

The Southern Yarn

Dec. 2020 / Jan. 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

downundercalendar

JANUARY

Waitangi Day and Australia Day
Saturday, January 30, 2021, 6 pm
A ZOOM party, from our homes.

It's a topsy-turvy world and, as it is impossible to anticipate exactly what will be allowed later in January or early February and likely there will still be restrictions on gathering, we are planning to have a **Zoom social** to celebrate our national anthems, your own delicious food in front of you, two-up, a brain teaser quiz (prizes include one 220 g jar of Vegemite – and we'll get the prizes to you somehow), other entertainments and, yes, a bake-off.

The bake-off will be "cupcakes or muffins". For judging, have 3 on a plate ready to hold up to the camera/screen - so decoration will be key. Let Judy know if you will be participating and we will make sure you are on the Zoom event list. Email social@downunderclub.mb.ca Phone **204-275-7083**



see the story
behind this on
p.3



DUCW members managed quorum and some fun via Zoom, our first of a few such gatherings, perhaps.

Our AGM goes Zoom

Thanks to Jenny Gates for setting up and "hosting" our Annual General Meeting via the Zoom videoconferencing software so many have begun to use. It worked so well, it might become the norm - how else could Ian and Catherine Bowering have attended (still holed-up in Melbourne)? Apologies to our members who don't have Zoom or the internet, but this is the best we can do for now, and we hope to "see" you soon!

Australia Day 2020: its modern context and history

[Source: BBC News, Sharon Verghis, Jan. 2018] Australia's national day of celebration has drawn much criticism recently from those who say it causes unfair hurt to indigenous people. But the controversy, like Australia Day itself, has evolved over many years, reports Sharon Verghis from Sydney.

More than most other nations, perhaps, Australia has a relaxed relationship to its national day. From regattas to camel races, flip-flop-throwing carnivals to outdoor concerts, Australians will mark a public holiday more popularly treated as a late summer festival than the solemn national day its founders intended it to be - a unifying celebration of the good fortune of being Australian and the values that bind the nation: democracy, freedom, independence, a fair go, mateship.

But what does 26 January really mean for Australians and how did it come to be?

Australia Day, on 26 January, commemorates the day in 1788 when Captain Arthur Phillip, commander of the First Fleet of 11 British ships, arrived at Sydney Cove to signal the birth of the colony.

In 1818, New South Wales (NSW) formally marked 30 years as a colony with a tri-

umphant 30-gun salute, the first official celebration of the date. It became an annual public holiday there in 1838 and remained a NSW-centric commemoration for many years.

But by 1888, 26 January had become known as "Anniversary Day" and was a public holiday in all capital cities except Adelaide.

The inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 reinforced momentum for a foundation holiday. By the 1920s, Anzac Day had become a national holiday but was regarded as a day of sombre commemoration of Australia's war casualties rather than a celebration.

The search for a national day that fit this latter description continued - ending in 1935 when all states of Australia agreed to adopt a common name and date.

In the 1980s, the Australian government began to take an increasingly prominent role and established the National Australia Day Committee. By 1994, all states and territories began to celebrate a unified public holiday on the actual day for the first time. Read more about the subsequent controversy here: [Link]

online



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editorially yours

Charlie Powell



Just as “Google” came into our vocabulary several years ago, now, thanks to the pandemic, the new understanding of “Zoom” has become commonplace. What a gift! (Every cloud has a silver lining!). Meetings and birthday parties have been enhanced, under the circumstances, by this sharing technology, which facilitates virtual togetherness. Zoom will no doubt play a useful role for many Canadian families this Christmas as COVID restrictions continue to be necessary. Kudos to the Kiwis and Aussies for managing to come through their lockdowns much more successfully than most!

The other understanding of “zoom” played a big part of this past year for me. My trusty Canon SX720 HS with 40x optical zoom brought me up close to many new birds – some of which I share in this month’s *Birds I View* (back page).

In *Getting to Know*, p.7, you will learn about a very resourceful lady named **Gladys Sandford**. And, in 100 years ago, on page 6, how Qantas was started. All this and so much more!

With little in the way of Club event reports, I am again grateful to Jenny Gates for her contributions to this issue, including the “Lady in Red” piece; also to Peter, Brian, Terry D., Jodie S. and our advertisers.

