

downundercalendar

FEBRUARY / MARCH

Waiting for things to improve so we can safely gather again

At the DUCW board meeting on January 12th, it was decided to not proceed with an Australia Day/Waitangi Day event until such time as an in-person gathering may be possible. Covid restrictions have meant that any meaningful social gatherings cannot be held; the Scandinavian Centre where the Club has held events in the past has been either closed or restrictions are in place.

We have had in mind a brunch gathering in the future but, again, restrictions on numbers and venues currently do not allow this.

However, it may be possible in the summer to have a pool party where Lynley and family have offered their pool and outdoor yard – fingers crossed! And stay tuned.

MARCH

*Commonwealth Day
Monday 14 March*

See page 7 for details



Great Scot!

If you have some Scottish ancestry (and who doesn't?) you may be interested in checking out the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations (COSCA) at <https://www.cosca.net/>

Ace of a day at The Open

Saturday, January 29th: 2022

Two days, really, of splendid tennis in Melbourne at the final weekend of the 2022 Australian Open, with Saturday providing the excellent showing and results for Aussie favourites Ash Barty winning the Women's Singles Championship and the two Ks (Nick Kyrgios and Thanasi Kokkinakis) the Men's Doubles. This was capped off Sunday with the Men's Singles title going to Rafa Nadal – from two sets down to winning in five sets. All three matches gave the enthusiastic crowds inside the arena, outside the arena, and we expats in Winnipeg some of the best tennis seen in quite a while. Edge of the seat stuff.

For two years the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has meant lots of cancellations and postponements for all kinds of sports, but let's look at some thoughts about tennis particularly and the two World Wars. Major interruptions occurred to Championships events in Europe and Australia during those times. For some of the information for this article we are indebted to Joel Drucker, historian-at-large for the International Tennis Hall of Fame (tennisfame.com).

World War I greatly affected the tennis world. Between 1915-1918, no Wimbledon tournaments were held, nor were French Championships held between 1915-1918. In Australia, no championship was held 1916-1918.

The Australian, Norman Brookes, won Wimbledon in 1914 just weeks prior to the beginning of the war, then worked for much of the war in Egypt as commissioner of the Australian branch of the British Red Cross. Legendary New Zealander, four-time Wimbledon champion Anthony Wilding, was killed in 1915 in the trenches in France.

Within a decade of the end of World War I, Wimbledon, the French and US Championships had all relocated to new and larger facilities. The building of the new venue in France was named in honour of a heroic aviator who had been killed in battle – Roland Garros – though he was not a tennis player.

At the start of World War II, Wimbledon



Evonne Goolagong Cawley and Ash Barty. [Link]

was closed down for seven years, from the event held in the summer of 1939 and restarting on June 24, 1946. Early in the war, the All England Club grounds were repurposed – the parking lot became a farm housing various livestock and a vegetable garden. Buildings became offices for Fire Services, the Red Cross, Air Raid and Civil Defence services, and others. However, it did not escape unscathed, including major bombing in 1940, severe damage from which was still visible when the event recommenced in 1946.

World War II occasioned the longest period of interruptions as, besides Wimbledon, the French Championships were also not held for six years (although a tournament named "Tournoi de France" was held unofficially under German occupation from 1941 to 1944). The Australian Championships stopped in 1941 and recommenced in January 1946. The US National championships continued to be played each year at Forest Hills in New York City.

Players from many nations served their individual countries in various capacities including active service.

Following the war, tennis again flourished and the groundwork was laid for the Open tennis era which began in 1968, "open" meaning both amateur and professional players competed.

Here is some fun trivia.....the winner of the French men's singles event receives the "Coupe des Mousquetaires" named for the Four Musketeers of French tennis – Jean Borotra, Jacques Brugnon, Henri Cochet, and Rene Lacoste.

