

# The Southern Yarn

May - June 2026



NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.

## downundercalendar

### JULY

#### Pool Party

*Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> July - 3:30 pm*

*57 D'Arcy Drive, south Wpg*

Lynley and family have offered their pool and backyard again for this eagerly anticipated summer social occasion for our members and families. In addition to the swimming and socialising, there will be a backyard barbecue. The Club will provide the burgers, hotdogs and buns. Members attending are asked to bring their own drinks, and an accompanying dish to share - salad, pasta or desserts. Let Lynley know (see below) ages of children attending, so quantities of burgers, etc., can be calculated. **Remember to RSVP!** If you plan to attend, please call Lynley at 204-269-1510, leave a voicemail, or by email to [social@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:social@downunderclub.mb.ca)

### AUGUST

#### Annual DUCW Golf Tournament

*Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, at noon*

*The Players, 2695 Inkster Blvd.*

This 9-hole game will again be "Best Ball" where you are part of a team of four, and you all hit your next shots from the best positioned ball in your group. It is a great format for social golf, and for those who just play occasionally, because if you don't hit a great shot yourself, you simply pick up your ball and play from your team's best position. The course has a nice open-air area attached to the restaurant, overlooking their man-made lake, and we gather after the game for results, a beverage, and perhaps a burger. It is a casual event and a guaranteed good time. Call Peter Munn at 204 237-1805 to let him know and get on a team. Regulars and players of all skill levels are welcome! INVITE A FRIEND!

### OCTOBER

#### Not-so-Formal Dinner

*24th October*



## ANZAC Day in Winnipeg

The DownUnder Club of Winnipeg held their annual ANZAC remembrance parade at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre on April 25. The parade followed the formal proceedings as in the past. Flag-bearers (colour party) were two of the younger club members, and readings were given by members. The service was led by the padre, Rev. Moysey, and supported by the bugler as we stood to attention in silent remembrance.

It was encouraging to see almost a "full house" in attendance, with members and friends numbering well over 40. All stayed on for a delicious potluck supper featuring, among other delights, pavlova and ANZAC biscuits. The social time also included several rousing games of two-up, with a selection of Aussie-themed prizes on hand.

### Land Acknowledgement

The Down Under Club of Winnipeg meets on Treaty 1 in the Province of Manitoba and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live and gather, and all the lands from whence we came, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.



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email: [info@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:info@downunderclub.mb.ca)

## editorially yours

Charlie Powell



Winnipeg is home to an amazing diversity of nationalities, with over 100 different countries of birth. It is probably not unique in that respect. However, it is certainly near the top of the class in the extent to which so many of these various ethnicities strive to keep their culture alive. Evidence for this, on a large scale, is best seen in the number of cultural groups that participate in the annual Folklorama festival. This year there will be 45 unique ethno-cultural Pavilions throughout the city from August 2nd – 15th. Our DUCW is long past being able to join that list, but we do manage to stay true to our roots in other ways – Our Australia and Waitangi Days and ANZAC Day being the most public – not to mention this little newsletter. Regular readers will notice the frequent articles related to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. There is an obvious reason – WW2 vets who came to Canada under that Plan formed the genesis of the Club upon their return after the war. This issue is no exception – see p.6, with thanks to Bomber Command Museum of Canada (Nanton, Alberta) for their permission to freely use content from their website.

Thanks also to contributors Peter, Judy, Pam Sabourin, Dennis Woodford, Jenny and Lucia, as well as the faithful support of our advertizers.



Lucia Barron and friend at the 1997 DUCW Folklorama pavillion.

## president's ramblings

Peter Munn



It was gratifying to see all the members and friends that attended the Anzac Day service held on the 111th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli in 1915. And a big thank you to the participants in the colour party, the various readings, the music, and the commemorative wreath laying. Adding to the ceremony, we thank the Reverend Teresa Moysey for her words and prayer, and trumpeter Rick Sellwood, whose playing of “The

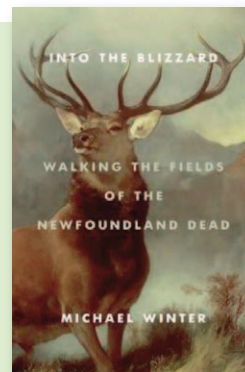
Last Post” and, after a minute of silence and reflection, the playing of “Reveille”, added a note of solemn authenticity to the service.

Margaret and I wish you all an enjoyable summer and hope to see you at the upcoming pool party in July and the golf tournament in August.