YOU, too, are encouraged to become a Yarn contributor! Don’t be shy – share.

Make the most of your Christmas, as we say goodbye to this year,
Stay safe!

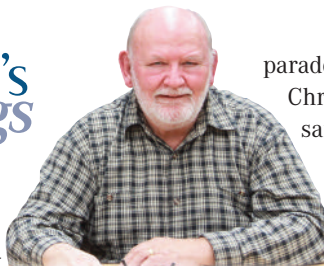
Vegemite

Our local supplier of Vegemite is Family Foods in Stonewall, but unfortunately, they are currently waiting on new stock. You can contact Glenda at 204-467-5553 to find out when they have it back in stock, or email her at swfamilyfoods@gmail.com and ask to be put on their email list for updates on Vegemite arrivals and other imported stock. – *Jenny Gates*



president's ramblings

Peter Munn



Hello again. Like yourself, I have been enjoying the unusually good weather we have been experiencing in Winnipeg. If you have to go out for a good reason, people can be seen walking everywhere. Singles, couples, walking their dogs, and dogs walking their owners. And still bikes are out in force, especially when the temperature rose to 4°C. Unfortunately these conditions often lead to very slippery conditions on sidewalks, and in our area of the city many people do their recreational walking on the roadway. Margaret enjoys walking around our neighbourhood, we are not too far from Egerton, on the Seine River, and the City is spending a lot of y(our) tax dollars on walking paths in this area.

We are getting ready for Christmas, it won’t be as elaborate as past years, but we are looking forward to the new ways of celebrating with our family. Zoom is now becoming an integral part of our lives, and we spent 4 hours on Saturday night playing internet-based games with the whole family, 6 separate homes, but joined by Zoom. Mr. Dressup would have been proud of some of the costumes and get ups that were

paraded as the night went on. No doubt Christmas get togethers will be much the same, I expect.

And for our Annual General Meeting, we had a large group of people join in via Zoom, and the meeting was successfully completed, with the appointment of a new board, which was a re-appointment of the previous board. Upon closing of the AGM, we had a general get together and “chin wag”, which was appreciated by all of us, it has been a long time since many of us had spoken together. It was a pleasure saying hello again to Jude McCudden, who travelled to and called in from her local library in Ashern, as her home internet reception is poor. Good for you Jude, thanks again for joining in.

So that’s it for me,
Stay safe, and we wish you and your family a Merry Christmas,

Peter

This monument bears the full Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi and has stood at Te Tii marae since 1880.



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Bledisloe, Waitangi Day 1934

In 1932 Governor-General Lord Bledisloe gifted the Treaty House and grounds at Waitangi to the nation. He hoped that the site would become a national memorial, symbolising that the Treaty of Waitangi had initiated a unique relationship between the indigenous and the colonising peoples.

This partnership was reflected in the membership of a trust board set up to develop the property, which would include representatives of descendants of those involved in making the Treaty in 1840. The first board included Kirihi Te Riri Maihi Kawiti as a representative of their descendants of the northern chiefs of 1840. The partnership was also marked by a decision to build a whare rūnanga to stand near the Treaty House. Northern chief Tau Henare took a leading role in both the trust board and the building project.

In February 1934 Bledisloe's gift was marked by celebrations. A pattern for subsequent events was set. It involved two sites – the Treaty House grounds (where the whare rūnanga would be built) and Te Tii marae close by – several organising bodies (Māori, Pākehā and government), and Bledisloe's prayer that 'the sacred compact made in these waters may be faithfully and honourably kept for all time to come'. A second prayer hoped that the two races might unite as one nation through Christianity – Bledisloe's interpretation of Lieutenant-Governor Hobson's words at the 1840 signing, 'He iwi tahi tātou' (Now we are one people).

Up to 10,000 Māori attended the 1934 celebrations. The events had special meaning for many as they looked back to their independent status before the signing of the Treaty: 1834, when northern tribes chose a national flag at Waitangi, and 1835 when they issued a Declaration of Independence.

Māori and Pākehā perceptions of past and present events were clearly at variance

in 1934. Waitangi became a stage on which the interplay of relationships – past and present – was repeated. There would inevitably be clashes. [Source: New Zealand History. Link]

A very happy ending ...

Take your minds back to February 22 and our bush-fire fundraiser – an extraordinary event with an exceptionally good video if you haven't yet seen it [Link].