– Judy Powell

editorially yours

Charlie Powell



As explained on our website: "The Down Under Club of Winnipeg (DUCW) has been proudly and enthusiastically operating in Manitoba for almost 70 years. It came into existence in the 1940s when Australian and New Zealand servicemen, who had been training in this area through the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, informally gathered as a meeting of mates." It is now 70-plus years and, sadly, none of those founding vets are still with us. As time marches on we naturally contemplate how to continue our evolution and remain of relevance in our community. Meanwhile, it's fitting to be reminded of that extraordinary logistical effort and show of solidarity and cooperation across the Empire that was a necessary response to foreign aggression – see "Getting to know..." p.6.

Driving along rural Manitoba roads in the dead of winter, I don't expect to view many different birds. Sometimes lucky enough to see an owl atop a hydro (electricity) pole, or a flock of snow buntings. Occasionally a covey of small chicken-like birds is disturbed in its roadside dining and takes off fast and low. After a recent such sighting and still needing a subject for Birds I View, I researched whether they were quail or partridge and determined they must be the latter, but since partridge had their turn a couple of years ago, quail got the nod this time – p.8. All this and so much more bits of news that might have escaped your notice over the past two months.

As always, big thanks to Jenny, Brian, Judy, Peter and other readers who contribute and offer feedback; not to mention our sponsors!

president's ramblings

Peter Munn



It's well into the new year as I write this for the *Yarn*, and I trust everyone is doing well in this extended cold period we are going through. We have recently marked Australia Day and Waitangi Day, albeit not in the way we would have liked.

For me Australia Day means putting a leg of lamb on the barbie, sipping on a good South Australian red, and looking forward to the cold lamb leftovers.

Australia Day also has meaning for Margaret and me in a different sense. Way back in our single days, we met in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was party central at that time for the travellers passing through, and

we made friendships from that time that exist to this day. Most of us grouped together into rented houses, which became the beta version of Airbnb. In amongst this merriment, boy meets girl, boy proposes after 11 days, girl is overwhelmed, and says yes. Boy then goes on with life as before, until girl tells him that her parents are coming to visit, and maybe they should get married then. When boy's mother, and girl's brother also intend to visit, it seemed like a good time for a wedding, so a registry office was booked, 26th January, 1973, and they lived happily ever after. For those counting backwards, that's 49 years, and it's been fun all the way. And I never forget an anniversary.

– Peter

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Did you Know?

Morsels of information

Old – New South Wales

[Source: Wikipedia; thanks to Chris B.] At one time “Canada” used to be New Britain and was comprised of New South Wales, New North Wales and Labrador.

In 1612 Welsh captain Thomas Button wintered on the shores of Hudson Bay, at the mouth of the river he named the Nelson. He dubbed his encampment Port Nelson, and “the whole of the western shore New Wales.” Seven years later, in 1619, Danish captain Jens Munk would winter nearby at the mouth of the Churchill River, naming those environs Nova Dania (Latin for “New Denmark”).

The region would again be visited twelve years later in 1631 by Captains Thomas James and Luke Foxe. Supposedly Captain Foxe, upon discovering a cross erected by Button at Port Nelson, christened the shore north of the Nelson River as New North Wales, and all the lands south as New South Wales.

139 years later Captain James Cook would more successfully use the name New South Wales for the Colony of New South Wales which would eventually encompass most of New Holland (Australia). By this time the North American name had begun to fall into obscurity. [Ed. But Nova Scotia (New Scotland) persists]. [Link]

Are you watching?

Aussie and Kiwi athletes are doing brilliantly at the Olympics! Watch them if you can!

DOWN UNDER MEDALS!

Kiwi Zoi Sadowski Synnott, with Julia Marino (USA, silver) and Aussie Tess Coady (bronze).
REUTERS/
Mike Blake



ReMember

Things of interest to our members

Australia Day

Thanks to the efforts of Brad Robertson, Chief of Protocol and member of the DUCW, the Australian and New Zealand flags are typically raised every year in Memorial Park.

However, this year January 26 was also Bell Let's Talk Day, so the Australian flag was displayed in the Rotunda of the Legislative Building. The above photo shows Brad on the left with the Honourable Andrew Smith, Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage.