— Peter

### This may be of interest.....

A few weeks ago I (the writer) came to possess a book *Into the Blizzard: Walking the Fields of the Newfoundland Dead*, written by Canadian author, Michael Winter — and it is a withdrawn public library book so I don't have to return it. The book was published in 2014 and is a profound and deeply moving tale of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment from its inception, training, and deployment to Gallipoli and, subsequently, to the trenches of France. The author literally follows in the footsteps of the regiment one hundred years on, authentically also using ship, train, bus and bicycle. Winter follows the Regiment's trail to, and across, England, Scotland, Turkey and Europe, weaving past into the present. A remarkable book, well-told, and you can see there is a link to the historical ANZAC story as we remember it. — Lest we forget.



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## World Cup Soccer Watch Party

Hey Australian soccer fans! We have been invited to the Home Away from Home World Cup Soccer Watch Party on **Monday June 19 at 2:00 pm**. The event will be streamed live outdoors on big screens at The Beer Can, Granite Curling Club, 1 Granite Way in Winnipeg. Bring your flags. Wear your jerseys. Share your traditions. Make it feel like home!

“At The Beer Can, we believe the best moments happen when people come together. Around a table, under the sun, in the middle of a cheer, and creating a space to connect, celebrate, share stories, and welcome others in — all while rallying behind your team. It’s a celebration of culture, connection, and community.”

The Watch Party is proudly partnering with KidSport, helping local kids in our community have access to the sports they love. Because every child deserves the chance to play.

Anyone interested in attending can contact Dana Todd – 204-771-2249 or email: [events@thebeercanwpg.com](mailto:events@thebeercanwpg.com) –



Okains Bay, discussing our father’s life here and what it must have been like for him, especially at first and not knowing a word of English. It wasn’t as cold as it may look with our jackets on, but needless to say we did not go swimming. The clouds eventually disappeared, and it was for the most part a beautiful sunny day.

### A bit of family history

Lucia Barron

December 7, 2025 marked the 100th anniversary of our Italian father’s arrival in New Zealand. He was sponsored out by a farmer from Okains Bay, on Banks Peninsula and worked here for a year or two as per their agreement, before relocating to the city of Christchurch. Okains Bay is now approximately 90 minutes from Christchurch... who knows how long back then.



Lucia with sister and friend along with a sister and friends visiting from Winnipeg, we took a Mail Run Tour of the eastern bays. Our friendly and very hospitable driver gave a great commentary as he completed the combined mail delivery service and tour. This was my first visit to this area, so a truly special and memorable experience.

Below: Oikans Bay petrol station, by Wildman NZ



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## 105 Years of Service of the Royal Australian Air Force

[Source: Australian War memorial, Michael Garside, Liaison Officer] The Royal Australian Air Force began as a small army flying unit raised for service during the First World War. A half-flight of three obsolete aeroplanes was formed and sent to the Middle East. During the war, the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) expanded to a strength of eight squadrons – four operational and four training – based in the Middle East, France and the United Kingdom. With the end of the First World War, the AFC was briefly known as the Australian Air Corps, before becoming the Australian Air Force in March 1921. Royal assent was given later that year, and on 31 August 1921 it became the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The Imperial Gift of more than 100 aircraft from the United Kingdom allowed the RAAF to get off the ground.

From the very beginning, rigorous training was instilled as an imperative. Early RAAF personnel were trained by the army before the RAAF commissioned its own training institutions.

In the inter-war years, the RAAF engaged

in aerial mapping and survey, and maritime defence. With the Second World War looming, the RAAF expanded dramatically, raising new squadrons, building new bases, and developing capability in the air, on the ground, and over water.

With nearly 6,000 aircraft, thousands of ground vehicles, and some 1,300 marine vessels, the RAAF grew into the fourth-largest air force during the Second World War. Answering the call of the Commonwealth, the RAAF played a major part in the European theatre. No. 10 (maritime) Squadron was already in the United Kingdom, and 17 additional RAAF squadrons were formed, while thousands of Australian aviators were embedded within Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons.

RAAF squadrons served with distinction in North Africa and in the Asia-Pacific.

Australia played a huge role in the Empire Air Training Scheme, which shared the training of thousands of pilots, navigators, wireless operators and air gunners amongst Commonwealth countries. Read more: <https://wm.awm.gov.au/read/105-years-raaf>



## Aussie gold strike!

[Source: ABC News, Michael Charlebois, 2 May 2026] After narrowly missing out on qualifying for the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics, Australia's mixed team curlers Tahli Gill and Dean Hewitt have put that behind them in the most emphatic way possible, beating Sweden's Therese Westman and Robin Ahlberg to claim world championship gold in Switzerland.