One of our donors for that event was a friend of mine named Ardythe. Keen to support those in need, Ardythe donated several items, including the **Lady in Red**. A beautiful collector doll with a big red hat and a gorgeous dress with train, this little lady was unfortunately left out of the many baskets we put together for prizes on the night.

When I asked Ardythe if she would like it back, she said, "Why not donate it to the Red Hat Society?"

An excellent idea, but then COVID struck and the lady in question was, quite literally, shelved ... until last week while cleaning my office when I re-discovered her quietly bid-



ing her time.

A closer look revealed how beautiful the Lady in Red really is. For those who know collectibles, she is a Popular Creations 2004 11-inch Alexandra Tassel Doll, still in the original box. And because I really wanted her to go to a good home with someone who would truly appreciate her gorgeous red hat and other attire, I immediately followed Ardythe's advice and contacted the local chapter of the Red Hat Society.

And that's when Joy wrote, "I would definitely be interested in obtaining the collector doll! We plan to hold a Red Hat convention as soon as this pandemic is over, and it would be a fabulous item for one lucky lady in attendance to take home. Thank you!"

The next day when Joy came to pick the lady up, she unexpectedly gave me a gift. When I said there was no need for that, she responded, "Well, I've never seen her before, and she is quite the beauty. So, we wanted to say thank you for getting in contact with us."

A very happy ending for us all!

Thank you, Ardythe, for your generous support of our fundraiser. And thank you, Joy, for appreciating the Lady in Red as much as she deserves.

– Jenny Gates



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Fiddling while COVID burns

[Source: SMH, Nick Miller, 10Nov2020] Ian Pidd's parents moved into a nursing home this year, in the brief gap between Melbourne's coronavirus lockdowns. Then, two weeks later...

"The home gave us a call," he says. Mum and dad were infected. "The home got absolutely smashed [by COVID-19]," Pidd says. "I don't want to demonise it, it's a really good place, but the virus just swept through it. People died. And my father's really frail."

"We all just immediately went 'that's that'. The big spectre. Our parents are going to die and we're not going to be able to be with them."

Pidd is a performer, director, writer and producer who's been on stages, behind scenes and on arts boards for decades around Melbourne, Australia and internationally. He's not one of those people who likes feeling helpless, who accepts there's nothing he can do. He couldn't even speak to his parents, who were too ill to pick up the phone. So he reached for his ukulele.

"OK, I'm going to go down there, find a window and I'm just going to f--ing sing."

And he did. Outside the home he sang a bunch of Beatles songs, the Paul McCartney tune *I Will* (Who knows how long I've loved you / you know I love you still / will I wait a lonely lifetime / if you want me to, I will). An old gospel song. A tonne of popular hits.

"My old man is from the theatre, too, so I sang a lot of musical songs that I know he knew."

He couldn't even see inside to gauge the reaction. But, past the doors he couldn't pass, his parents fought back to health. Meanwhile Pidd rang around musician friends in the area. They would play most afternoons at staff changeover, for six weeks at the height of the pandemic wave.

"Everyone put up their hand. Cool, amazing musicians. It was beautiful," he says. "This is what art is actually for. To create community, to create connection and comfort. As a generous gift. Something humans can share."

He's not going to claim they saved any lives. But we all know what lockdown was like, that feeling of getting through a day just by putting one foot in front of the other.

"It was like war down at that home. I'm absolutely sure we provided comfort, and I think also we fed into the courage of the residents, and the staff. We showed them there

was still goodness in the situation, in the world. That what they were doing was appreciated, and there was love amid this horrendous experience."

When the doors finally opened a musician came out. A 94-year-old gentleman, who came up to them and said he had a saxophone, could he join in?

"You absolutely f--ing can, man. He can play. He's good. The carers say it's a transformation for him."

Pidd's dad has started organising play readings at the home. And Simon Abrahams, director of the Melbourne Fringe, called Pidd and asked him to put on a show. They'll be playing at six different nursing homes across Melbourne.

"The musicians [playing with me] were doing it for bottles of wine and cakes and bars of chocolate," says Pidd. "During the Fringe they're going to get paid. And that pleases me, enormously." [Link]



The Dish renamed

[Source: ABC Central West, Hugh Hogan, 9th November, 2020] The Dish, famous for broadcasting the moon landing, will now also be known as 'Murriyang', representing the 'skyworld' that it has scanned for more than 50 years. Aboriginal elder and Wiradjuri man Stan Grant senior helped to choose the Wiradjuri name for the CSIRO Parkes Radio Telescope to mark the start of NAIDOC week.