Waitangi Day on February 8 coincides with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (QPI), which marks 70 years since Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne. And since all the flag poles that day were to fly the QPI Jubilee logo, Brad endeavoured to try to set up a display again in the Rotunda with the New Zealand flag.



Welcome to Scott Ryan

In December 2021, Scott Ryan commenced as Australia's High Commissioner to Canada. Prior to serving in public office, Scott worked in the pharmaceutical and health sector, as a consultant in the health and insurance industries, and in various capacities in state and federal politics. On behalf of the DUCW, Scott, welcome to you and your family.

staytuned!

entertainment from back home

Got Netflix? There are several productions from down under on the streaming service, including these three recently watched:

Back to the Outback – a delightful animated film from Australia for kids of all ages

Paper Planes – a feel-good Australian film with some cool paper airplanes

The Power of the Dog – a powerful movie filmed entirely in New Zealand and directed by Jane Campion. There is also a 'short' appropriately titled *Behind the Scenes with Jane Campion*.

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[Source: Science Alert, Peter Dockrill]

Putting Tasmania on the map (for when it no longer is) ...

At a distant end of the Earth – hidden somewhere in a remote location in Tasmania – a strange structure is about to witness and record the end of the world as we know it. The project, called Earth's Black Box, is a giant steel installation, soon to be filled with hard drives powered by solar panels, each of them documenting and preserving a stream of real-time scientific updates and analysis on the gloomiest issues the world faces.

Information related to climate change, species extinction, environmental pollution, and impacts on health will all be chronicled in the monolithic structure – so that if some future society might one day discover the archive, they'll be able to piece together what happened to our planet.

"Unless we dramatically transform our way of life, climate change and other man-made perils will cause our civilization to crash," the Earth's Black Box website explains.

"Earth's Black Box will record every step we take towards this catastrophe. Hundreds of data sets, measurements and interactions relating to the health of our planet will be continuously collected and safely stored for future generations."

[Link 1] [Link 2]



Protecting Australian sandalwood

Global trade in sandalwood (timber and related products from the genus *Santalum*)

has been well documented for over one thousand years with references to its spiritual and therapeutic use across Asia. There are 25 known species across Australasia, Indomalaya, and Oceania ecozones.

For the last couple of hundred years, demand for sandalwood has focused in particular on Western Australian sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*). Australia became a major exporter of sandalwood to Asia in the 19th century with early European settlers exporting up to 14,000 tonnes of Western Australian sandalwood per year from Fremantle Port.

More recently, global demand for sandalwood has grown rapidly, driven by an increasing population and income, in particular in Asia. This demand has resulted in a significant depletion of all sources of naturally occurring wild sandalwood. This depletion has led to the protection of sandalwood in most countries where it naturally occurs. Regulations governing the harvest, trade and processing of sandalwood derived from wild stands have been broadly introduced. Despite this protection, the decline of remnant sandalwood has continued with an insufficient natural resource to satisfy global demand.

The evolution of a plantation industry offers the solution to provide an environmentally sustainable supply for the long term. [Link]

Solar Train

In a world-first, a train in northern NSW is running totally



on solar power following the conversion and refurbishment of a derelict heritage train by the Byron Bay Railroad Company.

With plenty of sunlight for its batteries to soak up, the company set about converting a 1940's railmotor with the aid of Southern Shorthaul Railroad's Lithgow Railway Workshop.

The workshop custom-designed curved solar panels for the roof of the railmotor along with solar batteries designed to operate all systems – traction power, lighting, control circuits and air compressors. Director Tim Elderton said the technology adapted from electric buses was re-engineered to convert the railmotor.

For prolonged lack of sunshine, there is a 30 kilowatt solar array on the station roof so the locomotive can be plugged in. A regenerative braking system also recovers around

25% of spent energy each time the brakes are used, and the train has zero emissions. [Link]



Ken Macken's Datsun before it became a Dasla

Electric Dazzler ...