Canada's Kadriana and Colton Lott took care of business in the bronze medal match, beating Italy 11-3 on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May.



## cornerstore

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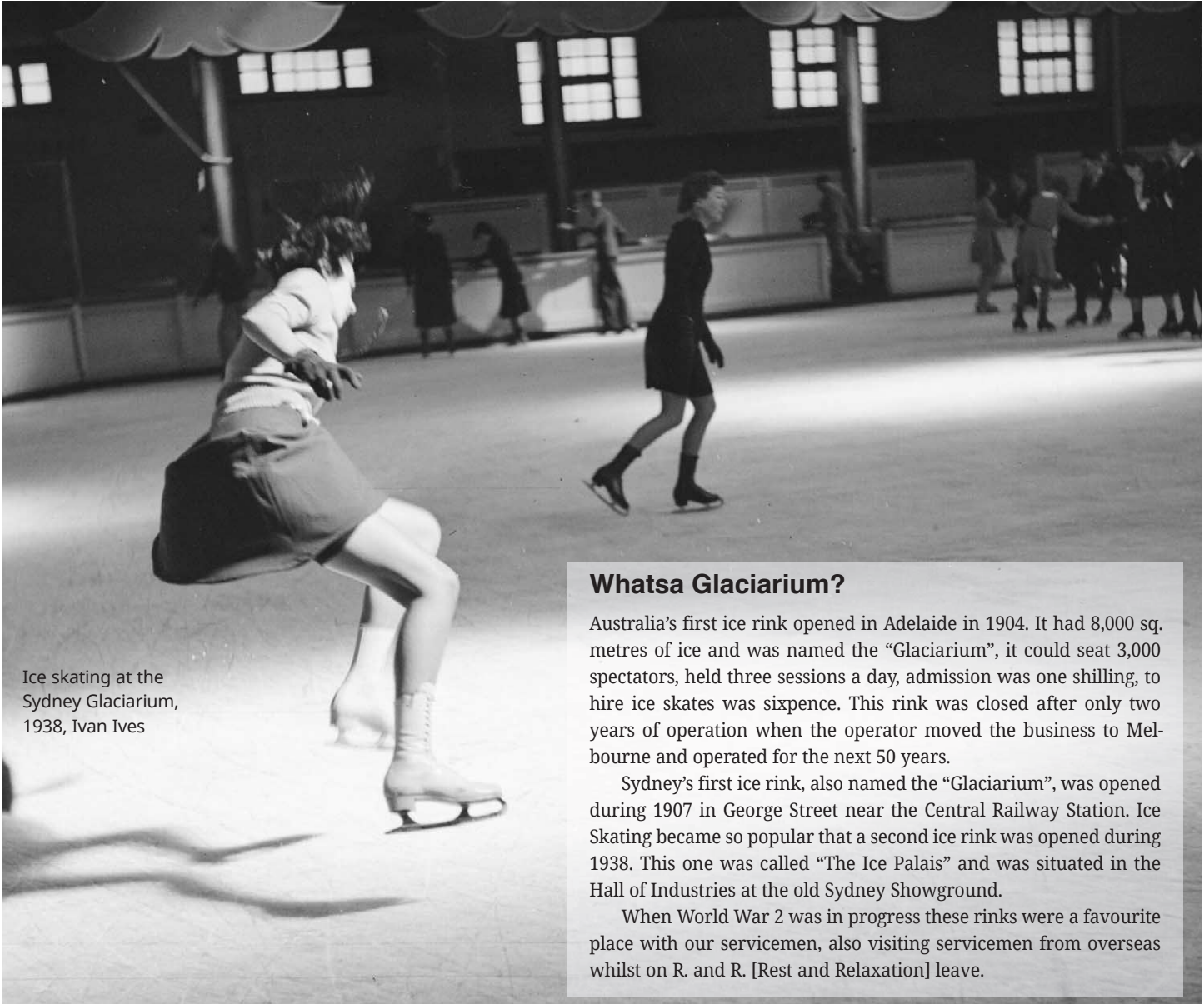


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## didyouknow?

surprising curiosities

[Source: Wikipedia] **The Double Sunrise** service was formed in July 1943 to re-establish the Australia-England air link that had been cut due to the fall of Singapore in February 1942. The service initially operated from its base in Nedlands, Western Australia near Perth, to the Royal Air Force base at Lake Koggala near Galle in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). It was later extended to Karachi in British India (now part of Pakistan), which was the terminus for the BOAC service from England. The name of the service was derived from the crew and passengers observing two sunrises on the westbound flight from Australia. Read more online.