He said Murriyang was the home of the creator spirit.

"He went back to the stars eventually and now you see Orion's belt, that's where he lives," he said.

Dr Grant has worked to keep the Wiradjuri language alive. His grandfather taught him, but as a young man, he was not allowed to speak it because of the prevailing assimilation practices of the time. "I'm 80 years old ... so I never ever imagined that this [naming] was going to happen when I was a young bloke." He said to see the Wiradjuri language honoured at one of the most iconic landmarks in the central west of New South Wales gave him great pride.

"Well I think this is a fantastic day for our people, I think it's one of the biggest things to ever happen to our people actually," Dr Grant Sr said.

The Parkes Observatory has three telescopes which all received a Wiradjuri name as part of the ceremony.

The smaller, newer, 12-metre radio telescope was built in 2008 and was given the name 'Giyalung Milil', which means 'Smart Eye.'

The third, decommissioned antenna was called 'Giyalung Guluman', which means 'Smart Dish'.

The CSIRO has been working with traditional owners to name their telescopes all across Australia.

The head of radio telescopes, John Reynolds, said the 50-year-old dish at Parkes had been scanning the stars for a fraction of the time that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had been.

"It acknowledges the deep connection in astronomy," Dr Reynolds said.

"It's the oldest science. It was practised by Indigenous folks for countless generations before us, and we are very happy to be able to acknowledge that in some way." [Link]



Trees really are so much more

[Source: The Conversation, 3rd November, 2020] In an open letter, more than 1,200 academics from universities and institutes across Australia have written to the Victorian government to protest against the destruction of Djab Wurrung country as part of a highway duplication in the west of the state.

The letter follows the removal of the Directions Tree last week. The signatories listed below are both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

We are Australian academics* writing to condemn the destruction of the 350 year-old sacred Djab Wurrung Directions Tree at the hands of the Victorian government. We call on the government to urgently halt works and protect the remaining Djab Wurrung trees and land from destruction.

We are historians, geographers, lawyers,

criminologists, sociologists, scientists, anthropologists, social workers, linguists, archaeologists, artists, architects, philosophers, psychologists and other academics from universities around Australia. We have come together in our sorrow and anger at the colonial violence currently being perpetrated by the Victorian government against the Djab Wurrung people, and against all First Nations people in Australia.

While all trees hold value, especially in a climate crisis, the Djab Wurrung trees are so much more than “just trees”; they are living entities with significant historical, cultural and spiritual value and meaning. They are part of an important songline, and have been physically shaped by hundreds of years of First Nations culture and ceremonial practice.

Take the Directions Tree, for example, which was cut down with a chainsaw last week, and carted away unceremoniously on the back of a dump truck. This massive and strikingly beautiful 350-year-old Yellowbox tree with distinctive swirling bark, had been planted as a seed with the placenta from a Djab Wurrung child’s birth and its branches actively shaped and directed over time.

It would have been difficult to look at this tree – to truly bear witness to it – without forever changing the way one understands trees, our interconnectedness with nature, and the strength, depth, beauty and longevity of First Nations culture. Read more: [\[Link\]](#)

newszealand

various sources, see web links in online edition

Honouring New Zealand's wartime 'land girls'...



Lady Fiona Elworthy checks out the plaque and memorial seat at Rongomaraeroa, which honours the Women's Land Service. Photo / Roland Dale

[Source: NZHerald, 15Oct2010] The “Land Girls” are largely unsung heroes of New Zealand’s World War II experience and Fiona, Lady Elworthy, of Timaru is determined that, in her district at least, there

should be a memorial to them.

While men took up arms against the Axis enemies, Women’s Land Service (WLS) members placed on farms back home had their own battles with totally unfamiliar tasks, long hours, isolation, equipment shortages – and with prejudice.

Thanks to the efforts of Lady Elworthy, plus former Women’s Land Service members Sadie Lietze now 97, and Joan Butland (who forged her father’s signature at age 17 so she could join the WLS), a plaque and seat will be unveiled during a ceremony and picnic at Maungati in South Canterbury on Sunday.