[Source: ABC Science, James Purtill] At the beginning of winter, Ken Macken took the highway out to Chinchilla in Queensland's Western Downs to buy a 40-year-old ute – a dodgy-looking Datsun upholstered with strips of carpet and sheet metal. By the time spring arrived, Mr Macken had converted the retro clunker into a snazzy little electric vehicle (EV), able to surge to 100 kilometres per hour in under six seconds (something the petrol version would have never achieved).

He dubbed the two-door electric run-about the "Dasla". [Link]

newszealand

various sources, see web links in online edition



Stoats be gone!

[Source: *Otago Daily Times*, Bruce Munro] She loves weasels but was brought to New Zealand 50 years ago to help eradicate both weasels and stoats. Now, Emeritus Professor Carolyn King, while supporting the goal of a predator-free New Zealand by 2050, is warning against repeating mistakes that made Otago ground-zero for the disastrous introduction of those invasive predators 140 years ago. *Otago Daily Times*' Bruce Munro reports.

Stoats and weasels, both members of the mustelid family, which includes ferrets, have done enormous damage since being introduced. Over millions of years, New Zealand had developed a "globally unique" feather and cold-blood-based ecosystem in which invertebrates, reptiles and birds filled all the

ground-dwelling niches mammals occupied elsewhere, King said. Stoats, which are more common here than weasels or ferrets, have been called “public enemy No 1” for New Zealand birds. Stoats can take prey much larger than themselves and they hunt a diverse range of animals, including birds, mice, rats, lizards and invertebrates. They kill an estimated 15,000 North Island brown kiwi chicks each year and are implicated in the extinction of several bird species including the South Island bush wren, laughing owl and New Zealand thrush. In Otago, hoiho, mohua and skinks have all declined, in part because of mustelids, especially stoats. During her five-decade career, King has helped introduce more humane ways of trapping mustelids; researched and explained the complex interplay between beech forest growth cycles, native birds and their exotic predators; pointed to the formerly underestimated role of ship rats in decimating native bird populations; and highlighted the need to tackle mustelid fertility in order to eradicate them. Along the way, she has unearthed the unfortunate series of events that put Otago’s Bushey Park farm at the centre of New Zealand’s own tragic, nationally significant version of “There was an old lady who swallowed a fly”. Rabbits were introduced to New Zealand for meat and sport from as early as the 1850s. By the 1870s, they had reached plague proportions, threatening the viability of Southland and Otago farms, King wrote in a paper recently published in the *New Zealand Journal of Zoology*. Then, in 1879, prominent Lincolnshire gentleman farmer Samuel Grant was given a taxpayer-funded trip to New Zealand to scope out a plan to bring out-of-work Lincolnshire farmers to New Zealand for a fresh start. [Link]

PM's Waitangi Day Speech

To mark this important day in New Zealand, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern issued a statement to the nation. In lieu of the typical in-person ceremony at the treaty grounds north of Paihia, the remarks were broadcast as part of Waitangi Day commemorations.

Ardern said it is important to take time and reflect on Waitangi Day and think about how to improve outcomes for Maori and all New Zealanders. “Today, we mark the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our ancestors who signed this document, we mark their journey, and continue to make our own, one that defines our nation - a nation we can all be proud of.”

[Link to the full statement here.]

viewthese

entertainment from back home

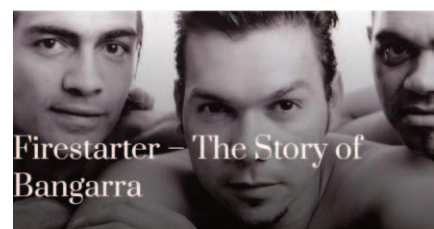
There are many things we miss living away from home - family and friends, favourite foods, and familiar places. Recently, however, I was reminded of one more thing - easy access to Australian and New Zealand film and television productions.

Fortunately, some of those productions occasionally turn up on CBC, Netflix and Acorn TV, but unfortunately, three productions in particular are not yet available outside Australia.