Ice skating at the Sydney Glaciarium, 1938, Ivan Ives

### Whatsa Glaciarium?

Australia's first ice rink opened in Adelaide in 1904. It had 8,000 sq. metres of ice and was named the "Glaciarium", it could seat 3,000 spectators, held three sessions a day, admission was one shilling, to hire ice skates was sixpence. This rink was closed after only two years of operation when the operator moved the business to Melbourne and operated for the next 50 years.

Sydney's first ice rink, also named the "Glaciarium", was opened during 1907 in George Street near the Central Railway Station. Ice Skating became so popular that a second ice rink was opened during 1938. This one was called "The Ice Palais" and was situated in the Hall of Industries at the old Sydney Showground.

When World War 2 was in progress these rinks were a favourite place with our servicemen, also visiting servicemen from overseas whilst on R. and R. [Rest and Relaxation] leave.



## The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan

[Source, with permission: Bomber Command Museum of Canada] As the focus of a Commonwealth-wide effort to instruct aircrew, Canada made a major contribution to Allied air superiority during World War II. Called the “Aerodrome of Democracy” by US President Roosevelt, Canada had an abundance of air training space beyond the range of enemy aircraft, excellent climatic conditions for flying, immediate access to American industry, and relative proximity to the British Isles via the North Atlantic.

Canada had been the location of a major recruitment and training organization during the First World War and Britain looked to it again when war began again in 1939. To Prime Minister King, the scheme had the advantages of keeping large numbers of Canadians at home and avoiding the raising of a large expeditionary force. Canada agreed to accept most of the plan’s costs but insisted that the British agree that air training would take precedence over other aspects of the Canadian war effort. The British expected that their Royal Air Force would absorb Canadian air training graduates as in WW I, but King demanded that distinct Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons be formed.

The construction of the training schools was a massive undertaking in itself. On the prairies, farmer’s fields were transformed in a matter of a few months into operational schools. This involved the levelling and paving of runways, taxiways, and tarmacs: the building of several huge hangars, and dozens of other buildings for accommodating, teaching, and providing other services to the

young airmen: and the installation of electrical, water, sewage, and other services.

As well, an aircraft construction industry was developed to provide the thousands of aircraft necessary. As just one example of this, 1832 twin-engined Avro Anson Mk II’s were built at factories in Nova Scotia and Ontario during the war.

At the plan’s peak, 94 schools operating at 231 sites across Canada, 10,840 aircraft were involved, and the ground organization numbered 104,113 men and women, and three thousand trainees graduated each month. At a cost of more than \$ 1.6 billion, 131,553 pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, wireless operators, air gunners, and flight engineers were graduated.

**3,000  
trainees  
graduated  
each month**

Recruits began their air force career with a four to eight week posting to a Manning Depot where they were issued with uniforms and learned the basics of military life such as marching drills, physical training, cleaning, and performing guard duty.

If it was clear that a recruit was not suitable to be a pilot, they were then sent directly to train at bombing and gunnery, navigation,

or wireless (radio) schools. Others who demonstrated a high level of mechanical ability were sent to St. Thomas where they learned aircraft maintenance skills. Pilot candidates were sent to Initial Training Schools.

Following Manning Depot, prospective aircrew were posted to an Initial Training School for ten weeks. Ground school subjects such as mathematics, navigation, and aerodynamics were studied. There was no flying although students did spend some time in Link trainer simulators. Their results here determined their next posting, some being considered suitable for flying training and others were sent to bombing and gunnery, navigation or wireless schools. The courses were demanding and often required an academic background beyond the limits of high school graduates.

The first step for those who qualified for pilot training was a posting to an Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS). An eight-week course involved all aspects of basic flight and navigation and about fifty hours of flying in the single engined “primary” training aircraft such as Fleet Finches, de Havilland Tiger Moths, and later in the war, Fairchild Cornells.

Successful graduates of an EFTS would be posted to a Service Flying Training School (SFTS) where students were expected to improve their navigational skills, master instrument and night flying, and participate in formation flying exercises. Most faced the challenge of adapting to flying larger, twin-engined aircraft such as the Avro Anson or Cessna Crane. Pilots who were judged to be



suited to flying fighter aircraft flew the single-engined Harvard aircraft, much more powerful and demanding than the aircraft at EFTS. Upon graduation from an SFTS, the pilot was ready to continue his training at an Operational Training Unit (OTU), generally in Britain.

Other aircrew were assigned to BCATP schools devoted to their speciality such as navigation, wireless, and bombing and gunnery schools where a variety of aircraft were used in their training.