The memorial sits among the cherry trees and native plants of Rongomaraeroa (the Long Pathway to Peace), a reserve established by Lady Elworthy to honour her late husband.

Sir Peter Elworthy, a former Federated Farmers president, was a Nuffield Scholar and also founding president of the NZ Deer Farmers’ Association.

“Peter was greatly encouraging of women taking up any career they wanted; he always chose on merit, not gender,” Lady Elworthy said.

“He was ahead of his time in that regard. He’ll be so happy we’re having this (event).”

Dianne Bardsley will be guest speaker at Sunday’s celebration.

The author of *The Land Girls: In a Man’s World, 1939-1946*, recorded that New Zealand’s early efforts to emulate Britain’s Women’s Land Army of WWI and WWII failed to fire.

The Minister of Agriculture was not in favour; neither was the Farmers’ Union (later Federated Farmers), nor its Women’s Division. [\[Link\]](#)

Waimate Shears: Tony Dobbs celebrates 100 blade shearing open final wins

[Source: NZHerald, 12Oct2010] South Can-

terbury farmer Tony Dobbs has become the first person in the world to win 100 open blade-shearing finals.

The win came on the second and last night of the 43rd Waimate Shears New Zealand Spring championships, in which he first competed in 1979.

He won the intermediate blades final there two years later, and in 1985, had the first of his now 13 wins in the open event – two more than the championships’ next most successful competitor, legendary



machine shearer Sir David Fagan, who was on-hand to witness Dobbs’ triumph, hailed with a standing ovation.

Three days before the event the 58-year-old Dobbs, who farms near Fairlie, said he had barely shorn any sheep with the blades since he won a world teams title, with fellow South Canterbury shearer Allan Oldfield in France in July 2019.

Dobbs doubted whether he had had anything like the right sort of preparation to win the first event of the season.

But he was certainly in the right form for the six man showdown of four sheep each.

He finished third-off in just under 15mins, beating individual runner-up and reigning individual world champion Oldfield, (on both time and in the final count), with a winning margin of 1.645pts. [\[Link\]](#)



They’re cute, but really? ...

The stakes may not be as high as the U.S. presidential election, but a feathered contest in New Zealand appears to have actual evidence of fraud. The contest for the nation’s Bird of the Year award attracted more than 1,500 fraudulent votes for the Little Spotted Kiwi (also known as kiwi pukupuku), according to the Forest & Bird agency. The illegitimate votes briefly pushed the kiwi to the top of the preferred bird leaderboard, but the votes have since been removed from the competition, the agency said. “It’s lucky we spotted this little kiwi trying to sneak in an extra 1,500 votes under the cover of darkness,” says Laura Keown, spokesperson for Bird of the Year, in a statement. (Voting closed on 15Nov.)

“But they’ll have to play by the rules like all of the other birds to win the competition.”

The votes came in during the wee hours of Monday morning in New Zealand and were discovered in the afternoon by the contest’s official scrutineers at Dragonfly Data Science. They were all traced back to the same IP address in Auckland, the nation’s most populous city.

“All of our birds deserve a fighting chance, especially this little manu, our smallest kiwi, which is so threatened by predators that it is extinct on mainland New Zealand outside of predator-free sanctuaries,” says Keown. Read more: [\[Link\]](#)

BushYarn

The swaggies at the gates of Heaven ...

Three swag-carriers arrived at the Pearly Gates on Christmas Eve, where St Peter confronted them. 'What have we here! Three swaggies, eh? I tell you what: I'll ignore the "snowdropping"; the petty thievery and the bad language on one condition – that you each give me something Christmassy!'

'Struth!' they all cried, 'that's a bloody hard bargain.'

The first swaggie reached into his pocket and pulled out a crumpled and dirty Christmas card from his sister and he handed it to St Peter. 'It's not much, however, it is a Christmas card alright!'

'Enter!' declared the Gate Keeper.

The next swaggie looked a bit doubtful as he reached into his swag and pulled out a mouldy piece of ancient-looking fruitcake. 'It's a Christmas cake! A bit old, and to tell the truth, it's made out of baked beans, it doesn't taste too good but it can blow out its own candles!'

St Peter, not one to have the wool pulled over his eyes, reckoned that the swaggie could enter on the grounds of a 'good try'.