FIRES - The TV mini-series “Fires” tells the harrowing story of the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. The six-part anthology acknowledges the losses suffered and the ways people came together in the face of that devastating natural disaster. Beneath the unfathomable scale of the fires and behind the images and the headlines were thousands of stories of people directly affected by the fires, and stories of heartbreak, loss, heroism, humanity, and community.

This show is currently only available on iView (ABC), although hopefully it will show up on CBC at some point. And if you are hoping to get iView in Canada, the official line is, “ABC iView is currently not available overseas. If you are living overseas and have access to a local (overseas) App Store or Google Play store, you may be able to access ABC Australia iView. ABC Australia iView is a different app, catering specifically to international audiences.”



FIRESTARTER - The powerful documentary “Firestarter - The Story of Bangarra” tells of the almost 40-year journey of the Bangarra Dance Theatre, and how three young Aboriginal brothers - Stephen, David and Russell Page - turned the newly born dance group into one of Australia’s leading performing arts companies. All their productions explore the loss and reclaiming of culture, the burden of intergenerational trauma and the extraordinary power of art as a messenger for social change and healing.

I met some of the Bangarra company in Australia and was an instant fan of who they are and what they are about. When I heard about “Firestarter”, I looked for it online, but unfortunately, it is still not available outside Australia.

THE NEWSREADER

“The Newsreader” is an Australian drama series that provides an insight into the smoky Australian newsrooms of the 1980s and the people who brought us our nightly news. I’m particularly interested in seeing this because my friend Kim Ho is a script writer and script coordinator for the show. In particular, he was the lead writer for episodes 3 and 4 of Season 1. Way to go, Kim.

There’s a good chance this will screen on CBC in the near future, so fingers crossed for that.

By all accounts, these three excellent productions are worth waiting for, if and when they become available here in Canada. Until then, if you know of any other movies, TV series, and documentaries from Australia and New Zealand that are either worth a watch or worth waiting for, please let us know. We’ll share them in future newsletters for all to see and enjoy.

- Jenny Gates



Empire Air Training Scheme

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan – BCATP

At the outbreak of the Second World War the British government realised it did not have adequate resources to maintain the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the impending air war in Europe. While British factories could rapidly increase their aircraft production, there was no guaranteed supply of trained aircrew. Pre-war plans had identified a need for 50,000 aircrew annually, but Britain could only supply 22,000.

To overcome this problem, the British government put forward a plan to its dominions to jointly establish a pool of trained aircrew who could then serve with the RAF. In Australia the proposal was accepted by the War Cabinet and a contingent was sent to a conference in Ottawa, in Canada, to discuss the proposal. After several weeks of negotiations, an agreement was signed on 17 December 1939 which would last for three years. The scheme was known in Australia as the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS).

Under the scheme 50,000 aircrew would be trained annually, each dominion would conduct its own elementary training; advanced training would be conducted in Canada because of its closeness to the British aircraft factories and the war zone. From November 1940, some training was also conducted in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Australia undertook to provide 28,000 aircrew over three years, which represented 36% of the total number of proposed aircrew. The first basic flying course started on 29



April 1940, when training began simultaneously in all participating countries. The first Australian contingent embarked for Canada on 14 November 1940. The following Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) schools were established across Australia to support EATS:

- Initial Training
- Elementary Flying Training
- Service Flying Training
- Air Navigation
- Air Observer
- Bombing and Gunnery
- Wireless Air Gunnery

Under Article XV of the agreement, it was proposed that each country's aircrew would serve in distinct national squadrons once they arrived in Britain. Eventually there were 17 Article XV RAAF squadrons, these being numbered 450–467 (but with no 465 formed). Four of these units were in Fighter Command, seven in Bomber Command, and one in Coastal Command. Another five were also formed in the Middle East. However,

despite Article XV, the bulk of Australian aircrew served with RAF squadrons and not with a designated Australian squadron.