The presence of the BCATP base had a major effect on the nearby communities, not the least of which was providing a sizeable economic boost for towns which had still not recovered from the depression of the Thirties. The airforce personnel were generally made welcome and participated with the civilian population in various sporting, cultural, and social events both on the base and off. Inevitably romances developed and the concluding report of the BCATP reported that more than 3750 Canadian girls had married members of foreign forces who had been stationed in Canada.

With the massive presence in the Country of the BCATP, the RCAF was seen to be the service of choice for tens of thousands of young Canadians and of the total graduates of the Plan, 55% were Canadians with the others being primarily Britons, Australians, and New Zealanders. As the war progressed, this major commitment to the air war overseas, and particularly to Bomber Command, inevitably exacted a very heavy toll in Canadian casualties during operations.

# cricketyarn

humour

## Brutally honest ...

Keith Fletcher had just joined veteran John Edrich in the middle at the Gabba as Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson unleashed a furious assault on the tourists. 'How's it going out here, John?' asked Fletcher. 'One tour too many, "Fletch" .... One tour too many.'

Excerpts from *Favourite Cricket Yarns* by Ken Piesse (2016) quoted with permission from Echo Publishing.



## Items from back home

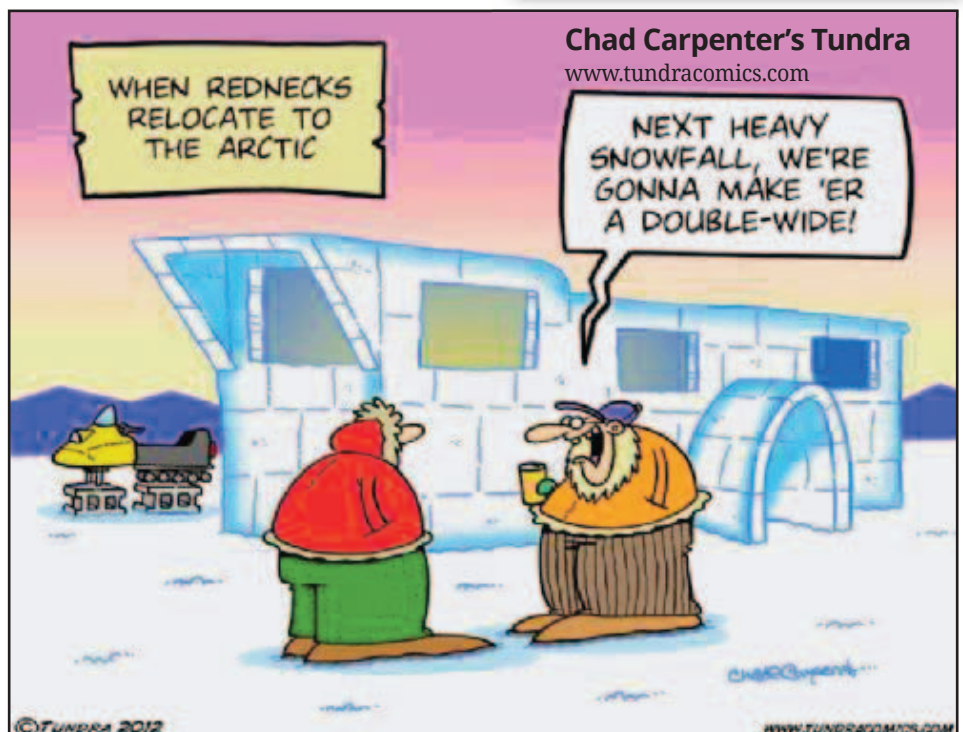
Dennis Woodford (above) was happy to find a rare Cherry Ripe, while Liz Hydesmith (right) picked up some cute writing paper, all at the ANZAC Day gathering. If you've got some hard-to-procure gems from your latest travels Down Under or extras sent by the rellos, consider sharing them at a future club gathering.



## watchthis

cultural connections

Fancy a geopolitical merger? Use the QR code to view a fun little video on YouTube that proposes a potentially good idea worth considering ... or not. Enjoy!



# birds*i*view

by Charlie Powell

## Birds of Vancouver

We were in Vancouver for a week in late March. It was quite a bit different to Winnipeg in late March. Cherry blossoms, magnolia and daffodils were in full bloom and the grass was green. It was a pleasure to be able to

walk the streets, parks and nature trails. And the birds didn't disappoint. Highlights included coming across a great grey heron communal nesting site at English Bay, an assortment of colorful waterfowl on a lake at Burnaby and the Bloedel Conservatory in Queen Elizabeth Park – a domed lush paradise with many tropical birds. Here are just a few examples...



Photos by Charlie Powell



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

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