The last swaggie just stood there looking nervous, and when St Peter looked beyond him to the doorway to Hell he quickly reached into his swag and pulled out a rather dirty pair of black lace lady's knickers and then handed them to the great saint. 'It's not much, but it is from Christmas,' said the swagman, coughing.

St Peter wasn't amused and only relented when the sundowner added: 'They're Carol's!'
[Source: "Classic Bush Yarns, by Warren Fahey, 2001]



100 years ago

In November 1920, World War I veterans Paul McGinness and Hudson Fysh envisaged an air service connecting Australia to the world. They had recently completed the first overland motor survey of northern Australia by Model T Ford. Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Ltd was registered as a business on 16 November 1920. Founding chairman Fergus McMaster wrote that Qantas was "inspired by the spirit of ANZAC". The first Qantas air routes provided vital connections to the people of western Queensland who responded with enthusiasm by purchasing shares and travelling by air.

The founder's vision was always on the horizon, they were pioneering a new form of travel, not just an airline. The 'NT' in Qantas represented their plan

to fly overseas via Darwin as the main aerial port of entry at the time. From joy-riding and charter work based at Longreach in western Queensland, a route network quickly developed. The vision for overseas expansion was achieved in 1935 with services between Brisbane and Singapore taking three and a half days using DH-86 aircraft. From 1938, Empire flying boats linked Sydney and Singapore introducing full cabin service and modern comfort. Read more history here: [\[Link\]](#)

And here is a link to some very rare historic color footage of the Qantas float planes: [\[Link\]](#)



Australian High Commission

Because of COVID, there are no planned visits from the AHC across Canada for passport renewals and applications. We do expect that when travel is again allowed, there will be a consular visit to Winnipeg, something we'll be insisting on for all those in need of a passport. If you do need to contact someone with any questions about this, check out this link: <http://canada.highcommission.gov.au/otwa/contact-us.html> – or send any questions you have to otwa.passports@dfat.gov.au.

Watch This

CBC Gem is currently screening a program on the show *The Nature of Things* titled "Wild Australia: After the Fires". Look for it online, [\[link\]](#). Signs of life and hope emerge from the scorched landscapes of the worst wildlife disaster in modern history.

Netflix is showing "The Dressmaker", an excellent Aussie flick based on the book of the same name by Rosalie Ham, directed by Jocelyn Moorehouse, and starring an extraordinary cast including Kate Winslet and Judy Davis. Highly recommended.

GettingtoKnow

history, and members of our club

Gladys Sandford (1891–1971)

by Carol J. Baxter

Gladys Sandford (1891–1971), motorist, was born on 4 March 1891 at Summer Hill, Sydney, fourth child of Oswald Coates, an English-born commission agent, and his wife Valerie Albine, née Lassau, who came from South Australia. By 1896 the family had moved to Auckland, New Zealand. At the age of 21 Gladys was employed as a schoolteacher at Napier. On 20 June 1912 at St Barnabas's Anglican Church, Mount Eden, she married William Henning, a widower and a motor salesman. She learned to drive and enjoyed tinkering with engines.

When her husband enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in 1914, Gladys offered her services as a motor driver, but was turned down. She paid her own passage, sailed to Egypt with the Volunteer Sisterhood, and worked as a driver at the Ghaza hospital. Reaching England, she was engaged as a driver by the Motor Transport Section of the N.Z.E.F. on 30 May 1917. She rose to be head lady driver, but contracted influenza and was discharged on 19 January 1919. In 1920 she was appointed M.B.E. Her husband, who had won the Military Cross, had died of wounds in 1918.

Tireless and fearless, Gladys was an attractive woman with fair, curly hair and blue eyes. At St Mark's Church, Darling Point, Sydney, on 3 April 1920 she married Frederick Esk Sandford (d.1929), a squadron leader in the Royal Air Force. They lived in England, India and Egypt. In 1924 she returned to Auckland alone. For many years she had wanted to learn to fly. In December 1925, despite strong opposition, she became the first woman in New Zealand to gain a pilot's licence (no.18).