The agreement was renewed for an additional two years in March 1943, although by then it was evident that the RAF already had a large surplus of aircrew. Throughout 1944 Australia's contribution to the scheme was wound back, at Britain's instigation, and the scheme effectively ended in October 1944, although it was not formally suspended until 31 March 1945. By this time, over 37,000 Australian airmen had been trained as part of the scheme.

Sources:

- Don Charlwood, *No moon tonight*, Angus and Robertson, London, 1956
 - Peter Dennis [et al.], *The Oxford companion to Australian military history*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995
 - John McCarthy, *A last call of empire: Australian aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988
 - Hank Nelson, *Chased by the sun: courageous Australians in Bomber Command in World War II*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2002
 - Alan Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force, The Australian centenary history of defence*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001
- [links]

Through the BCATP, tens of thousands of young men from different countries – Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, British – settled throughout Canada for shorter or longer stays, depending on the requirements of their training programmes. Some trainees boarded with families. Both military and civilian trainees took part in local activities, frequenting restaurants, dancing halls, churches and other attractions in communities near their bases. Friendships and romance followed: it is estimated that some 3,750 Canadian women married foreign BCATP airmen. [Link]. Casualties: [Link]

BushYarn

Waltzing Matilda – the other translation ...

Source: 'Classic Bush Yarns' by Warren Fahey, 2001

Old fella bagman camp alonga billybung
Sitta longa shade big fella tree
Singum watchum old billy boiling
You'll come walkabout tildalonga me

You'll come a walkabout big fella roundabout
You come walkabout tildalonga me
Leadum dillybag meat froma tuckabag
You carry plurry swag tildalonga me

Up come a jimback to drink at the waterhole
Bagman tallem comalonga me
Singum shovim longa tuckabag
You come walkabout jumbuck longa me

Down come the troopie mounted on their prads
Down come a troopie one, two, three
Where's that jimback you got in your tuckabag
You come walkabout comalonga me

Bagman henup jumpa longa waterhole
Drown plurry self near big fella tree
Ghost him be seen all night be waterhole
You come walkabout tildalonga me.



Commonwealthnews

Platinum Jubilee

[Source: Plans announced for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend 2022 | The Royal Family] On 6th February this year Her Majesty The Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

To celebrate this unprecedented anniversary, events and initiatives will take place throughout the year, culminating in a four day UK bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June. The bank holiday will provide an opportunity for communities and people throughout the United Kingdom to come together to celebrate the historic milestone.

The four days of celebrations will include public events and community activities, as well as national moments of reflection on The Queen's 70 years of service.

In addition, initiatives including The Queen's Green Canopy and the Platinum Pudding competition will create a lasting reminder of The Queen's Jubilee, while The Queen's private estates will also join in with special Jubilee themed events offering more opportunities for members of the public to celebrate the historic milestone.

And what is The Platinum Pudding competition?

To mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee a nationwide baking competition hopes to find a brand new pudding dedicated to The

Queen. The Big Jubilee Lunch and Fortnum & Mason are inviting applications from UK residents aged 8 and over to create the perfect Platinum Pudding recipe.

Five finalists will prepare their pudding for an expert judging panel including Dame Mary Berry, Monica Galetti and Buckingham Palace Head Chef Mark Flanagan. The winning recipe will be made available to the public and the pudding will be enjoyed at Big Jubilee Lunches during the Jubilee weekend, and by generations to come.

Commonwealth Day 2022

[Source: The Commonwealth] Commonwealth Day 2022 will be celebrated on Monday **14 March 2022**, with a service held at Westminster Abbey and a schedule of virtual events. The theme for Commonwealth Day 2022 will centre around the theme for the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting – 'Delivering a Common Future' – which highlights how the 54 member countries in the Commonwealth family are 'innovating, connecting and transforming' to help achieve goals like fighting climate change, promoting good governance and boosting trade. Given that 2022 is Her Majesty's Jubilee Year, there will also be a special focus this year on the role service plays in the lives of people and communities across the Commonwealth.



NZ Joke ...

Three Kiwis and three Aussies are traveling by train to a conference. At the station, the three Aussies each buy tickets and watch as the three Kiwis buy only a single ticket.

