Warren, also found 61% had encountered a shark in the year before they completed the survey.

A cull was conducted from January to April last year. A total of 172 sharks were caught, and 68 were shot. Not one was a great white. Australia's Environment Protection Authority refused to give the Western Australian state government permission to continue the program, because of concerns about the impact on the great white population.

Scientists cheered: Hysteria makes bad policy....Those who know the least panic the most.

A poll by UMR Research, a private company, found 82% of Australians believe sharks should not be killed, and that we swim at our own risk. – Julia Baird is an author, a journalist and a television presenter with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and an author who is working on a biography of Queen Victoria.

Murray Burt