Forced to support herself, Mrs Sandford worked as a motorcar saleswoman and taught her customers to drive. She was dared to emulate F. E. Birtles' overland trip from Adelaide to Darwin. With a female companion (who could not drive), she left Sydney on 4 March 1927 in a 1926 Essex 6 coach, planning to motor to Perth, Darwin, Adelaide and along the coast to Sydney. 'Their equipment consisted of tinned foods and flour, a frying-pan, a billy and a grid-iron, blankets and a



From top: Gladys Sandford driving an ambulance in London during WWI, in an illustration by Jenny Cooper; Gladys Sandford (top) with friend Stella Christie in Perth on their round Australia trip. Image courtesy State Library of Western Australia; Portrait of Gladys Sandford. Gladys Sandford papers, ca. 1891–1925. State Library of New South Wales collection of World War I papers.

mattress, canvas waterbags, a tomahawk, fencing wire and a wire strainer, a set of bog extractors, a Red Cross outfit, a revolver, and four suitcases of personal luggage. The only spares they carried when they set out were two spark plugs, a coil, and a soldering iron'. Floods and impassable roads necessitated changes to her itinerary. Returning to Sydney on 25 July, she had driven some 10,000 miles (16,093 km) and undertaken running repairs, including re-assembling the engine. On the one occasion she needed help, she short-circuited the Transcontinental telegraph-line to gain the aid of technicians.

In 1929 Sandford settled in Sydney. During World War II she founded and presided

over the Women's Transport Corps. By 1940 it had almost 400 members who had to practise military drill, and pass theoretical and practical examinations in driving and maintenance. The unit was soon brought under the umbrella of the National Emergency Services. By day she censored letters for the Department of the Army.

After the war Sandford ran a poultry farm with a female friend for a few years before obtaining a job with the Department of Repatriation. In 1956 she retired. She moved into the War Veterans' Home, Narrabeen, worked at the home's art-union office, took up painting, and enjoyed sea fishing. A vice-president of the Sydney branch of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' (later Services) Association, she marched on Anzac Day and acted as an unpaid social worker for the association, visiting sick and distressed soldiers and their families. She died on 24 October 1971 at the Repatriation General Hospital, Concord, and was cremated.

Source: Carol J. Baxter, 'Sandford, Gladys (1891–1971)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, [Link], published first in hardcopy 2002, accessed online 12 November 2020.

This article was first published in hardcopy in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 16, (MUP), 2002 [Link]

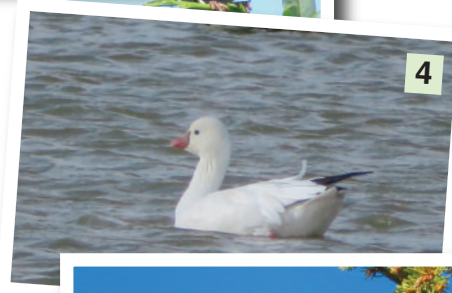
Another Aussie female first: Her name was **Milliecent Maude Bryant**, and in early 1927, she became the first woman to gain a pilot's licence in Australia. She was also first in the Commonwealth outside Britain. [Link]

2020 birding Quiz: Some of my birding firsts

In June I shared the American woodcock and last issue I shared the great egret that I was able to photograph along the Red River, just south of Winnipeg. This time I am including several other birds that I saw for the first time here in Manitoba. Can you identify them all? Answers below.

Reader feedback

Terry D. sent in this photo of the partridge family in the backyard. And here is Clare S. hosting a couple of chickadees.



The Swan – by Mary Oliver

Did you too see it, drifting, all night, on the black river?
Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air -
An armful of white blossoms,
A perfect commotion of silk and linen as it leaned
into the bondage of its wings; a snowbank, a bank of lilies,
Biting the air with its black beak?
Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
A shrill dark music - like the rain pelting the trees - like a waterfall
Knifing down the black ledges?
And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds -
A white cross Streaming across the sky, its feet
Like black leaves, its wings Like the stretching light of the river?
And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything?
And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
And have you changed your life?

QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Indigo bunting; 2. Cooper's hawk; 3. Song Sparrow; 4. Snow goose; 5. Baltimore Oriole; 6. Great Horned Owl; 7. Trumpeter Swan.
How many did you get? Let's see how many firsts we can put together for 2021.



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THE DOWN UNDER
CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.
Station Main, PO Box 1655,
Winnipeg Manitoba Canada R3C 2Z6

Media and Communications:
Jenny Gates

info@downunderclub.mb.ca
www.downunderclub.mb.ca
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