How are three people going to travel on only one ticket? asks an Aussie. Watch and you'll see, answers a Kiwi.

They all board the train. The Aussies take their respective seats but all three Kiwis cram into a bathroom and close the door behind them. Shortly after the train has departed, the conductor comes around collecting tickets. He knocks on the bathroom door and says, 'Ticket, please.' The door opens just a crack and a single arm emerges with a ticket in hand. The conductor takes it and moves on.

The Aussies see this and agree it was quite a clever idea. So after the conference, the Aussies decide to copy the Kiwis on the return trip and save some money (being clever with money, and all that). When they get to the station, they buy a single ticket for the return trip.

To their astonishment, the Kiwis don't buy a ticket at all. How are you going to travel without a ticket? says one perplexed Aussie. Watch and you'll see, answers a kiwi.

When they board the train the three Aussies cram into a bathroom and the three Kiwis cram into another one nearby. The train departs. Shortly afterward, one of the Kiwis leaves his bathroom and walks over to the bathroom where the Aussies are hiding. He knocks on the door and says, 'Ticket, please'.

We Remember

Every six years or so, Gordon Keatch prepared a retrospective for our website [<https://downunderclub.mb.ca/history/>]. He was unable to do the most recent one before he died, so in his honour, the most recent update will be uploaded to the website by mid-February. Please make a note to check it out.

Reader feedback –

Vilma Wilkie and Jenny Gates both shared the following links about "Songs of Disappearance album featuring bird-songs of endangered species reaches the Top Five ARIA album charts": [[Link](#)] and [[Link](#)]



Northern bobwhite (Photo by Brian Stansberry - Own work, CC BY 3.0, [Link])

Quail ...

Koreke, the New Zealand quail [Source: NZbirds.com] - Sir Joseph Banks mentioned them in his journal of Cook's first voyage in 1769/70 and they were abundant in New Zealand / Aotearoa when white settlers arrived. Unfortunately, land-clearing fires, extensive shooting and introduced predators led to their extinction by 1875. They had significance and value in the local culture - quail preserves were often given in the Maori Land court in support of title.

The collective noun for a group of quail is a flock, covey or bevy. Aussies might add "mob". Australia's two major quail species - the "stubble" and the "brown" - fortunately enjoy the conservation status of "least concern". The other two species are the plains wanderer and the little button-quail.

According to the Canadian Encyclopedia, three quail species are found in Canada: California quail (*Callipepla californica*) and mountain quail (*Oreortyx pictus*) in the mildest parts of southern BC; northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) is native to southern Ontario. The latter are so-called because of the clear whistled bob-WHITE, and inhabit pasture, grassy roadsides and farmlands from southern Ontario down through the east and central states to the Gulf.

Their nest is usually a grass-lined depression or hollow hidden amongst weeds or long grass. And just to prove they belong to the "chicken-like" avians, they lay a clutch of 10 - 15 eggs.

Quail are the smallest members of the culinary group known as gamebirds (peafowl, pheasants, ptarmigan, grouse, partridges, etc), although, at an average live weight of 100 gms, one wonders "why bother?"



Koreke, the New Zealand quail

Quail's Nest ... a poem by John Clare

Source: [link]

I wandered out one rainy day
And heard a bird with merry joys
Cry 'wet my foot' for half the way;
I stood and wondered at the noise,

When from my foot a bird did flee—
The rain flew bouncing from her breast
I wondered what the bird could be,
And almost trampled on her nest.

The nest was full of eggs and round—
I met a shepherd in the vales,
And stood to tell him what I found.
He knew and said it was a quail's,

For he himself the nest had found,
Among the wheat and on the green,
When going on his daily round,
With eggs as many as fifteen.

Among the stranger birds they feed,
Their summer flight is short and low;
There's very few know where they breed,
And scarcely any where they go.



And finally...

Kea steals GoPro from hut on Kepler Track, ends up making stunning short film, and puts a new spin on in-flight entertainment. [Link]



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